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Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**STATEMENT ON GEORGIA
BY AMBASSADOR BARBARA GIBSON
DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
729TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
28 AUGUST 2008**

Canada warmly welcomes the presence in the Permanent Council today of Her Excellency, Madame Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Georgia. We thank her for her Government's perspective, and her views on how the OSCE might be of further assistance to help resolve the current crisis.

Canada is gravely concerned by the Russian Federation's unilateral recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We condemn this action, which violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia, and is contrary to UN Security Council resolutions supported by the Russian Federation, as well as the six-point peace plan brokered by French President Sarkozy. Furthermore, this action runs counter to the principles of peaceful conflict resolution reflected in the OSCE Charter for European Security and the Helsinki Final Act, and the express and firm commitment all participating States, made most recently at the Ljubljana Ministerial Council, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Canada notes that the Russian Federation's use of military force in Georgia is in violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations, and its continued occupation of parts of Georgia undermines the Sarkozy peace plan which President Medvedev signed on 16 August 2008. We call upon the Russian Federation to fulfill immediately its international obligations, to withdraw its troops to the pre-August 7 lines, and to implement fully the Sarkozy six-point peace plan. Canada calls upon the Russian Federation to reconsider its actions to date, to commit itself to the rule of law and to cooperate fully with the international community in resolving the crisis in Georgia in a peaceful manner. Canada strongly reasserts our strong and continued support for Georgia's sovereignty, within its internationally recognized borders, and underlines our respect and support for the democratically elected and legitimate government of Georgia.

Canada remains concerned at the access challenges for aid workers to conduct needs assessments and assist those who remained in the conflict areas. We call upon all parties to ensure that the civilian population has the assistance it needs and ensure access for international relief efforts.

Canada also strongly urges the Russian Federation to allow OSCE Monitors the ability to operate freely throughout South Ossetia and ask that the Russian Federation agree to the rapid deployment of the remaining 80 OSCE Monitors to the Mission in Georgia

under the current mandate, until a new Permanent Council Decision can be agreed to, for a new mandate for the observers.