



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **Response to the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia**

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel Baer  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 6, 2014

I warmly welcome the three Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia – EU Special Representative Herbert Salber, UN Special Representative Antti Turunen, and the OSCE Chairmanship’s Special Representative Angelo Gnädiger. Thank you for your comprehensive reports.

The United States firmly believes that the Geneva International Discussions are critical to enhancing security, stability, and respect for human rights in Georgia. We remain convinced that through the Geneva format, the OSCE, the EU, and the UN play an invaluable role in monitoring the security situation, human rights, and humanitarian conditions in the conflict-affected regions. We believe that the EU, the UN, and the OSCE possess the expertise needed to tackle the challenges inherent in the process. We thank the Co-Chairs for their efforts to move negotiations forward and look forward to continued fruitful cooperation among the three organizations.

We are concerned that the so-called “draft treaty” between Russia and the Georgian region of Abkhazia - and the likely treaty between Russia and the Georgian region of South Ossetia - runs counter to the work in Geneva. We stress once more that the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are integral parts of Georgia and reiterate our strong support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We repeat the need for the return of a meaningful OSCE presence to Georgia.

The Geneva International Discussions remain a critical forum for ensuring international organizations’ access to all regions of Georgia and for improving the security and humanitarian conditions on the ground. We urge all participants to work constructively and creatively to support the discussions. The United States joined the twenty-ninth round of the Discussions on October 7 and 8. We were pleased with the participants’ readiness to work with the Co-Chairs on key issues. Future discussions should lead to progress on reversing “borderization,” by removing restrictions on freedom of movement along the Administrative Boundary Lines, and concluding a non-use of force agreement between Georgia and Russia. We called on the de facto authorities in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia to protect the human rights of all residents. We are hopeful that participants will build on the constructive approach taken in discussions on humanitarian issues.

We join the Co-Chairs in calling for a timely resumption of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Gali as a means of improving communication and mitigating tensions on the Administrative Boundary Lines for the Abkhazia region, and we again note

that the surest way to increase trust between the parties and improve the lives of people on the ground would be to grant access across the boundary line for all people, humanitarian organizations, and the EU Monitoring Mission. The Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism is a valuable instrument and shows what the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism could be if it were implemented.

The United States will continue to engage on these issues with the support of the participants and the Co-Chairs. We look forward to the thirtieth round of the Geneva International Discussions on December 9 and 10.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.