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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1264th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

23 April 2020

**In response to the statement by the representative of Georgia**

Mr. Chairperson,

In the light of the subject raised by the distinguished representative of Georgia, we urge our colleagues to familiarize themselves with the comments made in that regard on 20 April by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Ossetia. We shall quote the key points.

“The Border Guard Service of the Republic of South Ossetia did in fact erect border signs near the South Ossetian village of Khumta along the State border between South Ossetia and Georgia. The border guards are going about their work exclusively on South Ossetian territory, without even setting a foot on Georgian soil.”

The resumption of this work was not sprung on the Georgian authorities as a surprise. The matter had been discussed beforehand via the relevant hotline.

We are aware of a communiqué on this subject by the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on Security and Stability in the Trans-Caucasus. We do not share their interpretation of the situation. Setting up border infrastructure is unlikely to make the atmosphere in the region more tense, let alone infringe on the rights of the local population. It is a matter of improving border management, with the aim of preventing any incidents arising from people’s lack of awareness of where exactly the border runs. It is quite clear that this task has become even more relevant given the current epidemiological conditions.

We should like to recall once again the proposal by the authorities in Tskhinval to their Georgian neighbours regarding the execution of measures to demarcate the border under agreed conditions. For our part, we are ready to assist as an intermediary in such dialogue.

One further point. It is sincerely regrettable that the Georgian authorities once again preferred to embark on a new round of distinctly Russophobic propaganda instead of on painstaking joint work with their South Ossetian colleagues, within the existing negotiation formats, to overcome the current contentious issues. This meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council has also been misused to that end. Such a line of

conduct will, of course, not go unnoticed in Russia and will certainly not help to normalize our bilateral relations.

Thank you for your attention.