



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

STATEMENT

**Delivered at the 750th Meeting of the
Permanent Council**
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Madam Chairperson,

Over the past several months, the Georgian delegation has been bringing to your attention alarming developments in the occupied regions of Georgia, as well as in the territories adjacent to them. Yesterday, yet another incident took place, when a Russian armoured personnel vehicle and up to 50 military personnel were deployed at the village of Kvemo Nikozi, which is situated in the Georgian-controlled territory. They blocked access to the Georgian police post and started constructing fortifications. After arrival of the EU and OSCE observers at the spot, the Russian occupiers returned to the territory within the administrative boundary of the Tskhinvali region.

All serious incidents have been documented and confirmed by the OSCE and EU observers. Neither the facts themselves, nor their alarming nature are open to dispute. All of us around this table, except for one delegation, share these concerns and concur with each other in our assessments.

Madam Chairperson,

I believe it is high time to start assessing and analysing the situation in a comprehensive manner, with the aim of jointly drawing conclusions and finding possible solutions for proceeding further. First of all, it is of the utmost importance to identify the core outstanding issues in respect of which the Russian Federation is at odds with the international community.

-Russia is in substantial breach of the 12 August ceasefire agreement, as it has not withdrawn its troops to the positions held prior to the outbreak of hostilities. The international community has been continuing to call on Russia to implement the provisions of the agreement, whereas Russia continues to claim that it is in full compliance with the agreement.

-Russia is continuing its significant military buildup and a decision has subsequently been taken by the Kremlin to establish military bases in the occupied territories. The international community has clearly assessed this adventure as a step which will jeopardize stability and security in the region and will increase tensions, whereas Russia claims that it will increase stability in the region. This is happening not only against the will of the international community, but against the will of the majority of the local Abkhazians and Ossetians, who increasingly view the Russian military presence as a threat to their survival.

-Russia opposes the international presence and activities in Georgia. The international community has constantly been calling for more and not less presence, whereas

Russia has been doing its best to get rid of the presence. EUMM observers and OSCE MMOs are not allowed to enter the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, Georgia, unless they are kidnapped and forcefully dragged over by the militias of the Russian proxy regime. Furthermore, Russia has showed its rigid unwillingness to reciprocate the continued efforts of the international community to bring about a constructive dialogue aimed at finding a solution for increased OSCE activities in Georgia. Russia's position has recently become even more rigid.

-The international community has been advocating peace and stability in Georgia, whereas Russia condones the widespread provocations and shootings which take place from the occupied territories. Numerous facts regarding killings, injuries, robbery, plundering, kidnappings, violations of Georgian airspace and other criminal activities are well documented in the EUMM and OSCE Mission's reports of recent months, whereas Russia claims that these reports are biased, have not been corroborated and do not reflect reality.

-There has been a continued call on Russia by the international community to assume responsibility for the regions where its troops continue to be deployed and for the actions of its proxy militias. These calls have been largely ignored by Russia. Instead, attempts are being made to blame the Georgian police for provocations and kidnappings.

-Russia opposes the return of internally displaced persons to their places of residence and at the same time condones the worsening of the humanitarian situation in the occupied regions, whereas the international community is calling for increased humanitarian aid in light of the looming humanitarian disaster. As a result, humanitarian aid is not allowed into the occupied regions.

Madam Chairperson,

Furthermore, I want to take this opportunity once again to raise the issue of a steadily worsening situation in the Northern Caucasus, where shootings; kidnappings; shoot-outs between various guerilla groups, militias and Russian forces; special operations against or by the so-called "boeviks"; killings of well-known representatives of local communities, including journalists; and massive suppressions of human rights, such as the freedom of speech, have become daily occurrences. These regions of Russia – Chechnya, Ingushetia, Daghestan, and Kabardino/Balkaria – border on Georgia, and we are seriously concerned about the developments there.

Thank You.