

Annex E.8.36

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Sanakoev Appointed as Head of S.Ossetia Administration

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President Saakashvili has appointed Tbilisi-loyal South Ossetian alternative leader Dimitri Sanakoev as head of the provisional administrative entity in South Ossetia.

The relevant decree was signed by the president before his departure for Poland on May 10, Dimitri Kitoshvili, the president's spokesman said.

"Thus, the provisional administrative entity has been established, while the authority to chair this administration has been delegated to Dimitri Sanakoev," he said.

"Hence, on May 11, Dimitri Sanakoev will address the Georgian Parliament with the official status of the head of the provisional administrative entity," Kitoshvili added.

Opposition parties had been demanding that Sanakoev be given such status before coming to Parliament; otherwise they had threatened to boycott his address.

The presidential decree on Sanakoev's appointment is the culmination of a process to legitimise the position of the alternative South Ossetian leader.

The process, which was launched last November when Sanakoev was installed as alternative leader of South Ossetia after elections in the Tbilisi-controlled areas of the region, is regarded as a major attempt by the Georgian authorities to shatter the decade-old status quo in the conflict zone.

A policy brief, issued by an influential Tbilisi-based think-tank, Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), said last month that one of Tbilisi's major goals is to eliminate, or at least weaken, the ethnic dimension to the conflict.

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