



**Statement by the delegation of Georgia
At the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, September 19-30, 2016**

**Working session VII: Humanitarian issues and other commitments, including
address by the OSCE Special Representative/Coordinator for Combatting
Trafficking in Human Beings**

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

We too would like to thank the distinguished speakers for their important presentations.

While Georgia aligned itself with statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its member States, allow me to make our national statement and voice our concerns on two pressing humanitarian issues in my country, namely the issue of IDPs and refugees and the situation of human rights in Georgia's occupied regions.

Distinguished delegates,

Since the early 1990s and following the August 2008 Russia-Georgia war, more than 400 000 residents of Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali/South Ossetia were forced to flee their homes.

The Government of Georgia spares no effort to alleviate the burdens of IDPs and create decent living conditions for them, without prejudice to their right to return. To that end, in 2015, Georgia government adopted the IDP Livelihood Action Plan for 2016-2017. The main objective of the document is to improve their livelihood through promotion of vocational education, employment opportunities, development of agricultural cooperatives, provision of small grants, etc.

Georgia's efforts to strengthen the international focus on the issue of IDPs and refugees include, but are not limited to an annual initiation of the UNGA Resolution on the "Status of

the Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia and the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia”, with an increasing number of supporting states each year. The resolution is of a purely humanitarian nature and is based on UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The Resolution condemns the demographic changes made by the occupying power, reiterates the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees, regardless of ethnicity, to a safe and dignified return to their places of origin, and calls for fully respecting and protecting their property rights.

Despite our efforts, regrettably, the core of this humanitarian problem remains unresolved, as the IDPs and refugees continue to be denied of the right to go back to the places of their origin in safety and with dignity. In this context, no progress has been registered within the second working group of the Geneva International Discussions, which addresses humanitarian issues, including the issue of return of IDP and refugees.

Mr. Moderator,

I would also like to draw your attention to the existing grave humanitarian and security situation in the occupied regions of Georgia. The severity of the situation has been once again exposed by brutal murder of Giga Otkhozoria, a 30-year old resident of Gali district in May this year, by the so called “border guards” deployed along the occupation line. Full responsibility for this criminal act lies with the Russian Federation, the power exercising effective control over the region. We reiterate the need to detain the perpetrator of this criminal act to avoid provocation.

Restriction of the freedom of movement, prohibition of education in native language, systematic violation of property rights is a dire reality faced by people residing in these regions. People along the occupation line are arbitrarily detained for so the called “illegal border crossing” on a daily basis. Installation of razor and barbed wire fences as well as other artificial obstacles along the occupation lines by the Russian occupation forces further aggravates the already grave humanitarian situation on the ground.

Moreover, adoption of the discriminatory regulations for ethnic Georgians living in the occupied regions is a cause of our profound concern, as they could become the ground for new wave of ethnic cleansing. To that end, it is evident that the so called “law on legal status of foreign citizens in Abkhazia” and “law on entry and exit from Abkhazia” and a similar so called “law” in Tskhinvali, first and foremost, target the ethnic Georgians who have courageously remained in these regions.

Mr. Moderator,

The abovementioned once again demonstrates the need for establishment of effective international mechanisms for monitoring the security and human rights situation in

Georgia's occupied regions. The OSCE and its institutions must play a greater role towards that end.

We call upon the international community to enhance its focus on the current situation in Georgia's occupied territories, give adequate assessment to and undertake effective efforts to avert Russia's illegal actions.

Thank you.