

Delegation of Georgia
2006 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, October 2-13, 2006

Statement submitted at the Working Session #14
(October 11, 2006)

Tolerance and non-discrimination II

Mr. Moderator,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this distinguished gathering because the issues under discussion are of utmost importance for all of us. The OSCE participating States through numerous OSCE documents committed themselves to combat aggressive nationalism, chauvinism, xenophobia, different forms of ethnic-cleansing. Unfortunately, these phenomena still manifest themselves in some OSCE areas. Recent steps of Russian officials directed against ethnic Georgians currently residing in Russia can serve as the vivid example of it.

This is no more the question of bilateral relations; This is the problem of the whole OSCE community.

Recent detention of the Russian military officers, on the basis of the documented evidences of espionage, was used by the Russian Federation as a pretext to further strengthen political, economic and military pressure on Georgia.

The question is - why?

Because, Georgia has irreversibly chosen the path of democratic transformation in pursuing independent foreign and security policy. This means further development of democratic institutions, protecting equality and freedoms of all citizens of Georgia, including the Abkhazs, Ossetians and other ethnic minorities, in their strive for better future and prosperity.

Our ultimate goal is to transform Georgia into a truly European country, so that we can become part of Europe whole and free.

Recent political events have once again demonstrated that Russia does not tolerate the democratic processes in Georgia and uses the old, worn-out Soviet tactics of intimidation and fear against us.

What is happening today from the part of Russia is the punishment of our citizens for their choice of freedom and democracy.

The pressure from Russia has enormously increased after the Rose Revolution when the democratic transformation of Georgia took a real shape and hence the prospects of its integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations became visible.

Over past years we have seen Russia stepping up its support for the separatist regimes in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Remaining Georgian residents there are under constant terror, fear and humiliation, resulting in killings, kidnappings and others facts of human rights violations. These acts have taken place under direct involvement and encouragement from the Russian peacekeepers.

The Russian Federation banned almost all imported Georgian agricultural products, including wines and mineral waters. This was followed by closing the only legal land checkpoint on the Georgian-Russian state border.

So, as I mentioned earlier, the case of detained Russian intelligence officers was just the pretext for Russia.

Otherwise it is difficult to understand why after the Georgian government showed its good will and handed over the detained officers to the OSCE, thanks to the involvement of OSCE Chairman-in-Office Minister Karel De Gucht, the Russian government decided to cut air, sea, land and railway links as well as to stop postal communication and ban money-transfers from Russia to Georgia.

Unfortunately, this is not the only discriminating policy Russia wants to utilize. All relative and factual information would be available for the distinguished delegations but now let me mention some of them:

The Russian government decided to take the most extreme approach and deport citizens of Georgia from Russia. Number of Georgian nationals have already been detained and deported, others are expecting deportation.

Numerous facts of forcible separation of minors from their parents, separation of families have taken place. Many Georgian nationals residing in Russia are under constant fear.

On October 5th, Ministry on Interior of the Russian Federation sent official request to principals of all secondary schools of the Russian Federation to hand over to local police stations lists with the names of all children of Georgian origin studying at their schools. These lists are to be used by Russian police for setting up special control procedures over the Georgian children as well as in order to trace their parents.

Earlier on October 4th, Georgian students and teachers were suspended from the schools owned by the Russian militaries in Georgia. The Georgian children were interrupted during a regular class session and were asked to leave.

Many Georgian entrepreneurs, operating legal businesses in Russia, are under constant pressure from Russian authorities and are seriously considering selling their financial assets, in order to escape the injustice and discrimination.

There are ever mounting threatening statements coming from the Russian government. What is their next step? Probably “pogroms” against Georgians currently residing in Russia?

What we see is the outbreak of state sponsored xenophobia in Russia that targets citizens of Georgian origin.

What we have there is the mass violations of human rights.

What we are witnessing is the one of the forms of ethnic-cleansing.

We believe these acts of Russian side can not be left unaddressed by the OSCE, because they run against the very spirit of this organization. There is no place in today’s world for such actions and we believe that the international community should declare a policy of zero tolerance towards the policy of bigotry and prejudice.

We are grateful for those Russian citizens who stood up against expression of intolerance and xenophobia in Russia, because they realize very well - this policy can lead to the unpredictable developments in their multiethnic and multinational state.

After all, peace and tolerance does not come easy and that is why we all have to try to defend and secure them.

We have been taught in a blatant way that the road of democracy is difficult, but nevertheless Georgia proved to be a success story and Georgian people will not let this success story to fail.

NON - PAPER

Current Georgia-Russia relations

Georgia has irreversibly chosen the path of democratic transformation in pursuing independent foreign and security policies. This means further development of democratic institutions, protecting equality and freedoms of all citizens of Georgia, including the Abkhaz, Ossetians and other ethnic minorities, in their strive for better future and prosperity.

We are consolidating our efforts to become a better democracy, which operates based on the principles of equality, liberty and freedom for all. We wish to co-exist peacefully with neighbors and with our efforts advance the cause of democracy in the region and beyond.

Our ultimate goal is to transform Georgia into a truly European country, so that we can become part of Europe whole and free.

Recent political events have once again demonstrated that Russia does not tolerate the democratic processes in Georgia and the freedom of its citizens and uses the old, worn-out Soviet tactics of intimidation and fear against us.

What is happening today in Georgia is the punishment of our citizens for their choice for freedom and democracy.

The pressure from Russia has enormously increased after the Rose Revolution when the democratic transformation of Georgia took a real shape and hence the prospects of its integration into the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations became visible.

Over past years we have seen the Russian Federation stepping up its support for the separatist regimes in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Few remaining Georgian residents are under constant terror, fear and humiliation, resulting in killings, kidnappings and others facts of human rights violations.

These acts have taken place under direct involvement and encouragement from the Russian Peacekeepers.

It is even more disturbing that the vast majority of the Russian political establishment agrees and supports the current Russian leadership on its quest to undermine Georgia's statehood and annex its regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Russian Federation continued with its bullying tactics and banned almost all imported Georgian agricultural products, including wines and mineral waters on its market. This was followed by closing the only legal land checkpoint on the Georgian-Russian state border.

Recent detention of the Russian military officers, based on the documented audio and video evidence indicating that they have conducted acts of espionage, was used by the Russian Federation as a pretext to further strengthen political, economic and military pressure over Georgia.

Belligerent statements from Russian political elite against Georgia, including President Putin's accusations against Georgia of state sponsored terrorism and hostage taking, was backed up with mounting forces near the Georgian-Russian border and the military exercises in close proximity (only 0.7 nautical miles away) of Georgia's territorial waters.

These actions cause extreme concern for us as this is a clear threat of use of force against Georgia.

As you are aware, the Georgian government showed its goodwill and handed over the detained officers to the OSCE, thanks to the involvement of OSCE Chairman-in-Office Minister Karel De Gucht.

It should be emphasized that Minister De Gucht asked the officers if they were mistreated or if they wanted to raise any issues regarding their detention? All the officers replied "no." In addition, before departure officers were thoroughly checked by the Russian doctors and it was officially acknowledged that there were no signs of abuse or mistreatment.

Paradoxically, after the officers have been sent back, the Russian government decided to cut air, sea, land and railway links, and postal communication with Georgia. Furthermore, the Russian government has announced that it plans to ban money-transfers from Russia into Georgia, which would put all the law abiding Georgian citizens residing in Russia, under very harsh conditions.

Strangely enough, Russian officials call illegitimate the transfer of their hard-earned money by Georgian nationals back to their families, while Russian banks, supported by their government, are actively engaged in money laundering, smuggling, printing counterfeit US Dollars and other illegal financial and criminal activities in the separatists regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Unfortunately, this is not the only discriminating policy the Russia wants to utilize:

The Russian government decided to take the most extreme approach and deport citizens of Georgia from Russia. Number of Georgian nationals residing in Russia have already been detained and face deportation.

Open facts of minors from their parents, forcible separation of families have taken place. Many Georgian national residing in Russia are under constant fear.

In Georgia, on October 4, 2006, Russian state owned schools suspended all Georgian students and teachers. The Georgian children were interrupted during a regular class session and were asked to leave.

In addition, the Russian government has authorized its special forces to break in and seal off hotel "Tbilisi" which represents an inalienable part of the complex owned by the Georgian embassy, thus blatantly violating the principle of extraterritoriality and the Vienna convention of 1961 on diplomatic relations.

In addition, many Georgian entrepreneurs, operating legal businesses in Russia, are seriously considering selling their financial assets, in order to escape the injustice and discrimination.

According to the comments coming from the highest levels of the Russian government, the next step that Russia is willing to go through is “pogroms” against Georgians currently residing in Russia notwithstanding whether they are citizens of Georgia or of the Russian Federation.

We see outbreak of state sponsored xenophobia in Russia that targets Georgians residing there.

Jews suffered similar fate in the hands of Hitler, and there is no place in today’s world for such actions and we believe that the civilized world should declare a policy of zero tolerance towards the Russian government’s actions of bigotry and prejudice.

However, at first the Russian citizens themselves must stand against expression of intolerance and xenophobia in Russia, as this can lead to the unpredictable developments in the multiethnic and multinational Russia.

Russian high level officials are openly declaring that these actions are against Saakashvili “regime” thus confessing that they are deliberately undermining the democratically elected government in the sovereign country.

But the most cynical remarks are the declarations by Russian officialdom that these sanctions are not directed against the Georgian people but only against its government. While the Russians are saying that their policies are not directed against the Georgian people, they also noted that their punishment is exactly directed against the Georgian people for their democratic choice to elect the current Georgian leadership.

We are fighting our Cold War in Caucasus and we see the threat to the peace and security in the region, as we are threatened that this cold war is going to become a hot one.

After all, peace does not come easy and that is why we all try to defend, secure peace and stability throughout world each and every day of our lives.

We have been taught in a blatant way that the road of democracy is difficult, but the Georgian people are able to overcome the obstacles and continue to prosper and fight for the better future.

Actions carried out by the Russian Federation against Georgia September 30 – October 5, 2006

Facts of Bigotry and Xenophobia

The facts listed below do not represent an exhaustive list of events taking place in the Russian Federation directed against ethnic Georgians during the last week. The Embassy of Georgia in Russia continues to collect information, additional facts will be made available in the nearest future.

In all cases described herein, humiliations, bigotry and xenophobic actions have been carried out by representatives of official state institutions (i.e. the police, the Prosecutor General's Office, the Tax Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications, etc), which clearly show that all these facts have taken place under the support and sponsorship of Russian authorities.

Large scale and widespread repressions started immediately after the statement of President Putin concerning Georgia and continue up to the current moment.

- Approximately 300 Georgian nationals have been arrested across the Russian Federation without being accused of concrete illegal activity. These people are currently held in preliminary detention cells. It is planned to transfer them to Moscow and deport them en-masse to Georgia.
- On October 5, Ministry on Interior of the Russian Federation sent official request to directors of all secondary schools of the Russian Federation to hand over to local police stations lists with names of all children of Georgian ethnicity studying at their schools. Lists of children is to be used by Police for setting up special control procedures over the children of Georgian ethnicity and their families.
- On October 4 in Tbilisi, Georgia, pupils and teachers who study and work at school number 9 of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (located in Tbilisi) found a notice on the school informing them that: “Distinguished parents, from October 4, 2006 studies for the citizens of Georgia at our school have been terminated.” From this school 70 pupils – citizens of Georgia and 25 teachers have summarily been discharged. In addition, at school number 17 in Batumi, Georgia, 30 pupils have been dismissed without explanation. These facts represent a clear demonstration of ethnic discrimination against citizens of Georgian ethnicity studying in Russian schools.
- 13 Georgian citizens have been deported from Moscow. Most of them were women and children. Deportations were conducted in a humiliating manner, in the presence of TV cameras and the media – women have been taken to hospitals to be publicly checked for sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS/HIV. Children were left alone without parents in various hospitals for many hours.
- Russian Special Police Forces (“OMON”) stormed the guest house “Tbilisi” (located in Moscow), which is a part of the common complex owned by the Embassy of Georgia. The stated reason was to expel illegal residents. Policemen have sealed off hotel rooms, all

inhabitants of the guest house have been urged to leave their rooms and have been searched. These events took place in a humiliating manner including the presence of TV cameras and print media. Diplomats and technical personnel of the Georgian Embassy to Russia are prohibited from entering the building.

- Russian Special Police Forces (“OMON”) invaded the Georgian cultural center “Mziuri” (also located in Moscow) without presenting concrete grounds. A search is underway.
- The Russian Foreign Minister Mr. Sergey Lavrov in his statement of October 4, 2006 in Strasburg questioned the legitimacy of Georgian authorities and used the expression, “ruling regime” to describe the current Government of Georgia.
- Two ships sailing under a Georgian flag have been stopped in Novorossiysk. Ships sailing under Georgian flags are prohibited from entering the Taganrog sea port. Georgian nationals, who are on ships sailing under other countries’ flags, are prohibited to make a landing on the territory of Russia.
- Representatives of the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation are actively checking restaurants and other businesses owned by Georgian nationals in and around Moscow, including two major casinos “Cristal” and “Golden Palace”, which, according to Russian statements, belong to Georgian nationals.
- 18 more Georgian citizens were arrested in Moscow without accusation of concrete illegal activity. Most of these people are children and women. The process of their deportation has started.
- 5 families, who are refugees from Abkhazia and who had been living in Russia for the past fifteen years, were taken to the police station without being accused in any concrete illegal activity. According to unofficial information, their deportation is planned.
- Ethnic Georgians are stopped in the streets of Moscow and other Russian cities by the police without concrete reasons, for just being a “person of Caucasian nationality” (“*Litso Kavkazskoi Natsionalnosti*” – a humiliating expression applied to ethnic non-Russians from the Caucasus). They are being searched, taken to police stations, and detained. This all happens in a most humiliating manner, under uncensored slogans against Georgia and Georgians.
- Georgian students in different Russian universities are prosecuted by police during lectures and in auditoriums. They are detained, searched and taken to police stations without being charged in any concrete illegal activity.
- In Moscow, protest actions organized by different political groups (including pro-presidential political groups) were held in front of the Georgian Embassy. Participants of these manifestations threw stones and different objects in the Embassy, broke several windows, damaged the building and shouted uncensored and humiliating slogans against Georgia.
- Uncensored and humiliating slogans against Georgia, Georgian authorities and Georgian people are regularly and publicly used by Russian politicians and members of the Russian State Duma.

- Public statements against ethnic Georgians currently leaving in Russia are made regularly by high-level representatives of Russian law-enforcement agencies. Without concrete grounds they blame the entire Georgian Diaspora in being criminalized, and involved in criminal and terrorist activities.

Sanctions Imposed by Russia against Georgia September 30 – October 5, 2006

Most sanctions have been introduced immediately following the statement of President Putin concerning Georgia and are in force for an uncertain period of time.

Important fact – President Putin’s statement was made on October 1. However, the day before, on September 30, the Russian side was already informed by the OSCE Chairman-in-Office about the intention of the Georgian side to hand over detained Russian officers to the OSCE.

The majority of sanctions has been imposed after the extradition of accused Russian spies and has nothing to do with the formal reason of tension.

- The Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation issued a decision to halt all air, road, railway and naval transportation to Georgia, imposing a complete transport blockade against Georgia.
- The Ministry of Information and Communications adopted a decision to stop all postal transactions with Georgia.
- The Embassy of the Russian Federation in Georgia stopped issuing visas to Georgian nationals, imposing a total ban without any exceptions.
- Director of the Federal Immigration Service of Russia adopted a decision to stop issuing working quotas for citizens of Georgia in Russia. He also started consultations with Byelorussian authorities to urge Byelorussia to make the same decision.
- Based on statement made by the Speaker of Russia’s State Duma, Mr. Boris Grizlov, the Duma’s financial and budgetary committees are charged with preparing legislative changes, which will allow the Russian Government to pursue restrictions on financial operations with Georgia, including the total ban on money transfers.
- Russia’s State Duma adopted a special resolution about “Anti-Russian and the non-democratic policy of the Government of Georgia”, urging and authorizing the Russian Government to take all necessary measures against Georgia.
- Without prior notification to Georgia, large-scale naval military exercises are being held in the immediate vicinity of the territorial waters of Georgia (*only 0.7 nautical miles away from territorial waters*).
- The “Russian Railway” president, Mr. V. Yakunin advised the company not to buy spare parts from Georgia (*purchase of spare parts worth 100 mln. Russian Rubles had been already agreed before*).
- Russian commercial and state-owned companies received instructions from authorities to stop the export of Russian wheat to Georgia.

- The Ambassador of Russia to Georgia, as well as the entire personnel of the Russian Embassy and members of their families have been evacuated from Tbilisi in a most demonstrative and unfriendly way.
- Representatives of the de-facto authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia were officially invited to participate in an international Economic Forum held in Sochi, Russia “Kuban 2006” (September 29 – October 1). Their demonstrative meetings with President Putin took place. In an official press release following the meeting, Mr. Bagapsh and Mr. Kokoiti have been mentioned as “Presidents of the Republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia” respectively.
- With direct Russian encouragement, de-facto authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have announced that they stop the negotiation process with Georgia.
- According to the information provided by the Georgian intelligence community (confirmed by some Russian journalists) additional amount of armament and military equipment was recently transferred from Russia to Abkhazia.
- Based on requests of the Russian Federation, Byelorussia is preparing to adopt a visa regime with Georgia.
- Russian Federal Migration Service made the decision to condense the validity of one-year multiple entry visas issued to the Georgian citizens from 12 months to 90 days.
- Russian Federal Migration Service has terminated residence and work permit quotas for the citizens of Georgia.
- Russian “Gazprom” is planning to double gas prices beginning from 2007 (at this moment the price of gas is 110 USD, after the increase – 170-250 USD)
- On 5th of October 2006 in the port of Novorossiysk, Russian customs officers did not allow the unloading of seven vehicles with Georgian license tags located on the board of the ship sailing under the national flag of Bulgaria.
- Local offices of the Ministry of Interior have forwarded to the Moscow high school administrations a request to provide a detailed information regarding pupils with ethnical Georgian surnames.
- As a result of raids conducted by Russian militia (police) in marketplaces, numerous Georgian citizens were detained in jails.
- 132 citizens of Georgia were deported by the means of a purely transport aircraft, which is unsuitable for the passenger transportation.
- Russian Chamber for Accounting inspected financial activities of the Academy of Arts headed by Zurab Tsereteli – an ethnical Georgian – and exposed a financial violation amounted up to 2,1 million rubles (approximately 80.000 USD).

- Russian nationalistic “Movement against Illegal Immigrants” has actively joined the hunt for Georgian citizens. In this regard, leader of the movement A. Belov has declared readiness to closely cooperate with militia.
- During past few days Russian authorities, while employing different excuses have shut down businesses run by ethnical Georgians, particularly restaurants, casinos (“Baccara”, “Golden Palace”, “Crystal”, “Golden Palace Weekend”, “Olympia”). By now, such unlawful actions against Georgians have acquired a large scale trait and are conducted across the whole territory of the Russian Federation.
- Russian authorities have inspected a publishing house, which publishes books written by Boris Akunin (Grigol Chkhartishvili). Head of the publishing house has been questioned regarding the activities of the mentioned author.

Запрос

Прошу Вас предоставить списки лиц грузинской национальности, учащихся вашей школы, с предоставлением сведений: ФИО учащегося, даты его рождения, адреса проживания, домашнего телефона, ФИО родителей. Сведения прошу предоставить до 15.00 часов 04.10.2006 г. Ответ на запрос прошу выслать по факсу 431-30-11. Телефон ПДН 431-30-13

И.о. начальника ОВД
Проспект Вернадского
УВД ЗАО г. Москвы
ПОДПОЛКОВНИК МИЛИЦИИ



Комаров А.В.

Unofficial Translation

Inquiry

You are kindly asked to provide us with lists of all Georgian students at your school together with following information: Family name, fathers' name and first name of a student, date of birth, addresses of residence, home telephone numbers, Family, fathers' and first names of the parents. The information should be submitted by 15:00 on 04.10.2006 to the following fax: 431-30-11. Tel.: 431-30-13.

Acting Head of the Department of Internal Affairs
Vernandsk Ave.
Internal Affairs Office of Western Administrative District of Moscow
Militia Ltc. Komarov A.V.

В целях обеспечения правопорядка и соблюдения законности, предотвращения террористических актов и агрессивных настроений между детьми жителями Москвы и детьми грузинской национальности, прошу предоставить в ОВД Таганского р-на г. Москвы следующую информацию:

- Ф.И.О., даты и место рождения и жительства детей грузинской национальности, в каком классе обучается,
- Ф.И.О., даты и место рождения и жительства родителей, место работы и должность, состав семьи,
- Взаимоотношения детей грузинской национальности с другими учениками, случаи неприязненных отношений между детьми, так и по отношению к ним, факты неповиновения грузинских детей учителям, факты антиобщественных действий, противоправных деяний.

Данную информацию прошу направить в наш адрес: до 09.10.2006 года (г. Москва, Ведерников переулок д.9).

Начальник ОВД/
Таганского района
г. Москвы
полковник милиции



Г.С. Захаров

670-0033. *г.м.м.м.м.*
911-8691 *Тарм*
Сергей
Захаров

Unofficial Translation

With an aim to enforce law and order, preventing terrorist acts and aggressive attitude between the children residing in Moscow and children of Georgian nationality, the Moscow's Tagan district Department of Internal Affairs is requesting following information:

- Family, fathers' and first names, dates and places of birth and residence of Georgian students, the school grade they attend;
- Family, fathers' and first names, dates and places of birth and residence of parents, places of employment, composition of families;
- On Relations of Georgian children with other children, incidents of hostile attitude between the children, as well as towards them, facts of disobedience of Georgian children to their teachers, cases of bad social behaviour, unlawful acts.

You are kindly requested to forward the specified information to our address by 09.10.2006 (Moscow, Vedernikov St. 9).

Head of the Department of Internal Affairs
Tagansk District of Moscow
Militia Colonel.

G.S. Zacharov