



Joint Declaration of the Russian Union of Journalists and Independent Association of Georgian Journalists on reporting the military conflict between Russia and Georgia

Within the framework of the meeting between journalists and journalists' unions affiliated to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) from the European Neighborhood Region, that took place in Berlin in 6-9 November, 2009, the Russian Union of Journalists (RUJ) and the Independent Association of Georgian Journalists (IAGJ) discussed the obstacles to truthful reporting during the last military conflict (August, 2008) and the ongoing consequences and made the following announcement:

Media must be free to report the conflict and its consequences independently and objectively. Free and ethical journalism is vital for the eventual resolution of the conflict and reconciling the divisions between people of the region.

The RUJ and IAGJ demand that both governments:

- immediately end all travel restrictions on journalists and allow all journalists access to report freely from throughout the territory of Russia and Georgia;
- should guarantee the safety of all journalists reporting in the conflict zones as required under UN Security Council Resolution 1738;
- immediately end the blocking of transmissions of all broadcasters.

The IAGJ and RUJ additionally demand:

- an end to anti-Russian and anti-Georgian war propaganda conducted in all media especially governmental controlled;
- an independent review on the misuse of media to promote war propaganda and hate speech, done in co-operation with journalists unions, the IFJ and civil society structures.

The RUJ and IAGJ commit themselves to develop initiatives to build confidence and dialogue between professional journalists from Georgia and Russia that further joint understanding between both nations.

The IAGJ and RUJ specifically underline the urgent need to organize a meeting to discuss the reporting of the conflict and launch a detailed program of action to improve journalists' rights and media coverage of the conflict.

The International Federation of Journalists endorses the declaration and commits itself to support its realization. All participating parties call on the OSCE, Council of Europe, the European Union, UNESCO and other international structures to support this process.

On behalf of the Russian
Union of Journalists
Mikhail A. Fedotov, Executive

On behalf of the Independent
Association of Georgian
Journalists

On behalf of the International
Federation of Journalists
Aidan White, General

Secretary

Zviad Pochkhua,
President IAGJ

Secretary

November 9, 2009, Berlin, Germany