



**Georgian delegation's response to the NGO "Sandidzan" and
"Ossetia Accuses"**

2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

Working Session 10, Freedom of Movement

Warsaw, September 28, 2015

- Thank you Mr. Moderator,
- In exercising my right of reply, I would like to state the following:
- If anyone is to be held responsible for the hostilities during the 1990s or the 2008 Russia-Georgia war and the ensuing human rights violations, it is the Russian Federation. It was once again amply demonstrated during the August 2008 war, when Russia, in complete violation of the principles of international law, invaded the Georgian territories and continues to illegally occupy 20% of its territories up to date.
- I would also like to stress that as opposed to ethnic Georgians, local residents of Ossetian ethnicity can cross the occupation line freely and reside in different parts of Georgia, without the fear of being harassed or prosecuted on ethnic grounds. They freely exercise their political, economic, social and cultural rights, whereas ethnic Georgians residing in the occupied territories are banned to even visit the graveyards of their relatives and family members, let alone visiting churches, receiving education in mother language or other fundamental rights for that matter.
- I would also like to remind the "Sandidzan" representative that, based on the figures of the 2002 census in Georgia, up to forty thousand ethnic ossetians resided on the Government controlled territory of Georgia.

Thank you.