



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Geneva International Discussions

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry R. Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 19, 2017

At the 41st round of the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia October 10-11, the United States expressed its continued objection to the closure of two controlled crossing points along the Abkhaz Administrative Boundary Line (ABL), and the continued placement of physical barriers and demarcation signs along both the Abkhaz and South Ossetia ABLs, in violation of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United States stressed that these actions restrict freedom of movement and damage the livelihoods of local residents.

The United States stated its objection to the demolition of hundreds of Georgian homes in the Eredvi village in South Ossetia, noting that Georgians have a right to return to their homes. The United States also expressed its continued concern with the Abkhaz decision to suspend prosecution of a suspect in the killing of Georgian citizen Giga Otkhozoria. Decisions such as these threaten to undermine the trust built up through the resumption of the Incident Prevention Response Mechanisms and undermine the Geneva International Discussions (GID) as a whole.

The United States encouraged the parties to continue constructive negotiations aimed at achieving a mutually agreeable statement on the non-use of force during the next round. The United States also called on the parties to work together to identify comprehensive solutions to issues affecting the lives of residents on both sides of the ABL, including the potential threat of certain insect species to agricultural harvests.

The United States regrets that the two working groups were not able to complete discussion of their agendas, including a discussion of internally displaced persons, because of a walk-out in Working Group II. The United States urges participants to look for practical steps forward to resolve humanitarian issues, including the core issues of internally displaced persons, during upcoming rounds of negotiations.

The United States calls on the Russian Federation, as a party to the conflict, to abide by the 2008 ceasefire agreement and to respect international law and its international commitments. The United States fully supports Georgia's territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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