



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

S T A T E M E N T

**Delivered at the 757th Meeting of the
Permanent Council
2 April 2009**

Madam Chairperson,

Yet another terrorist act occurred on the territory of Georgia on March 29. One policeman was killed and nine were wounded in two serial improvised device attacks in the village of Dvani of Kareli district, a territory, which is adjacent to the Tskhinvali region. Relevant OSCE Spot report describes the matter in full detail and assesses the situation in adjacent areas as extremely volatile. Since October 2008, 14 Georgian citizens, including 12 policemen, have been killed and several dozens injured in the areas adjacent to the occupied territories.

As stated by the Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission Mr. Hansjorg Haber this attack is a totally unacceptable breach of the August 12 six-point ceasefire agreement. All responsibility for such terrorist and subversive act rests with Russia, which is in full effective control of Georgia's occupied territories. By militarizing occupied regions through introducing around ten thousand troops and establishing four military bases, by installing puppet regimes, who run local affairs only from the instructions from Moscow and by tolerating the acts of terrorism, ethnic cleansing and human rights violations, Russia unfortunately has become a co-perpetrator of these heinous crimes.

March 29 terrorist attack once again demonstrates the urgent need to start unimpeded implementation of the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, which was agreed during the Geneva talks on February 19. We need as soon as possible to start the implementation of this mechanism with relation to Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region simultaneously. Only through such depoliticized exercise, which aims at preventing deterioration of situation on the local level we can save lives of innocent people.

Madam Chairperson,

Against this background, I would like to raise the issue of the future of the OSCE Mission to Georgia. Discussions so far here in Vienna, unfortunately, have not yet yielded positive outcomes.

Let us recall latest developments in this regard. Since 22nd December of the last year, when Russia vetoed the decision on the extension of the Mandate for the OSCE Mission in Georgia, the Greek Chairmanship has presented a number of proposals aimed at de-politicizing the debate, trying to accommodate interests of Georgia and Russia through a creative compromised solution and establishing not less but more OSCE presence on the ground.

We are all aware that certain delegations present in this room have prudently taken part in the exercise proposed by the Greek Chairmanship, trying to find a mutually acceptable solution and maintain OSCE presence in Georgia. Meanwhile, since December of the last year, Russia has not only refrained from taking part in the informal consultations in good faith, but simply refused to participate in the negotiations at all, citing various incomprehensible arguments.

This Monday we witnessed the same irresponsible approach once again, when Russia once again defied the opportunity to participate in the consultations in good faith. There has been no meaningful and adequate proposal from the Russian side, something that we all have waited for impatiently over last few months, but something that has been never materialized by Russia.

Position which has been taken by the Russian Federation so far can only be interpreted as a clear evidence of Russia's objective to procrastinate the process and decrease the international presence in Georgia to the minimum. Nevertheless, let me be very clear - I still would very much like to preserve a last hope that there is still a chance for a solution of this outstanding issue.

Madam Chairperson,

We all agree that we need to find ways to move forward from the currently existing standstill. Over the last few months informal talks among different participating states have not brought desirable results for the reasons described above. I also believe that now is a high time in the discussions, when the negotiations should move to the next stage. All OSCE participating states should be involved in the discussions in determining the future of our common organization. An urgent, transparent and inclusive discussion on the future OSCE presence in Georgia must be an adequate response to the current stalemate.

Thank you.