



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

**Statement regarding the so-called "presidential elections" held in  
Abkhazia, Georgia**

As delivered by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE,

Ambassador Paata Gaprindashvili

at the 878<sup>th</sup> session of the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, September 1, 2011

Mr Chairman,

Dear Colleagues,

On August 26, 2011 the Russian occupation forces and its proxy regime in Sokhumi conducted another cynical act of the pseudo-democratic policy - the so-called "presidential elections". Moscow also brought to Abkhazia several dozen "international observers" in yet another attempt to legitimize the outcome of the illegal "elections", and thus the ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of people.

There cannot be any justification whatsoever for such a mockery of the international law. No decision on the future of Abkhazia can be legitimate as long as up to half million forcibly displaced persons, which amounts to ¾ of the original population of the region, are today in exile and deprived of the right to participate in the decision-making process. They must be part to any solution.

By signing the OSCE Summit Declarations in Budapest, Lisbon and Istanbul the participating States, including Russia, strongly condemned "ethnic cleansing" which took place in Georgia:

- In Budapest the participating States, quote: "expressed their deep concern over "ethnic cleansing", the massive expulsion of people, predominantly Georgian, from their living areas and the deaths of large numbers of innocent civilians."
- In Lisbon the participating states condemned, and I quote:" the "ethnic cleansing" resulting in mass destruction and forcible expulsion of predominantly Georgian population in Abkhazia. Destructive acts of separatists, including obstruction of the return of refugees and displaced persons and the decision to hold elections in Abkhazia and in the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, undermine the positive efforts undertaken to promote political settlement of these conflicts."
- In Istanbul participating States again strongly condemned, quote: "the "ethnic cleansing" resulting in mass destruction and forcible expulsion of predominantly Georgian population in Abkhazia, Georgia." Furthermore, the Istanbul Summit declaration recommended to despatch a fact-finding mission to assess, *inter alia*, reported cases of continued "ethnic cleansing" in Gali district of Abkhazia, Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

Crimes committed by occupants and their puppet regime have fundamentally distorted the demographics of Abkhazia, Georgia, thus preventing IDP's and refugees of Georgian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Greek, Azerbaijani, Estonian and other ethnic origin to return to their homes. Moreover, the human rights of the remaining residents are violated on a daily basis by the occupation regime. International observers are not allowed to the occupied region to report on the situation there.

True progress in the Abkhazian region of Georgia demands arrangements that incorporate all rightful residents into the political process. One critical step is to establish security guarantees involving international police. This would enable the safe return of forcibly displaced people and refugees. Sooner Moscow understands this and starts fulfilling its internationally undertaken commitments, better for the future of Russia herself.

Thank You.