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## **OSCE Confirms Russian Fighter Jet Shot & Destroyed Georgian Unmanned Police Aircraft on April 20**

**Report: “Absent compelling evidence to the contrary, an aircraft owned by the Russian Federation...shot down a Georgian UAV within Georgian airspace”**

The OSCE has concluded that a Russian air force fighter jet shot down a Georgian aircraft over Georgian airspace on April 20, 2008.

In a report issued during last week’s OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE’s Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) concurred with the core findings of an earlier investigation undertaken by the United Nations Observation Mission in Georgia.

“The FSC Chairmanship shares the main conclusion of the UNOMIG’s report, also concurred by the statements of other States, that the radar tracking and video data provided by Georgia were authentic, and that, absent compelling evidence to the contrary, an aircraft owned by the Russian Federation, either a MIG-29 or SU-27, shot down the Georgian UAV within Georgian airspace on 20 April,” said the OSCE report.

The OSCE also noted that several of its member-states had sent experts to Georgia to examine the evidence related to the 20 April incident. “The findings of their national experts fully correspond with those elaborated in the UNOMIG report,” said the OSCE report.

In its report in late May, UNOMIG noted that the unarmed Georgian UAV was conducting routine surveillance above the breakaway Georgian territory of Abkhazia. UNOMIG analyzed radar tracking data and video transmitted from the UAV in the moments before its destruction; the UN observers deemed the data to be authentic and impossible to simulate. UNOMIG added that the data correlated with eyewitness reports from civilians and CIS peacekeeping forces that the mission interviewed.

Furthermore, the Russian fighter was found by UNOMIG to have fired a heat-seeking missile at the UAV, “very close to, or even inside, an international airway at a time where civilian aircraft were flying.” The UAV belonged to, and was operated by, the Ministry of the Interior and not the Ministry of Defense. It was consequently not a military flight.

The Georgian Government has welcomed the unequivocal confirmation by the international community that Georgia came under unprovoked attack on April 20 by the Russian Federation, which exclusively provides its military forces of the CIS forces under the 1994 Moscow Ceasefire Agreement. The Government said that this action puts a definitive end to the possibility of Russian neutrality in this conflict; it instead underscores that Russia is actively aiming to thwart Georgia’s peace initiative in Abkhazia.

The OSCE also called for the withdrawal of the Russian military railroad construction troops recently deployed in Abkhazia, Georgia as well as any military personnel and hardware, the presence of which might not be consistent with the role and mandate of the peacekeeping forces. The group also underscored that it was “vital that the peacekeepers act to ensure the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons to all parts of Abkhazia, Georgia.”

Meanwhile, the OSCE praised the Government of Georgia’s efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflicts on its territories. “The recent Georgian peace initiatives could

serve as a positive step forward," the report said.