

Saturday, July 22, 2009

**The following statement is from Eduard Kokoity,
President of the Republic of South Ossetia:**



Less than a year after ordering Georgia's U.S.-trained and equipped military forces to attack South Ossetian civilians, Georgian President Saakashvili continues to demand more and newer weapons from the United States. We hope U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden conducts meetings in Georgia this week with prudence and a clear recognition of the truth: on Aug. 7, 2008 an irrational Georgian leader used U.S. military support to launch a brutal attack on South Ossetia, hours after publicly assuring Ossetian civilians that he had ordered a ceasefire. Grad rockets and cluster bombs killed women, children and the elderly in the middle of the night. Only the intervention of Russia prevented an even greater massacre.

The U.S. and other western supporters of Georgia have said it is no longer important who started the August war. But it is important. The world's most powerful country continues to support the most irresponsible leader in our region. Georgia does not need more weapons, it needs more tolerance and political freedom. In South Ossetia, we want to be able to raise our children without worrying each day about a reckless and embattled Georgian leader with a U.S. arsenal at his disposal. If the Obama Administration genuinely wants to promote peace, stability and democratic values in our region, it will not send Saakashvili more weapons. Instead it will encourage him to guarantee that he will never again use violence against my country.