

# **Annex E.8.35**

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RUSSIA

## Russia recognizes Georgia's breakaway republics -2

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**Russia's president signed decrees on Tuesday recognizing Georgia's breakaway South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states despite warnings by Western leaders not to do so.**

(Recasts throughout, adds Medvedev quotes, Georgia, West reaction, background)

MOSCOW, August 26 (RIA Novosti) - Russia's president signed decrees on Tuesday recognizing Georgia's breakaway South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states despite warnings by Western leaders not to do so.

"Respected citizens of Russia! You undoubtedly know of the tragedy of South Ossetia," began Dmitry Medvedev in a nationwide televised address.

"I have signed decrees on the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia by the Russian Federation," the president said.

Both houses of Russia's parliament voted unanimously on Monday on a resolution asking the president to recognize the independence of [Abkhazia](#) and South Ossetia, following requests from the leaders of both regions, that broke away from Georgia after bloody post-Soviet conflicts in the 1990s.

The move will further worsen Russia's relations with Western powers, already strained over they called Moscow's disproportionate response to Georgia's attack earlier this month to retake South Ossetia.

Russian officials have said Georgia lost its right to the two regions after launching a military offensive on August 8 that killed hundreds of people and forced thousands to flee [devastated South Ossetia](#).

"This is not an easy decision, but it is the only way to protect people's lives," Medvedev said, urging other countries to follow Russia's suit.

"In violation of the UN Charter, its commitments under international agreements, and in defiance of common sense, the Georgian leadership began an armed conflict," the president said, stressing that many civilians had lost their lives in the Georgian attack.

"The same plight was in store for Abkhazia. Tbilisi had obviously planned a blitzkrieg that would have presented the world with a fait accompli," Medvedev said.

Georgia called the decision to recognize the republics "an unconcealed annexation" and said its ties with Russia would now "stall for a long time, if not for good."

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia "regrettable."

The U.S., which has backed its ally Georgia since the start of the crisis, is to deliver more humanitarian aid to the Georgian Black Sea port of Poti on Wednesday. Russian peacekeepers are also patrolling the port.

"The heightened activity of NATO ships in the Black Sea perplexes us," Col. Gen. Anatoly Nogovitsyn said in Moscow, reacting to reports that 10 NATO warships were in the region.

France, which brokered a ceasefire between Russia and Georgia, also said it regretted Moscow's decision. The OSCE condemned the move, and Britain and Germany rejected it as contradictory to Russia's UN Security Council obligations.

"We reject this categorically and reaffirm Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity," a U.K. Foreign Office spokesperson said.

Upon hearing the news that Russia would recognize their republics as independent states, people in South Ossetia and Abkhazia fired into the air, hoisted their respective flags alongside Russian flags, beeped car horns, and shouted "Recognized! Recognized!" Some people wept with joy.

"We have lived through three Georgian genocides in the past 100 years, and only Russia's protection allows us to look to the future with hope," Fatima, a resident of South Ossetia's capital Tskhinvali, told a RIA correspondent.

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