

“Five national leaders are here at this complex time for Georgia to demonstrate our firm support for the democratic choices of the Georgian people and express our approval for Georgia’s decision not to submit to the aggressor,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who arrived in Tbilisi today with the Polish, Lithuanian and Ukrainian Heads of State and the Latvian Prime Minister.

According Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Russia’s announcement about the total cessation of military activity is not true and he listed several new attacks.

“Russia has become a party to the conflict and thereby discredited itself as a peacekeeper as well as the principles of international peacekeeping. The peacekeeping missions in Abkhazia and South Ossetia must become international,” President Ilves said.

According to the Estonian Head of State, serious efforts are required by the international community to send new peacekeeping units, for instance with the help of the European Union or OSCE, to maintain security in the conflict regions.

Several days of hostilities have created a humanitarian catastrophe in Georgia. Thousands of people have fled their homes to escape the war; thousands of homes have been destroyed.

There is a clear need to quickly initiate humanitarian operations, in order to relieve human suffering and help the refugees return to their homes,” President Ilves said.

The Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Ukrainian leaders, who also met with French President Nicolaz Sarkozy, agreed that Russia must quickly allow international aid organizations and shipments into the conflict region.

The Heads of State jointly stressed the need for the European Union, as the strongest carrier of European values on the continent, to speak with a firm voice, in order to protect countries that fall victim to aggression on its borders.

Any hesitation in respect to this issue demonstrates our weakness in standing for our principles and adds to the strength of those who think that aggression is an permissible means of resolving differences between countries,” President Ilves said.

Speaking about Georgia’s movement toward NATO, the Estonian Head of State confirmed that he supports the position expressed yesterday by the alliance’s Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, that the decisions of the NATO Bucharest Summit are in force and Georgia’s integration with NATO will continue.

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