

September 24, 2009



**STATEMENT BY SOUTH OSSETIAN PRESIDENT EDUARD KOKOITY  
IN RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT SAKASHVILI'S UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SPEECH**

“President Saakashvili claims to be a statesman. Yet once again, he has shown his disregard for the truth and refused to take responsibility for his reckless actions. It was he who cynically told the people of South Ossetia that they were safe, and then hours later ordered his troops to fire on Tskhinval, triggering the August war. It is he who is responsible for the resulting humanitarian disaster, most of which occurred in South Ossetia. It is he who has refused to renounce violence against us, making it impossible to build the peace and prosperity desired by people everywhere. I hope that these facts will be fairly and objectively presented in next week’s EU report, and that the world will finally know the truth about how President Saakashvili conducts Georgia’s affairs.

It is unfortunate that the U.N. has given President Saakashvili a powerful platform to shift the focus away from his irresponsible behavior. Instead of pursuing a dialogue of peace and diplomacy, he is trying to use South Ossetia and Abkhazia as levers to pit Russia against the U.S. and the West. This is a dangerous and reckless strategy, which only serves to fuel the tensions and increase the likelihood of further conflict.

Let me be clear: South Ossetia will never again be a part of Georgia. As president, I have taken steps to ensure that all of our peace-loving citizens—regardless of their ethnicity—can return home safely. We are rebuilding homes and schools. We are creating the institutions of a true democracy; holding elections, establishing a judicial system, and building businesses that can provide a future for our people. We invite the members of the U.N. to visit us and see for themselves.

President Saakashvili is trying to stifle an honest discussion about South Ossetia because he knows the truth will resonate with all who resent oppression and wish to be free—just as Georgians themselves have for centuries. ”

-- Eduard Kokoity, President, Republic of South Ossetia

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