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## **COE ISSUES NEW CONSOLIDATED REPORT ON CONFLICT IN GEORGIA**

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The Council of Europe (CoE) has issued its new consolidated report on the conflict in Georgia.

The report focuses on human rights and security situation in the Russian occupied regions of Georgia – Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (South Ossetia).

A delegation of the Secretariat carried out a fact-finding visit to Tbilisi on February 12-13, 2019 and met with various state and non-state actors.

The Georgian government along with a large part of the international community continued to object resolutely to Russias recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, as well as to the increasing Russian military presence in these territories, in violation of Georgias sovereignty and territorial integrity, the report says.

The report underscores that security actors met by the delegation highlighted that in general the number and the frequency of military exercises in the region had regrettably increased.

Moreover, the delegations interlocutors converged in their assessment that the humanitarian and human rights situation in conflict-affected regions had further worsened, mainly due to increased restrictions on freedom of movement, it says.

The report also highlights that the closure for an unprecedented period of the crossing points between the occupied regions and the rest of Georgia has created an extremely difficult humanitarian situation for the local population, while hampering people-to-people contacts.

It also says that the so-called borderisation process also continued to trigger widespread criticism during the reporting period.

The report further notes that in meetings with the delegation, representatives of the Georgian government raised the issue of impunity for grave human rights violations in conflict-affected areas and referred in this respect to the Otkhozoria-Tatunashvili list.

Against this background, the death of a 29-year-old Georgian citizen in Abkhazia on 12 March raised serious concerns, the report reads.

Georgias Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani said the report is an important message proving that the problems of Georgia are high on the CoE's political agenda.

The delegations of European Union and Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development-GUAM member states also released separate statements on the Secretary Generals 19th consolidated report both reiterating their firm support for the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

The report was presented by the CoE Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland on April 24.

It covers the period between between October 2018 and March 2019.

It is being published twice a year since 2010.

<http://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1125>

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