



Statement of the Minister of Justice of Georgia

H.E. Mr. Rati Bregadze

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Madam President, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Georgia shares the belief that the International Criminal Court (ICC) ensures the victims' right to truth and promotes the supremacy of justice, which is a foundation for lasting peace.

As a founder member of the ICC, Georgia is one of its exemplary supporters - effectively cooperating with and supporting the Court to enhance its performance and efficiency in different directions.

Fourteen years have passed since the 2008 Russia-Georgia war that made Georgian civilians and military personnel victims of heinous crimes.

In 2016, Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC granted the Prosecutor's request to open an investigation *proprio motu* in the situation in Georgia concerning crimes against humanity and war crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court in the context of an international armed conflict between 1 July and 10 October 2008.

This year marks as an exceptionally important for Georgia since the first time after 2016, tangible results have been achieved within the investigation.

As a situation country - Georgia hopes that justice will finally be served for the victims of the 2008 war in Georgia. To this end, the Government of Georgia undertakes intensive efforts on a daily basis to match the increasing needs of the investigation.

The expectations are high in the Georgian people and the international society that the investigation process will be completed promptly and that victims will get the justice they deserve.

In this regard, Georgia notes with hope and gratitude the recent developments and ongoing activities within the investigation.

In particular, on 10 March 2022, the ICC Prosecutor lodged an application before the Pre-Trial Chamber I for arrest warrants in the Situation in Georgia against high officials of the de facto "*South Ossetian administration*" who committed crimes of Unlawful confinement, Torture and Inhuman treatment, Hostage taking and Unlawful transfer - against ethnic Georgian civilians in the context of occupation by the Russian Federation.

The investigation also uncovered the role of Vyacheslav Borisov, Major General in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and Deputy Commander of the Airborne Forces at the time of

the events, who is believed to have intentionally contributed to the execution of some of these crimes and is now deceased.

Thus, the grave violations committed against the population of Georgia during the August war are attributed to specific individuals - representatives of the Russian Federation and the separatist regimes.

On 30 June 2022, Pre-Trial Chamber delivered the arrest warrants mentioned above for three individuals in the situation in Georgia.

This fact further proves that the grave violations committed against the population of Georgia will not go unpunished. Referring to the results above, Georgia firmly believes that the investigation will also proceed in an active phase in other episodes.

In this regard, Georgia further refers to the landmark judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) of 21 January 2021 on the case of *Georgia v. Russia (II)*.

In the Judgment, the Grand Chamber of 17 judges unequivocally confirmed that the mass violations of fundamental human rights committed against the Georgian population, "*targeted as an ethnic group*", is attributed to Russian Federation, which exercised effective control over the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia during the August 2008 war and ongoing occupation. Georgia strongly believes that the ICC will consider those grave violations of human rights as they translate into war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute.

Georgian Government reiterates its strong support for the Court and expresses its readiness to help the Prosecutor's Office in any manner within the ongoing investigation.