



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Statement on the 24th Round of the Geneva Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 4, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States was pleased to participate in the 24th round of the Geneva International Discussions on June 25 and 26. During the discussions, the United States joined the Co-Chairs and the Georgian participants in expressing deep concern over the accelerated installation of physical barriers on the administrative boundary lines (ABLs). As we noted during the talks, such “borderization” is inconsistent with Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and is therefore contrary to customary international law, as well as the commitments made by the Russian Federation in the August 12, 2008, six-point ceasefire agreement.

We regret that some participants chose to cut short their participation in Working Group II, ending the discussion on important humanitarian issues and challenging an agreed format that has endured for almost five years. The United States continues to call on all sides to focus the discussions on substance rather than format in order to make tangible improvements to the lives of those living in the conflict-affected communities.

The United States remains committed to finding a long-term, peaceful solution to the conflict in Georgia, and reiterates its strong support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We remain convinced that the OSCE and other international actors can play a valuable role in resolving problems, providing humanitarian assistance, and monitoring human rights and humanitarian conditions. In this regard, unhindered access to the whole of Georgia is essential.

We appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Geneva Co-Chairs to facilitate progress towards these goals, and reiterate our support for the vital work of the European Union Monitoring Mission in promoting transparency and stability along the ABLs with the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions. We continue to value the Geneva International Discussions and their role in addressing issues of stability and security, human rights and humanitarian concerns, and the peaceful resolution of the conflict in Georgia, and look forward to working constructively on this agenda in the coming months.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman