



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Extension of Illegal Detention of Zaza Gakheladze by the Russian Occupation Regime in the Tskhinvali Region, Georgia

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1302nd meeting of the Permanent Council,
11 February 2021

Madame Chairperson,

Ukraine strongly condemns the decision of the Russian occupation regime in Georgian Tskhinvali region on extension of illegal detention of Georgian citizen Zaza Gakheladze for more than 12 years.

We consider Illegal actions by occupation forces of the Russian Federation in Georgia which resulted in wounding and detention of Zaza Gakheladze on administrative boundary line of Georgian Tskhinvali region more than half a year ago followed by recent prolongation of his detention as another evidence of Russia's negligence towards its obligations under the 2008 Ceasefire Agreement.

These provocative steps were taken amidst Russian disingenuous and declarative calls we often hear in the OSCE on importance of cooperation for the sake of international peace and security, adherence to core principles of international law and founding values of our Organization.

Acting in this way for years already together with intensified steps aimed at illegal militarization and de-facto annexation of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali the Russian Federation as a party to the Russian-Georgian conflict undermines existing possibilities to engage actively in relevant efforts aimed to resolve this long-lasting conflict.

Ukraine calls on the Russian Federation to reciprocate Georgian constructive approach to peaceful resolution of the Russian-Georgian conflict, reverse its recognition of the so-called "independence" of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, withdraw its forces from these occupied Georgian regions and provide unhindered access of international humanitarian organizations to the conflict-affected areas. At the same time the EU Monitoring Mission must be provided with possibility to implement functions under its relevant mandate.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Ukraine's strong support to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, madame Chairperson.