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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 by Ambassador Victor Dolidze at the 732<sup>nd</sup> Permanent Council Meeting  
Vienna 11 September, 2008*

Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

Let me brief you about the developments in Georgia since last Thursday. As you know President Sarkozy visited Moscow and Tbilisi on Monday in a continued effort to find a solution to the Georgian-Russian conflict. I want to once again express our sincere gratitude to the French Presidency for its tireless efforts to ensure that the cease-fire agreement is observed and peace and security is established in Georgia.

As a result of the mediation by the Presidency of the EU, together with the President of the European Commission and High Representative on the Common Foreign and Security Policy, concrete steps to be taken for the implementation of the six-point cease-fire agreement were outlined.

Based on the aforesaid Agreement, Russian troops should leave Poti, Senaki and their adjacent territories prior to 15 September; complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia, except from the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia, should take place by 10 October 2008.

The EU-initiated negotiations defined an area of deployment of international observers - throughout the entire territory of Georgia, at the first stage - on the territory adjacent to the conflict regions and subsequently - in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia as well. International observers will carry out their mandate under the aegis of UN, OSCE and the European Union. At least 200 EU observers will be deployed at the first stage but the number will subsequently increase, based on a bilateral agreement between EU and Georgia. Deployment of international observers should take place no later than 1 October.

Intensive efforts are currently made towards the development of international mechanisms that will ensure the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (from 1992 to date) to the places of their residence on the territories of Abkhazia and the former autonomous region of South Ossetia. We hope that the Russian Federation will play constructive role in this process and will support the idea of resettling those people, who were evicted from their homes as a result of Russian bombings, aggression and acts of ethnic cleansing.

Also, according with the agreement, on October 15, 2008 Geneva will host an international conference on regional security and stability that will highlight a broad spectrum of related issues. Georgia is ready to get engaged in this process, but we would like to see the Russian Federation fully implementing its commitments before these talks are launched.

An international forum in Tbilisi is scheduled presumably for the end of October 2008. This event will involve high-level representatives of the United States and EU member countries, international organizations and financial institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

Against this background it should be noted that the Russian continues to violate cease-fire agreement. Russian airplane once again violated Georgian airspace on August 9. Yesterday morning shots were fired at a Georgian police post from the direction of a Russian checkpoint near the entrance to the village of Karaleti, Gori district. Georgian policeman Kakha Tsochniashvili was shot in the head, and he died shortly afterwards in hospital. We have to note that during this incident Georgian side did not return fire. During last days Russian Federation prepared the agreement with the criminal regimes of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and Abkhazia regarding the provision of their security, which aims at having Russian troops in the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia. This is an outright violation of the six-point cease-fire agreement, which provides for the withdrawal of all Russian forces to the positions held prior to the outbreak of the hostilities.

All the aforementioned provide yet another proof that the Russian side continues to grossly violate the six-point ceasefire document. The Russian Federation's armed forces not only do not comply with the political commitments undertaken by their President before the European Union and Georgia but go as far as to completely disregard them thus even causing the deaths of innocent people. Russian Federation continues to openly challenge the Euro-Atlantic community and the whole civilized world. *Pacta Sunt Servanda*. Agreements must be observed. This is a cornerstone of the international law, and it has to be observed by all responsible members of the international community including the Russian Federation, if it pretends to be part of the civilized world.

Mr. Chairman,

Decision by the Russian Federation to establish diplomatic ties with Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia needs to be deplored as a further provocation, which in no case aims at resolving the existing crisis in the region. It is even more deplorable, when such decision is commented by the Minister Lavrov as being good for everyone in the region, including Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

We want to particularly denounce the cynicism with which the Russian Federation continues to violate the 6 point of the cease-fire agreement. Despite the fact that the point three of the agreement obliges the Russian Federation to ensure free provision of humanitarian aid, they continue to bar international humanitarian agencies from entering the areas suffered as a result of Russian aggression. Yesterday, in an unprecedented move, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia acknowledged that their forces indeed barred the (quote) humanitarian mission of the United Nations (unquote) from passing the village of Karaleti. This village, my dear colleagues, is located outside of the conflict zone, outside of the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia, and it is worryingly cynical that the armed forces of the Russian Federation not only illegally occupy that village currently, but shoot from there at Georgian policemen and do not allow humanitarian aid into Georgian and Ossetian villages. Such actions need to be denounced by all the responsible members of international community.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to ask a question to my Russian colleague. Before yesterday, Russian Federation was claiming that the so-called buffer zones, which we all know are completely illegitimate, were established in accordance with the notorious 1999 JCC Protocol. You all know our arguments about the absurdity of such claims. Nevertheless, let me ask you, Dear Ambassador, yesterday your Minister in a press-conference stated that these so-called buffer zones are established by the six-point ceasefire agreement and not any other agreements. Can you please show us, where exactly in the ceasefire agreement is it stated that Russian forces can stay outside of the conflict zone, in the depth of Georgian territories, such as Karaleti, Ali, Senaki or Poti? I would very much appreciate your answer.

I understand that Russian Federation finds itself in a very tough situation, as it is running out of the arguments to justify their utterly illegal and incomprehensible military presence in Georgia. But I am even more surprised to see this illogical and incomprehensible position with respect to the deployment of the additional 80 monitors.

Russian delegation here in Vienna keeps telling us that the Russian Federation is doing its best to persuade South Ossetia's leadership to let OSCE monitors into the Tskhinvali Region. We have also heard here at the negotiations from the Russian Ambassador that it cannot be overruled that the number of the MMOs in Tskhinvali might increase as a result of the negotiations. At the same time, yesterday Minister Lavrov is making a statement, where he overrules the presence of the OSCE monitors inside South Ossetia. Can we please know - what is the position of the Russian Federation regarding this issue? Since we are at the end stage of the negotiations, and only the issue of the area of responsibility of the MMOs remains unresolved, it would be useful, if Russia could clarify its positions regarding the presence of the OSCE MMOs in and around South Ossetia.

Mr. Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

We are once again witnessing the manipulation of the facts from the Russian Federation, as well as continued attempts to stall negotiations over the issues, which are extremely important and to avoid responsibility of implementing its international commitments. We need to stand strong and united, and we need to make sure that no such attempts can be tolerated in the future. With such position, Russian Federation is jeopardizing not only the stability and security in the OSCE area, but is also undermining the credibility and future of this organization.

Mr. Chairman,

In the end allow me to close with the hope that Russian Federation will at last start complying with the cease-fire agreement and will withdraw all its occupation forces from the entire territory of Georgia.

Thank you