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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

29 July 2010

**Regarding the results of the July round of the Geneva discussions on the
Trans-Caucasus**

Mr. Chairperson,

The twelfth round of the international discussions on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus was held in Geneva on 27 July. Once again, the delegations of the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Republic of South Ossetia met at the same negotiating table on an equal basis, along with representatives of the United Nations, the European Union and the OSCE.

As before, we consider it useful to invite to Vienna, to such discussions as are taking place today, negotiators from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Sukhum and Tskhinval must be given the opportunity to bring their considerations and concerns before the OSCE community, so long as our Organization is seeking to position itself as an honest “broker” in the South Caucasus, as one of the moderators of the Geneva process. Without taking into account the Abkhaz and South Ossetian views, the Permanent Council will be deprived of the opportunity to obtain an objective picture of the situation and prospects of the Geneva dialogue and, accordingly, the impression that this executive body forms of the real state of affairs in the Trans-Caucasus discussions will be incomplete.

Sadly, it must be acknowledged that, this time as well, the meeting in Geneva did not yield any significant breakthroughs, including on the main question – obtaining from Georgia guarantees regarding the non-use of force against South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia takes the position that the main priority of the international discussions was and remains the elaboration of legally binding agreements on the non-use of force. We view this as the basic purpose of the negotiations. In the absence of progress on resolving this fundamental issue, it is impossible to expect that headway can be made in other areas of work, including humanitarian issues. It is important to bear in mind that the Abkhaz and South Ossetian partners fully share this position.

We must once again draw the Permanent Council’s attention to yet another provocation launched by the Georgian military in the Georgian-South Ossetian border region. In that connection, the choice of timing for the new provocation speaks for itself. Tbilisi

constantly resorts to illegal actions on the eve of or during the meetings of the Geneva discussions. On this occasion, in the early morning of 27 July, in the village of Gvirgvina, Znaur district, Mikhail Kulumbegov, a citizen of South Ossetia, was abducted from his own house. The abductors were dressed in Georgian military uniforms and carried firearms. Threatening physical violence, they drove the South Ossetian to the Georgian checkpoint in the village of Dvani, and then drove around to a string of Georgian border hamlets before finally releasing him. Later that same day, Georgian soldiers fired on a television crew from South Ossetia that had arrived in Gvirgvina to produce a report on the abduction of Mr. Kulumbegov. It was only by a stroke of luck that none of the members of the South Ossetian television crew were hurt – bullets hit the television equipment.

A logical question arises: why does Tbilisi deliberately support tension in the border region, since such provocations do not help to create a constructive atmosphere around the Geneva discussions. Clearly, it would make sense to draw the Georgian side's attention to this during the forthcoming visit to Tbilisi of the "troika" of co-chairmen in the context of preparations for the next round of the Geneva discussions scheduled for 14 October.

Thank you for your attention.