



**Statement from Abkhaz President Bagapsh
in memory of Former Abkhaz President Vladislav Ardzinba**

Today, Abkhazia has lost one of its founding fathers. Vladislav Ardzinba led Abkhazia to independence in 1992 and established pride, productivity and patriotism in our country. His service to the Abkhaz people was boundless, and his dedication to their welfare, complete. The entire country and our Diaspora everywhere will remember President Ardzinba as a man of vision, compassion, and a relentless desire to see his country stand among the free and independent nations of the world. Each of us will think of him often as we work to fulfill his dreams. Our heartfelt sympathy goes to his wonderful wife and daughter, and our prayers remain with his soul. Vladislav Ardzinba will live in the hearts of the Abkhaz people forever, and generations to come will appreciate the gift he gave us all—independence to chart our own destiny.

**Sergei Bagapsh
President
Republic of Abkhazia
4 March 2010**