



10 YEARS AFTER THE WAR AND THE IMPACT OF RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ON GEORGIAN POLITICAL PROCESSES

We the signatory organizations respond to the **10th anniversary of the Russia-Georgia War** and the recent events. First of all, we recall the victims of the war. Once again we express our support for their families and other injured persons.

In 2008 a large-scale military intervention was carried out with a gross violation of norms of international law, as a result, thousands of people were injured. The military aggression was directed against ethnic Georgian population and territorial integrity of Georgia, which resulted in annexation of 20% of the country's territory. The process of occupation and persecution of Georgian people continues even today. Also, Russian Federation does not fulfill its obligations under the Cease-fire Agreement of 12 August 2008.

We remind the society that from the very first days of the August War we non-governmental organizations were actively involved in the processes. Namely, helping the victims and providing first aid to them; Informing international media and partners about the existing situation against the background of Russian propaganda and muffled communication.

Later we provided thousands of victims of the war with psychosocial rehabilitation services and free legal assistance, among them, in submission of complaints to the European Court of Human Rights. We have described stories of more than 1000 war victims, which we published as a report and precisely this report represents one of the main documents for the International Criminal Court in the investigation process of crimes committed on the territory of Georgia.

Against the background of the above mentioned, the statements made by the politicians on the 10th anniversary of the August War, for pre-election or other political purposes, according to which Georgia is guilty of launching the 2008 War, are alarming.

We believe that making such statements is particularly dangerous when the crimes committed during the August War are being investigated by the International Criminal Court. Thousands of victims, who unambiguously point to the brutal crimes committed by the Russian and Ossetian militaries and armed men, have already appealed to the court. In addition, the Russian Federation does not cooperate with the court, which makes the investigation process and establishment of truth about the case even more complicated.

In this situation, it is unacceptable from political subjects and candidates participating in the presidential elections to speculate with the issues of 2008 war. This may cause irreparable damage to execution of justice for the war victims.

Such political assessments are in full compliance with Russian propaganda, which has been trying to ignore the crimes committed during the war and to put the responsibility on the political arena for years.

We call upon all candidates and political subjects participating in the presidential elections to respect the ongoing investigation process into the International Court of Justice and to refrain from such assessments and expressions, dissemination of unverified or/and distorted facts.

Signatories:

~~The six member organizations of Coalition for the International Criminal Court:~~

1. The “Open Society Georgia” Foundation
2. Article 42 of the Constitution
3. Georgian Young Lawyers’ Association
4. Human Right Center
5. The Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture Victims
6. Justice International (The Hague)

~~Other signatory organizations:~~

7. Transparency International
8. Fair Elections
9. Georgian Democracy Initiative
10. Partnership for Human Rights