



August 9, 2017

**Statement of the EaP CSF Georgian National Platform on the Visit by the President of the Russian Federation to the Occupied Region of Abkhazia**

The Georgian National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) denounces the visit by the President of the Russian Federation to Bichvinta, in the occupied region of Abkhazia.

By so doing, the Russian Federation violated the terms of the ceasefire agreement between Russia and Georgia signed on 12 August 2008. President Putin's visit on 8 August coincided with the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the armed conflict between Georgia and Russia. This visit sent a clear message on a continuous occupation of the Georgian region in a most blatant manner.

The visit also flagrantly violated the territorial integrity of Georgia and its sovereignty, norms and principles of the international law. Destructive and aggressive acts of the Russian Federation, among others, accelerated the militarization of Georgia's occupied territories, posing a significant threat to peace and stability of the entire region. Georgia will never accept the occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Putin's visit to the occupied region is particularly cynical in light of Russia's taking part in the ethnic cleansing against ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia and South Ossetia after the dissolution of Soviet Union. This resulted in thousands of people becoming IDPs and refugees.

Persecution of ethnic Georgians in the occupied territories have persisted, along with russification, with the ultimate aim of annexing these regions by Russia.

We, the member organisations of the Georgian National Platform, express our firm protest against the visit of the President of the Russian Federation to Bichvinta and the occupied region of Abkhazia.

We call upon the Georgian authorities, as well as foreign states and international organizations, to increase pressure on the Russian authorities, with the purpose of deterring the aggression by this neighbouring state against Georgia.

*Signatory Organizations:*

1. European Initiative - Liberal Academy Tbilisi
2. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
3. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
4. Transparency International Georgia
5. Economic Policy Research Centre
6. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
7. Union "Article 42 of the Constitution"
8. EU-Georgia Business Council
9. Georgia's Reforms Associates
10. Youth Alternative
11. World Experience for Georgia
12. Foundation "Multi- Ethnic Resource Centre on Civic Education Development"
13. Human Rights Centre
14. United Public Movement "Multinational Georgia"
15. The Greens Movement of Georgia
16. New Generation for Democratic Georgia
17. Save The Future Generation
18. Association for the efficient use of the Georgian energy resources
19. Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture, Violence and Pronounced Stress Impact –  
EMPATHY
20. Association "Imedi"
21. Research-Intellectual Club "Dialogue of Generations"
22. Georgian Farmer's Association
23. Association "MERKURI"
24. Railway Workers New Trade Union
25. Georgia International Development Agency
26. "School-Family-Society" Association
27. International Center for Democratic Initiatives
28. Association of Tea Producers Georgia "Georgian Tea"
29. Civil Society and Democracy Development Center
30. Association "Atinati"
31. International Organization of Human Rights protection and Prisoners social welfare
32. Peaceful and Business Caucasus
33. Association for the Farmers' Rights Defence
34. Local Democracy Agency Georgia

35. Coalition for Independent Living
36. Community Development Academy
37. Georgian Association "Woman in Business"
38. Repatriates' Union
39. Foundation "Caucasus Environment"
40. International Business and Economic Development Centre
41. Caucasian House Georgia
42. Free Choice
43. Junior achievement of Georgia
44. International Center of Geopolitical research
45. Georgia Press Association
46. International Center for Advancement of Research, Technology & Innovation
47. Georgia Alliance for Safe Roads
48. Enterprise Innovation Development Center
49. Association European Studies for Innovative Development in Georgia
50. Teachers' Union "Education and Universe"
51. Union "Ecotech"
52. Disarmament and Non-violence
53. Institute for Euro-Atlantic integration and strategic studies
54. Women's Political Resource Center
55. . Samtskhe-Javakheti Regional Association "Toleranti"
56. Bridge of Friendship – Kartlosi
57. International Press Institute - Georgian national committee
58. Center for Development and Engagement
59. International Society "Caucasian Mosaic"
60. Association of Youth Journalists "New Vision"