



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 23, 2016

At the thirty-sixth round of the Geneva International Discussions on the conflict in Georgia on June 14-15, the United States welcomed the resumption of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), which met for the first time in over four years on May 27 to address the fatal shooting of a Georgian civilian along the Abkhazia Administrative Boundary Line on May 19.

The United States called on the de facto authorities in Abkhazia to investigate the shooting thoroughly and to bring anyone responsible to justice as quickly as possible. We also urged the de facto authorities to share as much information as possible with Georgian authorities about the status of the investigation into the crime. We were encouraged by IPRM participants' commitment to modalities that will facilitate regular meetings of the Gali IPRM. Moreover, we remain hopeful that by the end of the upcoming IPRM meeting on July 6, outstanding questions about the crime will be addressed.

We regret that participants did not discuss the return of internally displaced persons in Working Group Two. The United States believes that this issue needs to be discussed in Geneva in order to adequately address the humanitarian consequences of the conflict in Georgia.

Russia's ongoing occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which together constitute 20 percent of Georgia's territory, remains unacceptable. The United States would like to stress once again the need for the return of a meaningful OSCE presence to Georgia. We unequivocally support Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its aspirations to integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.