

Chronology

The Tsarist period

1783–1870s

The Russian Empire expands into the Caucasus. Eastern Georgia becomes a protectorate of Russia in the Treaty of Georgievsk 1783. By the early 1800s other Georgian areas voluntarily come under Russian rule. Abkhazia comes under the protection of Tsarist Russia in 1810, preserving its autonomy until 1864 when North Caucasian resistance to Russia is finally crushed. Abkhazia becomes the last Caucasian principality to be forcibly annexed to the Russian Empire. Mass migrations to the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East follow.

1917–18

Following the collapse of the Russian Empire, Abkhazia enters the Union of United Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus and is briefly a member of the North Caucasian Republic before coming under Georgian socialist (Menshevik) rule.

1918–21

A democratic legislature is established in the independent socialist Georgian state and great progress is made in Georgian educational and cultural development. Initially Abkhazia is granted a degree of autonomy, but Georgian policies towards minorities such as the Abkhaz and South Ossetians become increasingly oppressive, partly in response to the activities of Bolsheviks in these areas. The Georgian constitution of 1921 includes a vague clause allowing for Abkhaz autonomy but the Bolsheviks overthrow the Mensheviks in Georgia before a precise agreement on relations is reached.

The Soviet period

1921–31

Soviet power is established. Separate Soviet Socialist Republics of Georgia and Abkhazia with equal status are created. A treaty of alliance is signed between the two, though the division of responsibilities is not made clear. In 1922 they enter the Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. In 1925 Abkhazia promulgates a constitution sanctioning its status as a union republic with treaty ties to Georgia. An earlier reference to Abkhazia as an autonomous republic in the 1924 USSR Constitution remains unratified until 1931 when Abkhazia's status is reduced to an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Georgian SSR. The 1936 USSR Constitution restores Georgia's republican status, leaving Abkhazia as an autonomous republic within Georgia, but with centralized Soviet power in Moscow dominating.

1933–53

A period of widespread discrimination and oppression ensues in the Soviet Union. Georgians suffer Russification and extensive purges. Under the direction of Lavrentii Beria, head of the Communist Party in Georgia from 1931 and later head of the Soviet secret police, Abkhaz representation in local administration is restricted, Abkhaz schools are closed, the Abkhaz language is banned, Abkhaz intellectuals and politicians are repressed and large numbers of non-Abkhaz are moved from western Georgia and Russia into Abkhazia. This period is referred to by Abkhaz as the 'Georgianization of Abkhazia'.

1953–78

Following the deaths of Stalin and Beria repression throughout the Soviet Union is reduced. Abkhaz schools reopen, the Abkhaz language is reinstated and some restrictions on Abkhaz cultural life are lifted. Economic and cultural grievances remain and Abkhaz intellectuals petition Moscow in 1956 and 1967 to allow Abkhazia to secede from Georgia and join Russia. Georgia undergoes a period of industrialization and Georgian nationalism manifests itself on several occasions, including through opposition to Russification.

1978

Deliberations over the new Soviet constitution lead to protests in Tbilisi in defence of the Georgian language and demonstrations in Abkhazia over Georgian discrimination. A sense of continued oppression from Tbilisi prompts 130 Abkhaz intellectuals to petition Moscow to permit Abkhazia to secede from Georgia. The request is rejected but a number of concessions are made, including increased representation in the local administration and the establishment of an Abkhaz university and a television station.

1986–88

Glasnost and perestroika under Gorbachev foster Georgian and Abkhaz independence movements. Mass demonstrations in Tbilisi demand an end to discrimination against Georgians by Moscow. Sixty Abkhaz intellectuals write to Gorbachev requesting the restoration of Abkhazia's status to that existing between 1921 and 1931, before Abkhazia was made subordinate to Georgia.

1989

March–April

A mass meeting in the Abkhaz village of Lykhny demands the restoration of the status Abkhazia enjoyed before 1931. A series of counter-demonstrations in Tbilisi assume a pro-independence character and on 9 April Soviet troops brutally disperse demonstrators, killing twenty-one. The Georgian independence movement takes on a more radical and nationalistic tone as a result.

July–August

Several die in armed clashes between Georgians and Abkhaz in Sukhumi and Ochamchira over the planned establishment of a branch of Tbilisi State University in Sukhumi. Increasingly extreme Georgian nationalist rhetoric and the introduction of a language law which includes the provision that Georgian is to be the sole language spoken in the Supreme Soviet of Georgia lead non-Georgian ethnic groups to fear for their cultural survival. On the initiative of the Abkhaz, representatives of various North Caucasian peoples establish an Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus.

September

A republic-wide strike in Abkhazia against Georgian violation of Abkhaz rights demands an investigation into the July events.

November

The South Ossetian Supreme Soviet approves a decision to increase South Ossetia's status from autonomous region to autonomous republic within Georgia. The Georgian parliament revokes the decision and armed confrontation in Tskhinvali begins, with the involvement of Soviet troops.

1990

March

Georgia declares sovereignty, nullifying treaties concluded by the Soviet government since 1921 and thereby moving closer to independence.

May

A meeting of representatives of mountain peoples of the Caucasus in Sukhumi demands the exit of Abkhazia from Georgia.

August

The Georgian Supreme Soviet bans regionally based parties from participating in elections to the Georgian parliament, preventing Aydgylara and Adamon Nykhas (the South Ossetian Popular Front) from fielding candidates. South Ossetia declares itself to be the South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic and appeals to Moscow to recognize it as an independent subject of the Soviet Federation. The Abkhaz Supreme Soviet declares the sovereignty of Abkhazia and a willingness to negotiate with the Georgian government on federative relations. The declaration, made in the absence of Georgian deputies who were now boycotting the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet, is immediately annulled by the Georgian government.

October

Gamsakhurdia's Round Table--Free Georgia coalition wins a majority in the Georgian parliamentary elections. A Georgian National Guard is formed.

December

Vladislav Ardzinba is elected Chairman of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet. Parliamentary elections in the South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic prompt the Georgian government to annul the autonomy of South Ossetia and impose a blockade which lasts eighteen months. A state of emergency is declared in South Ossetia and armed clashes resume early in the new year, leading to considerable population displacement.

1991

March

Georgia boycotts the Soviet referendum on Gorbachev's proposed union of sovereign republics, but fifty-two per cent of the electorate in Abkhazia vote overwhelmingly to join the union. Gamsakhurdia threatens to abolish Abkhaz autonomy and calls Ardzinba a traitor. A Georgian referendum on independence later in the month attracts a mass turn out and ninety-eight per cent vote in favour.

April-May

Georgia declares independence. Gamsakhurdia is elected president of Georgia with eighty-seven per cent of the vote.

August

Gamsakhurdia's failure to condemn an attempted coup in Moscow increases opposition against him.

October-December

Two-stage elections to the Abkhaz parliament are held on a quota basis in accordance with an electoral law adopted in August. Twenty-eight seats are allocated to the Abkhaz (who comprise 18% of the population), 26 to the Georgians (46%) and 11 to remaining ethnic groups (36%). Within months the parliament is paralysed by the formation of two blocks and the Georgian deputies walk out. The USSR ceases to exist and Gamsakhurdia refuses to ally Georgia to the newly formed CIS. Attitudes to Gamsakhurdia polarize Georgia and an armed attack is launched against him in Tbilisi.

The post-Soviet period

1992

January–February

Gamsakhurdia is deposed in a coup d'état and flees Georgia. A Military Council under the direction of Tengiz Kitovani, Jaba Ioseliani and Tengiz Sigua takes power and reinstates the Georgian Constitution of 1921. Fighting continues against supporters of Gamsakhurdia in western Georgia. Georgian military action against South Ossetia intensifies after an overwhelming majority vote in a referendum there in favour of South Ossetia's joining the Russian Federation.

March–April

Shevardnadze returns to Georgia to head the Georgian State Council. International recognition of Georgia follows.

May–June

Georgia joins the IMF and the Black Sea Economic Co-operation organization. Yeltsin, Shevardnadze and Ossetian representatives agree to a ceasefire and regulation of the conflict in South Ossetia providing for the deployment of joint Russian, Georgian and Ossetian peacekeeping forces. Supporters of Gamsakhurdia rally in Tbilisi and armed clashes occur. Following an assault by Abkhaz on the ethnic Georgian Minister of Internal Affairs of Abkhazia, the Georgian government demands the dissolution of the Abkhaz parliament and new elections to the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet. The Abkhaz Supreme Soviet sends a draft treaty on federative or confederative relations to the Georgian State Council, receiving no reply.

July

Georgia becomes a member of the UN and the World Bank. The Abkhaz Supreme Soviet (in the continuing absence of its Georgian deputies) reinstates the Abkhaz constitution of 1925, arguing that there is no provision for Abkhazia in the Georgian Constitution of 1921. The decision is declared null and void by the Georgian parliament. Zviadist forces continue to challenge Georgian government forces in western Georgia and a number of Georgian officials are taken hostage and reputedly held in the Gali region of Abkhazia.

August

The Abkhaz Supreme Soviet appeals to the Georgian State Council for negotiations on future relations between Abkhazia and Georgia. On 14 August the Georgian National Guard commanded by Tengiz Kitovani enters Abkhazia, reportedly to release the hostages and protect the railway from terrorist disruption. Georgian forces storm the parliament building and occupy Sukhumi. The Abkhaz leadership evacuates to Gudauta, general mobilization begins in Abkhazia and Georgian forces create a second front in northern Abkhazia.

September

A Russian-mediated ceasefire agreement does not hold. Hostilities continue and both sides accuse the other of violating the ceasefire. The UN dispatches its first fact-finding mission to Abkhazia.

October–December

Georgian forces in northern Abkhazia are pushed back across the border with Russia by Abkhaz forces assisted by volunteers from the Confederation of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus. Both sides make accusations of genocide. Shevardnadze is elected Head of State and Chairman of parliament with seventy-four per cent of the vote.

1993

January–March

Abkhaz forces make two unsuccessful attempts to recapture Sukhumi. Georgia and Russia quarrel over alleged Russian assistance to the Abkhaz and the retention of Russian military bases in Georgia.

May–June

A ceasefire agreed in Moscow does not hold and the military situation deteriorates. Georgia and Abkhazia appeal to the UN, CSCE and NATO to intervene. The UN appoints a Special Envoy to negotiate a comprehensive political settlement and develop proposals for a peacekeeping operation. Following a lull, in which large-scale evacuations are made from the conflict area, fighting resumes.

July

After a third unsuccessful Abkhaz attempt to recapture Sukhumi, Russia brokers a trilateral agreement in Sochi, providing for a ceasefire and the immediate demilitarization of the conflict zone.

August

A United Nations Military Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) is established to monitor the ceasefire. Zviadist forces take three key towns in Mingrelia. Continuing hostilities in western Georgia hamper the Georgian withdrawal of heavy weaponry from Abkhazia.

September

Talks between Russia and Georgia link the stationing of Russian troops in Georgia with resolution of the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Abkhaz forces launch a surprise attack on Sukhumi and other Georgian positions on 16 September, claiming the Georgians had failed to withdraw heavy weaponry. Georgians accuse the Abkhaz of violating the ceasefire and the UN and Russian Foreign Ministry condemn the Abkhaz action. On 27 September Sukhumi falls, the Georgian forces are ejected from Abkhazia and the majority of the pre-war Georgian population is displaced in chaotic circumstances.

October–December

The strategic port of Poti is captured by Zviadists, supply routes to Tbilisi are severed and Zviadists move eastwards. Georgia joins the CIS in return for Russian support to reopen supply routes. Russian troops defeat Zviadist forces quickly. In Moscow the stand-off between the president and the parliament, which has hindered effective decision-making for several months, is ended when Yeltsin orders troops to storm the White House. Georgia and Abkhazia sign a Memorandum of Understanding in Geneva but further consultations on the future status of Abkhazia end with no sign of agreement. Gamsakhurdia reportedly commits suicide.

1994

January–February

A second round of Geneva talks conclude with the establishment of a quadripartite commission on refugees, though parties remain far apart on key issues. A new outbreak of hostilities in the Gali region impedes repatriation and a third round of Geneva talks fail. Georgia and Russia sign a Bilateral Treaty on Friendship and Co-operation which includes the eventual re-establishment of Russian military bases in Georgia, though vociferous opposition in the Georgian parliament means the treaty is not ratified.

March

IDPs and groups opposing Georgian co-operation with Russia demonstrate in Tbilisi. While Shevardnadze visits the USA the Georgian parliament disbands the Supreme Soviet of Abkhazia and annuls its decisions, leading Abkhazia to suspend negotiations.

April–May

Georgian, Abkhaz, Russian and UN representatives sign a quadripartite framework agreement on IDP repatriation and measures for a political settlement of the conflict in Moscow. The Georgian and Abkhaz sides sign a formal ceasefire and agree to the deployment of a CIS peacekeeping force.

June–July

The CSCE initiates dialogue between Georgia and South Ossetia. The CISPKE, made up of Russian troops, is deployed along the Georgian–Abkhaz conflict line. Its impartiality is questioned by both sides. The lack of progress over repatriation leads to demonstrations on the Georgia–Abkhazia border, while the unofficial return of IDPs continues.

September–October

A round of negotiations in Geneva under UN auspices produces no results. After only a few official returns of IDPs to the Gali region, large numbers of IDPs, with Russian involvement, spontaneously attempt to return to Abkhazia, threatening the ceasefire. Shevardnadze and Ardzinba meet in Sukhumi in the presence of Russian Minister of Defence Grachev to discuss tensions. A quota system for the return of IDPs is agreed in emergency talks.

November–December

Official IDP returns to the Gali region continue to be very slow, while unofficial returns are more rapid. Further talks in Geneva result in little progress. Abkhazia adopts a new constitution as a 'sovereign democratic state' subject to international law, leaving ambiguity as to whether this constitutes a declaration of independence. Ardzinba is inaugurated president by the Abkhaz parliament and the Abkhaz propose a union state with Georgia on the basis of equal partnership. In response Georgia withdraws from the next round of UN-sponsored negotiations. Kitovani and Sigua announce the creation of an Abkhaz National Liberation Organization to retake Abkhazia by force. Georgia supports Moscow's military campaign in Chechnya, and Russia imposes sanctions on Abkhazia, forbidding adult Abkhaz males from crossing the border with Russia, prohibiting car and rail traffic and cutting postal and telegraphic links.

1995

January–March

Kitovani leads a 'peaceful' march on Abkhazia, but Georgian forces interrupt his progress before he reaches the security zone. A productive dialogue in Geneva over political settlement leaves core areas of disagreement. The repatriation of IDPs is suspended after the official return of only 311. Evidence emerges of Abkhaz militia raids on Georgian villages that result in the arrest of 200 IDPs and twenty deaths. Georgian armed bands enter Abkhazia, threatening the Abkhaz militia and Georgian returnees. Russian and Georgian Defence Ministers initial a military agreement.

April–August

The Gali region remains unstable. The Georgian parliament adopts a new constitution that does not define Georgia's territorial and administrative structure in relation to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Shevardnadze proposes a federal solution to the Georgia–Abkhazia and Georgia–Ossetia conflicts. Following an attempt on his life, Shevardnadze arrests the leaders of the Mkhedrioni, including Jaba Ioseliani.

October–December

A new currency, the lari, is introduced, over time contributing to the stabilization of the Georgian economy. Shevardnadze wins presidential elections by a convincing margin. His party, the Citizens' Union of Georgia, forms the majority in the new parliament. Liviu Bota is appointed resident Deputy to the UN Special Envoy and Head of UNOMIG to give continuous political attention to the negotiations. Talks between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on a draft protocol founder over political status and the return of IDPs. Abkhazia continues to demand sovereignty and an equal relationship with Georgia. Georgia proposes autonomy within an asymmetric federation and requires the return of IDPs prior to a determination of Abkhazia's status. Abkhazia's precondition for the return of IDPs is that its political and legal status be defined.

1996

January–March

Difficulties over the prolongation of the CISPKF mandate lead to tension in the negotiation process. The UN and Russia continue to promote negotiations but the sides reject a draft protocol. Abkhaz militia clash with Georgian armed groups, notably the White Legion, Forest Brothers and Liberation Army, some of which are alleged to have links with the Abkhaz 'government-in-exile' in Tbilisi and the Georgian Ministry of State Security and Ministry of Internal Affairs. Abkhaz militia conduct periodic sweeps through the Gali region, contributing to the movement of IDPs back and forth across the Inguri River.

April–July

Georgian and Abkhaz civil society representatives begin to meet in a variety of non-governmental forums, but official negotiations are deadlocked. Georgia, South Ossetia, Russia and North Ossetia sign a framework agreement on South Ossetia.

October–December

The UN opens a human rights office in Sukhumi. Progress made with the first official-level bilateral talks between Abkhazia and Georgia is set back by the parliamentary elections in Abkhazia which are declared illegal by the Georgian government.

1997

January–March

Violence in the Gali region spreads to Sukhumi and Ochamchira. The mandate of the CISPKF is expanded. Attacks aimed at the CISPKF by Georgian guerrilla groups continue. The Georgian economy continues to grow and bread prices are deregulated.

April

Following an agreement between Georgia and Russia external telephone communications from Abkhazia are routed through Tbilisi rather than the Russian Federation increasing the Abkhaz feeling of isolation. Bilateral contacts continue to grow, including telephone links between Ardzinba and Shevardnadze, though without concrete results.

June–August

Violent activity in the Gali region intensifies as shootings, the laying of landmines and hostage-taking by Georgian armed groups increase, and Abkhaz militia attempt to root out the guerrillas. Bilateral meetings facilitated by Russia intensify. Bota is appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General and convenes a meeting of the parties in Geneva. The first meeting between Shevardnadze and Ardzinba takes place in Tbilisi under Russian patronage on the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the war. Both reaffirm their commitment to negotiations but fail to agree a conclusive peace settlement. Public and parliamentary criticism on both sides is followed by the establishment of a Co-ordinating Commission.

November

Negotiations resume in Geneva under UN auspices and a Co-ordinating Council is established. Progress is made by the working group on socio-economic development and early in the new year restrictions on international telephone communications from Abkhazia are symbolically eased, but working groups on IDPs and security are less productive.

1998

January–April

The First Extraordinary Session of the Co-ordinating Council instructs its Working Group I to set up a mechanism whereby the parties, UNOMIG and the CISPKE could participate in the investigation and prevention of violations of the 1994 Moscow Agreement. The idea of a Joint Investigation Group as a confidence-building measure persists, but with little practical impact. A UN Needs Assessment Mission is sent to Abkhazia under the auspices of the Co-ordinating Council to identify short and medium term economic and humanitarian needs. Recommendations are not implemented. Another assassination attempt against Shevardnadze in Tbilisi is foiled. UN personnel are taken hostage in Zugdidi. IDPs, frustrated by the lack of progress, impose a blockade at the border between Abkhazia and Georgia on the Inguri River, which hampers the passage of humanitarian aid into Abkhazia. Mine attacks and hostage takings in the Gali region intensify. Local government elections held in Abkhazia are not recognized by Georgia or the international community. Abkhazia rejects proposals to extend the scope of the CISPKE throughout Abkhazia.

May–June

Large numbers of Abkhaz militia enter the Gali region in response to a Georgian guerrilla attack and clash with guerrillas and some Georgian Interior Ministry troops. Localized fighting over six days results in the flight of the vast majority (approximately 30,000) of the Georgian population to western Georgia. A ceasefire and the separation of forces are agreed but the situation remains unstable and the events are a major setback to negotiations. Further talks are suspended. The mandate of the CISPKE expires. Views diverge in Russia over renewal, but the peacekeepers stay on.

July

Shevardnadze is criticized for his handling of the May events. Georgia and Abkhazia level accusations against Russia over alleged involvement to destabilize relations. These accusations are linked by some to competition for oil pipeline routes from the Caspian Sea.

August–September

The Russian financial meltdown has a knock-on effect on the Georgian and the Abkhaz economies (the rouble remains the currency of use in Abkhazia). Ten members of the Abkhaz parliament walk out in protest at interference by President Ardvinba in the affairs of parliament. Clashes continue in the border region with guerrillas targeting Abkhaz militia, CISPKE and UNOMIG. There are rumours of a resumption of hostilities planned to coincide with the anniversary of the end of the 1992–93 war.

The Co-ordinating Council convenes and there is a marked increase in bilateral contacts between Abkhazia and Georgia which continue at irregular intervals into 1999, especially between Georgian State Minister Vazha Lordkipanidze and Abkhaz Prime Minister Sergei Bagapsh. Abkhaz presidential envoy Anri Djergenia visits Tbilisi on a number of occasions and there are meetings between high level state security officials.

October

A confidence building meeting under the aegis of the UN takes place in Athens during which high level talks occur but little substantive progress is made. Violent incidents in the Gali region continue throughout the autumn. A mutiny in western Georgia by over one hundred Gamsakhurdia supporters in the Georgian army is put down by government troops, but Colonel Elieva, its instigator, remains at large.

November

The Labour Party does unexpectedly well in local elections in Georgia at the expense of the Citizens' Union. High-level bilateral Georgian–Abkhaz talks in Tbilisi and Sukhumi intensify, but a proposed meeting between Ardvinba and Shevardnadze is postponed on several occasions due to disagreements over conditions for repatriation. IDPs, led by rival spokesmen Boris Kakubava and Tamaz Nadareishvili, become increasingly militant. The OSCE declares its intention to take a more active part in settling the Georgia–Abkhazia conflict in co-operation with the UN.

December

Tensions flare again in the Gali region as the situation deteriorates rapidly and Georgian troops are placed on full alert. Talks in Geneva avert conflict but the sides remain deadlocked over repatriation. The Tbilisi-based Abkhaz 'government-in-exile' creates the Party for the Liberation of Abkhazia, with Nadareishvili as its leader.

1999

January–March

Tensions between Russia and Georgia increase over the restitution to Georgian control of property used by the Russian military, the removal of Russian border guards from Georgian territory, continued Georgian attempts to internationalize peacekeeping in Abkhazia and Georgian reluctance to renegotiate the Collective Security Treaty of the CIS. The Abkhaz reiterate a proposal made in late 1998 unilaterally to begin in March the process of repatriating Georgians displaced during the 1992–93 war or the hostilities in May 1998. The Georgian leadership argues that repatriation should be jointly co-ordinated under UN auspices. Despite this some Georgians cross the border in March. Although the number of returnees is disputed the

pattern seems to repeat much of the toing and froing that IDPs have experienced over the past four years.

April–May

The presidents of CIS member states set a one-month deadline for Georgia and Abkhazia to agree on the text of two draft documents that have been under discussion for several months (the 'Agreement on Peace and Guarantees for Pre-empting Armed Clashes' and a 'Protocol on the Return of Refugees to the Gali Region and Measures to Restore the Economy'). The eighth session of the Co-ordinating Council is held in Sukhumi as a last-ditch attempt to reach an agreement but no compromises are evident. Despite the threat of withdrawal the CISPKF remains in place, though without an extension of its mandate. The Abkhaz insist that no breakthrough will come if Georgia seeks to present agreements negotiated by CIS presidents without Abkhaz participation. Georgia is accepted into the Council of Europe on the basis of a number of conditions especially, but not exclusively, relating to the repatriation to Georgia of Meskhetian Turks, who were deported under Stalin.

June–July

High-level Georgian and Abkhaz delegations meet in Istanbul for a second confidence-building meeting under UN auspices. Some minor agreements are reached. Working Group I of the Co-ordinating Council, dealing with security matters, is convened after eighteen months of deadlock caused by Abkhaz objections to the participation of people affiliated with the structures of the Abkhaz 'government-in-exile'. Representatives of five Georgian opposition parties announce in Batumi the creation of a bloc to contend the October parliamentary elections as an alliance against the Citizens' Union. Georgian leadership lobbies for international condemnation of alleged ethnic cleansing in Abkhazia as a result of the 1992–93 war, launching a campaign to bring Ardzinba before the International Court in The Hague on charges of genocide. The UN Security Council, however, refuses to label wartime attacks by Abkhaz on ethnic Georgians as ethnic cleansing, effectively ending Georgian hopes that the UN would sanction the use of force against Abkhazia. UNOMIG's mandate is extended until 31 January 2000. Low-level guerrilla activity continues and bombs are detonated in Sukhumi, although causing minimal damage. Georgian Foreign Minister Menagharishvili announces that Georgia's goal is to integrate into European economic, political and defence structures, the latter being a better guarantee of the country's national security than the CIS Collective Security Agreement.

August

Liviu Bota takes up his appointment as Romanian Ambassador to the OSCE in Vienna and becomes non-resident Special Representative to the Secretary-General and Head of Mission. It is likely that his three-month mandate in this role will be extended in view of the drawn out discussions concerning the appointment of a successor which are complicated by political bargaining among Security Council members. Surprise talks in Moscow between Georgian State Minister Lordkipanidze and Abkhaz President Ardzinba fail to solve disputes over expanding the authority of the peacekeepers and providing increased security guarantees for returning IDPs. The Georgian government requests an extension of the CISPKF mandate following a warning from Moscow that it would immediately withdraw the PKF if the mandate were not extended.