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STATEMENT ON THE
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES OF GEORGIA

Delivered by Ambassador Steffen Kongstad at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 28 May 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Norway continues to be deeply concerned about the occupation of Georgian territory. Recent borderisation activities conducted along the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABL) of occupied South Ossetia and Abkhazia further raises this concern.

During an ongoing pandemic, cooperation, not division, is needed. Using this situation as an excuse to further the process of borderisation with “border signs”, trenches and barbed wire is both illegal and unacceptable. As the borderisation makes the Administrative Boundary Lines ever more permanent in nature, the limitations on freedom of movement continue to grow. We regret the report of yet another death resulting from delayed medical evacuation from the occupied Akhalkalaki district.

We are also deeply concerned with the accusations in South Ossetian media against the EUMM and the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research in Georgia. The suggestion that any of these should be involved in spreading Covid-19 or any other biological warfare is, frankly, ridiculous. Access to information is a right and a necessity, but spreading information aimed at sowing confusion and distrust is never acceptable.

We yet again urge the parties to heed the call of the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions. We commend the work of the EU Monitoring Mission in monitoring the Administrative Boundary Lines.

Norway reaffirms its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognised borders.

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