



**Statement as delivered by the delegation of Georgia at the  
2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
Working Session 11, Humanitarian issues and other commitments:  
combating trafficking in human beings, refugees and displaced persons,  
persons at risk of displacement  
Warsaw, September 18, 2017**

Georgia aligns itself to the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the EU and its member states and in addition, I would like to make national remarks.

I would like to update the distinguished colleagues on the situation of IDPs and alarming developments in the occupied territories of Georgia.

Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of IDPs and refugees expelled from Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia as a result of Russia's aggression against Georgia, the ongoing occupation of its territories and a several waves of ethnic cleansing are still unable to return to their homes in safety and dignity.

Humanitarian and human rights situation has extremely deteriorated due to the recent developments. Restriction of freedom of movement, prohibition of education in native language for the ethnic Georgians, the practice of illegal detentions along the occupation line and kidnapping continue.

The occupation regime in Sokhumi closed 4 so-called crossing points from the existing 6 points. This step further restricts freedom of movement of the local population and aggravates the situation on the ground. It has a very negative impact on vulnerable groups of population, in particular: people in need of medical care and/or medical evacuation; elderly; women with children; families divided by the occupation line; as well as schoolchildren, who go to school on the territory controlled by the GoG to get the education in native language.

We are particularly concerned with intensified discrimination of ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia region.

Just recently, the occupation regime in Sokhumi has started aggressive enforcement of issuance of "residence permits" in the Gali district, launching the implementation of the so-called "law on foreign citizens". On the other hand, they are proposed to obtain the so-called Abkhazian passports on the condition that they deny the Georgian citizenship. It means that they are forced to become the stateless persons as the so-called "Abkhazian passports" are null and void, according to the international law.

The above regulations envisage ethnically targeted violence and provide for additional restrictions for residence, work, and exercising property rights by ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia region. This entire process can become a ground for another wave of ethnic cleansing. In this

way, Moscow successfully manages to impede confidence building between war-torn communities and to succeed on russification of entire Abkhazia region.

Besides, ethnic Georgians residing in Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchire districts are forced to change their surnames and nationality into Abkhazian ones.

The severe security and human rights situation on the ground once again underlines the urgent need of international monitoring missions as well as establishing international security arrangements in both occupied regions of Georgia.

We urge the international community to continue to push the Russian Federation to provide unrestricted access to the occupied regions of Georgia.

Thank you.