



Tbilisi, 06.01.2014

Blue Shield Georgia Statement on Dranda Church

Photos of Dranda Church of the Virgin located in Georgia's occupied territory of Abkhazia, Gulripshi district published recently in social media depict construction of a new reinforced concrete baptismal font on the archaeological remains of an old structure. Recent photos confirm the news of these inappropriate interventions that appeared in ICOM Russia report already in 2011, when the works were in progress.

Georgian National Committee of the Blue Shield expresses its concern regarding the willful and rude interventions on the 8th century monument of Georgian architecture and

- Appeals to the Government of Georgia to react on this fact and by utilizing all of its available resources, to renew its efforts to inform the international organisations and seek their involvement in monitoring and safeguarding of the cultural heritage in occupied territories of Georgia;
- Appeals to the Patriarchate of Georgia to contact the Patriarchate of Russia and request to halt willful action in churches and monasteries of Abkhazia by the clergy serving there under the Russian Patriarch;
- Appeals to Council of Europe, UNESCO, EU Directorate General for Education and Culture, ICOMOS International, International Committees of ICOM and Blue Shield and asks to react and give feedback on the above fact in their legal, professional and institutional capacities.



Archaeological remains of original baptismal font located in the narthex, 2005



Narthex of the Church, 2005



Construction of the new baptismal font in 2011



New baptismal font erected over the archaeological remains. 2013