

## **Official statement by the Government of Cuba**

[Translated from Spanish]

Cuba defends peace as an indispensable requisite for the development of all peoples in the world.

For over half a century our people have been the victim of aggressions by the United States government that have forced it to invest countless resources and energy in its defence. Our people has firmly held its ground and tenaciously defended its sovereignty while supporting the UN efforts and struggle for peace.

Part of our territory has been forcibly occupied for over a hundred years. However, to recover it Cuba has never resorted to violence, and it never will. Its foreign policy is known and recognised by the international community.

A disturbing crisis has erupted, originating in the news of the combat unleashed in the Caucasus at the Russian south border.

Following the disintegration of the USSR, South Ossetia was forcibly annexed by Georgia, a country with which it shared neither nationality nor culture but which preserved its status as an autonomous republic with its local authorities and its capital, Tskhinval. At dawn on 8 August, Georgia, in complicity with the US administration, launched its forces on South Ossetia in an attempt to occupy the capital. This they announced the same day that the Olympic Games were officially opened in Beijing.

It is false that Georgia is defending its national sovereignty.

As is known by the international community, the Russian troops were legally in South Ossetia with the intention of ensuring peace. They acted within the law.

The request for a previous withdrawal of the invaders is just, and our government supports it.

As a matter of principle, Cuba, threatened as it is by the United States forces, cannot accept a ceasefire without the invaders' withdrawal. If it were attacked by foreign forces, it would never accept such a ceasefire.

Raúl Castro Ruz

President of the State Council and the Council of Ministers

Havana, 10 August 2008