



United States Mission to the OSCE

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

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 2, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States warmly welcomes the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia to the Permanent Council. We also congratulate you, Ambassador Klaar, on your forthcoming appointment. Thank you, all, for your substantive, detailed, and candid reports.

The United States firmly believes that the Geneva International Discussions (GID) are critical to enhancing security, stability, and respect for human rights in Georgia, and as a means towards resolving the 2008 conflict. We share your view that no matter how difficult these discussions may be, they are critical. Through the Geneva format, the OSCE, the EU, and the UN play an invaluable role in monitoring the security situation, human rights, and the humanitarian conditions in the conflict-affected regions. The OSCE, the EU, and the UN possess the expertise needed to tackle the challenges inherent in the process, and we welcome their fruitful cooperation.

The United States fully supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally-recognized borders and rejects Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The United States urges Russia, as a party to the conflict, to withdraw its forces to pre-war positions per the 2008 ceasefire agreement, and reverse its recognition of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The United States also remains concerned with Russia's ongoing provocative actions to exert its influence over the regions and, Ambassador Klaar, we share your concern over the suspension of the prosecution of a suspect in the May killing of a Georgian citizen and reiterate our calls for bringing the perpetrator to justice.

We thank the Co-Chairs for their efforts to make progress and move the negotiations forward under challenging circumstances. In particular, we are pleased that both the Gali and the Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms continue to function. We share your view that the IPRMs are essential tools and useful platforms. Looking ahead to the next round in December 2017, the United States calls on the parties to achieve a mutually

agreeable statement on the non-use of force. I took note of the particular emphasis that you have placed on humanitarian issues, including missing persons. We also encourage participants to find solutions at the local level to humanitarian issues – including those involving internally displaced persons and working together to eradicate invasive species which have dealt devastating damage to the livelihoods throughout Georgia – which can then be endorsed at the December 2017 Geneva round.

In closing, the United States reiterates its full support to the Geneva Co-Chairs and to the GID forum. We look forward to our continued work with the OSCE, the EU, and UN Co-Chairs. And we call on the OSCE participating States to support the reestablishment of a meaningful OSCE presence in Georgia with unhindered access throughout the country within its internationally-recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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