



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA  
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**S T A T E M E N T**

*Delivered by Ambassador Victor Dolidze at the 735<sup>th</sup> Permanent Council  
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Mr. Chairman,

On October 15, 2008, International Discussions on the security and stability arrangements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, were launched as agreed in the August 12 cease-fire agreement.

For the first time with the joint efforts of the international community, and in particular, the European Union, United Nations and OSCE, an international format was created, by which Russia's self-designated monopoly over the peace process was terminated.

Unfortunately, the representatives of the Russian Federation started to obstruct talks from the very outset, by demanding the representatives of the regimes, created by Russian occupation forces, to be included into the talks, and at the same time by opposing participation of the representatives of the legitimate authorities of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. Russian Federation declined to participate in the formal plenary session, which, as agreed in advance, comprised of the representatives of the EU, OSCE and UN, in the capacity of mediators, and Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, in the capacity of official participants. Unfortunately, the decision of the Russian Federation not to participate in the plenary session jeopardized the success of the talks for the rest of the day.

Later, during the informal procedural information point, in which participants took part in individual capacity, and which was not attended by the Georgian

participants, representatives of the proxy regimes, effectively under the control of the Russian Federation, requested to be included in the talks as “delegations of South Ossetia and Abkhazia”. They also declined to be seated at the same table with the representatives of the legitimate governments of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, who became the victims of ethnic cleansing as a result of Russian aggression in August of 2008, and who had been suffering political persecutions since early 1990s.

Because of the unconstructive position of the representatives of the proxy regimes, endorsed by the Russian Federation, meetings of the working groups on the Security and Stability Issues and IDPs and Refugees, which had been also agreed in advance, did not take place. The Georgian side together with the international mediators waited for the meeting to be held until the last moment, but due to the obstructive position of the representatives of the proxy regimes and the Russian Federation, opportunity to engage in the constructive and meaningful dialogue was missed.

Despite the obvious obstruction of the Geneva talks from the Russian Federation, the Georgian side remains fully committed to the peace process, being convinced that the peaceful dialogue and negotiations are the only way to ensure that the security and stability are established in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and the IDPs and refugees are returned in a safe and dignified manner.

The Georgian side is looking forward to the November 18, when the negotiations in the Geneva format are planned to resume. Georgia remains hopeful that the Russian Federation, which obstructed today’s discussions will behave responsibly in the future and engage in the meaningful and result-oriented dialogue, for which there are all the preconditions in the new Geneva format.

Now let me use this opportunity and update you about the developments in Georgia since the last PC session.

Despite its claims, the Russian side still continues to grossly violate the provisions of the six-point ceasefire agreement, which mandates restoration of the status quo existing prior to the breakout of hostilities.

The Russian occupation forces still keep their positions illegally near the village of Perevi, Sachkhere district and in Akhagori. It needs to be noted that the Georgian-populated district of Akhagori has never been an arena of conflict; as a result of Russian military intervention, however, inhabitants of the district had to leave their homes, those who remained were subjected to

persecution, as for internally displaced persons still have no possibility to return. It should be emphasized that Russian invaders entered Akhagori and illegally occupied Georgian villages after the 6-point ceasefire agreement was already signed on 12 August.

The Russian occupation troops are still exercising illegal control over the territory of Upper Abkhazia, from which the local Georgian population was forcefully expelled.

The Russian side continues to violate Point 3 of the six-point Ceasefire Agreement obstructing artificially provision of humanitarian aid throughout the occupied territories of Georgia. In particular, Russia demands unlawfully that international humanitarian missions enter the territory of Tskhinvali and Abkhazia only from the territory of Russia and not from Georgia.

In flagrant violation of Point 5 of the six-point Ceasefire Agreement, the Russian side still maintains illegally and even increases its military presence on the territories of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region where, according to the official statement of the Russian Defence Ministry itself, up to 8 thousand servicemen are still present. Moreover, the Russian side continues to bar monitors of the European Union and other international organizations from accessing these regions. Furthermore, an agreement was reached with the separatist regimes on the setting up of Russian military bases in both regions, which also directly contradicts the ceasefire agreement.

On 13 October Georgian airspace was violated twice by aircraft of the Russian Federation Air Force.

At 9:57 two air vehicles crossed Georgia's state border with Russia in the Stepantsminda district, penetrated 18 kilometres deep into the territory of Georgia and departed at 10:01 from the direction of the Java district (in the vicinity of the Roki tunnel) in the direction of the Russian Federation.

During a period between 10:29 and 12:27 three military aircraft went to the depth of 45 kilometres into the territory of Georgia (from the direction of Mkinvartsveri and Stepantsminda), flew several times over the districts of Oni, Sachkhere, Java, Tskhinvali and Stepantsminda and afterwards left the territory of Georgia.

Yet another incursion of Russian military aircraft into Georgia's sovereign airspace indicates that Russia continues its aggression against Georgia.

Georgia, along with the international community considers as its priority task to ensure the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons

to the places of their permanent residence. This will only become possible if Russian occupation troops are replaced by genuinely peacekeeping forces, which will allow elimination of the consequences of the mass ethnic cleansing policy conducted by Russian occupation troops in Georgia.

Georgia appeals to the international community and international organizations to take urgent measures to prevent Russian aggression targeted against the State of Georgia.

Thank you.