



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Interpretive Statement on the Permanent Council Decision to Extend PC Decision No. 861**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
February 12, 2009

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The United States supports this decision as a temporary measure designed to provide more time to negotiate the future of an OSCE presence in Georgia, including in the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We believe the OSCE presence should include a monitoring function.

We also see nothing in this decision which would prevent the military monitoring officers (MMOs) from fulfilling the full range of their responsibilities. This includes monitoring compliance with the August 12 Saakashvili-Medvedev cease-fire and September 8 implementation agreements, to include the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

We continue to believe that our military monitoring officers should have full access to the whole of Georgia, with particular focus on the conflict zones, to include the South Ossetian region of Georgia. This is in keeping with the September 8 implementation agreement, which states that OSCE monitors should continue to carry out their responsibilities in conformance with their personnel and deployment scheme as it was on August 7, and we regret that the Russian Federation continues to stand isolated in this forum in opposing decisions which would authorize their return.

We expect the Russian Federation officials and local militias to ensure the protection of the MMOs and to take measures to prevent harassment of and attacks on the monitors, such as those which have recently seen.

We also see nothing in this agreement that would absolve the parties to the conflict from their responsibilities to honor their commitment to withdraw to pre-August 7 lines – that is, the lines where they were stationed prior to the beginning of hostilities – and to honor all other commitments undertaken in the August 12 Saakashvili-Medvedev cease-fire and the September 8 implementation agreements. In particular, the Russian Federation continues to maintain forces near the town of Perevi, in the Akhagori region, and in the Upper Kodori Valley, areas that were never controlled by Russia or the separatists prior to the August war.

We also expect the Russian Federation to honor its commitment to provide full access for humanitarian operations throughout Georgia. Withdrawal of Russian forces to pre-August 7 lines will allow for the more rapid re-establishment of normal, civilian policing.

The United States reiterates that the Russian Federation remains responsible for protecting human rights and enforcing the rule of law in the regions where its troops continue to be deployed, and it must assume responsibility for the actions of the militia active in the South Ossetian region.

The United States also holds the view that PC Decision No. 861 of August 19, 2008 created an independent mandate for the twenty MMOs, and that nothing in this decision changes that fact.

Madam Chairwoman, we request that this interpretive statement be duly registered and appended to this decision and also to the Journal of the Day.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.