

# Press Release

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## Georgia: "Continued international presence and further human rights efforts are needed in the areas affected by the August 2008 conflict" says Commissioner Hammarberg releasing his report

Strasbourg, 15.05.2009 – "All parties involved should ensure a faster improvement of the human rights situation following last year's armed conflict" said the Commissioner releasing today a [report](#) based on the findings of his fourth visit to the region since August 2008. "The population must be provided with all the necessary humanitarian assistance and human rights support and the work of confidence building must proceed."

The Commissioner underlined the need to implement in full the six principles for urgent human rights and humanitarian protection which he formulated in the aftermath of the active hostilities. They cover the right to return, the provision of care and support for displaced persons, de-mining, restoring a sense of security among the population, protection and exchanges of detainees and prevention of hostage-taking, and unhindered humanitarian access to the conflict-affected areas.

The report also focuses on specific human rights issues in Abkhazia, including freedom of movement and the right to return, passports and identity documents, and the status of the Georgian language in the schools in the Gali district. The need for a continued international presence with a clear mandate which can provide security and protect the population was underlined by all of the Commissioner's interlocutors. The UN presence in the region should be extended beyond 15 June 2009.

"People must not be made hostages to political processes", the Commissioner emphasised. "The region and its people are part of Europe and are bound to have a European future once an appropriate settlement is reached."

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