



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Efforts to Establish Fences Along the Administrative Boundary Line for the South Ossetia Region of Georgia, As Well As Into Tbilisi-Administered Territory

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 30, 2013

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States is deeply concerned about repeated efforts to establish fences along the administrative boundary line (ABL) for the South Ossetia region of Georgia, as well as, according to new reports, several hundred meters into undisputed Tbilisi-administered territory near the villages of Ditsi and Dvani. Such measures are in violation of international law and practice, and run contrary to the 2008 ceasefire agreement. Moreover, they build barriers rather than bridges, negatively affect the livelihoods of residents in the conflict-affected areas, and damage trust and confidence among people in the area.

The Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Andrii Deshchytsia, paid a visit to the villages of Zardiantkari and Didi Kurvaleti on the ABL after the last meeting of the Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) on 16 April. His visit itself and his access to the ABL were positive developments that should not be reversed. The United States fully supports the efforts of the Chairperson's Personal Representative to build confidence and address humanitarian needs.

The United States remains committed to finding a long-term, peaceful resolution to the conflict in Georgia. We hope that a frank and substantive conversation about this issue can take place during the next round of the IPRM on 30 May, and during the Geneva Discussions scheduled for 25 and 26 June 2013.

The regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are integral parts of Georgia. We reiterate our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. In this regard, freedom of movement and unhindered access to the whole of Georgia are essential.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.