



Russian Aggression of Georgia

ON THE EVE OF WAR:

The Sequence of events on August 7, 2008

** Timing is approximate*

00:15 Separatists begin attacking the villages of Eredvi, Prisi, and Vanati, with artillery, including mortars and grenade launchers. Simultaneously, the separatists attack the Sarabuki Heights, where Georgian peacekeepers are stationed. Three Georgian peacekeepers are wounded during the Sarabuki attack. The fighting in this area continues until approximately 10:00.

In a morning interview with Russian TV (NTV) and news agencies, South Ossetian separatist leader **Eduard Kokoity declares** that if the Georgian government does not withdraw its forces from the region, he will start “to wipe them out.” The Georgian military forces to which he refers are peacekeepers legally present in the South Ossetia conflict zone.

11:00 Separatists resume **shelling the Georgian villages** of Nuli, Avnevi, Vanati, from the village of Khetagurovo. Three Georgian servicemen are injured; a Georgian police return fire towards the village where the firing comes from, Khetagurovo, killing two separatists and wounding two others.

14:00 The Georgian peacekeeping checkpoint in **Avnevi is shelled**, including again from Khetagurovo, killing two Georgian peacekeepers and eight civilians. Phone conversation interception of separatist militia confirming the death of Georgian military servicemen and civilians is available (Sigint)*.

14:30 Georgian armed forces receive intelligence that **Russian troops** that had still not redeployed from July’s North Caucasian military exercises have been put **on high alert** and have received orders to prepare to march towards the Georgian border.

Around the same time **Georgian forces mobilize** tanks, 122mm howitzers, and 203mm self-propelled artillery in the direction of the administrative border of South Ossetia, in an effort to deter further separatist attacks, and to be in a position to defend the Russian-Georgian border in the event that Russia invades.

16:00 Georgian Special Envoy Temur Yakobashvili visits the conflict zone on August 7 to meet with representatives of the separatists. The Special Envoy of Russia’s Foreign Ministry, Yuri Popov fails to arrive to Tskinali, as previously agreed together with Minister Yakobashvili, citing a flat tire and a flat spare tire. When he finally reaches Tskhinvali, Popov meets Kokoity, and afterwards concedes that he cannot convince the separatists to hold urgent talks with Minister Yakobashvili.

Minister Yakobashvili meets General Marat Kulakhmetov, who states that he cannot contact the separatist leader Kokoity, and that **Russian peacekeepers cannot stop the separatist attacks**. Kulakhmetov admits that the separatists are shooting from the vicinity of Russian peacekeeping posts. During this meeting General Kulakhmetov suggests to Minister Yakobashvili that the Government of Georgia declare a unilateral

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ceasefire.

17:00 Minister Yakobashvili calls General Kulakhmetov to inform him of the Government of Georgia's decision to implement a unilateral ceasefire.

Georgian peacekeepers unilaterally cease fire to defuse tensions.

18:40 After return to Tbilisi Minister Yakobashvili holds a press conference to discuss the results of his visit to Tskhinvali, and announces the decision of the Government to call for and implement a unilateral ceasefire.

19:10 In a televised address, President Saakashvili declares a unilateral ceasefire and calls for the separatists to respect it and resume talks.

20:30 A Government controlled village of Avnevi comes under separatist **mortar fire from Khetagurov**.

The chairman of the separatist Security Council, Anatoly Barankevich (a long-standing Russian military officer, who served for four years as First Deputy of the Military Commissioner in Chechnya), tells the local TV that armed groups of Cossacks are headed towards South Ossetia to "fight against Georgian forces".

22:30 **Separatists fire** at the Government -controlled village of Prisi and Tamarsheni, from Tskhinvali and the mountain of Tliakana, wounding civilians

23:30 Separatists open **heavy fire on all Georgian peacekeepers' positions** around Tskhinvali, including the villages of Tamarasheni and Kurta; the **Kurta police station is destroyed**.

23:30 Georgian Government receive multiple human intelligence reports that about **150 armored vehicles and trucks with Russian soldiers are approaching the Roki Tunnel** from Russia and moving towards Tskhinvali. Multiple signal intercepts of separatist security and military officials at around 3am and later confirm that columns are stretched from Roki to Java. (Sigint)*.

23:50 For the first time, and in response to the entry of Russian armed forces into Georgian sovereign territory, **Georgian armed forces enter military action**—using armor, including tanks, 122mm howitzers, and 203mm self-propelled artillery system Dana.

00:45 August 8 Georgian forces fire artillery rounds at the invading Russian forces on roads being used by a Russian column already moving south of the Roki Tunnel.

** Here and below signal interceptions are cited. They are available upon request.*