The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/1152/19 18 October 2019

Original: ENGLISH



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Participation in the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia

As delivered by Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gregory Macris to the Permanent Council, Vienna October 17, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

At the 49th round of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) on the conflict in Georgia on October 8 and 9, the U.S. delegation expressed concern over the recent escalation of tensions along the administrative boundary line (ABL) with South Ossetia. We took positive note of the robust use of technical meetings of the Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) to reduce tensions and encouraged all participants to continue to make full use of the IPRM format to discuss and resolve issues of concern. The U.S. delegation once again called for the restart of regular meetings of the Gali IPRM as soon as possible.

The United States appreciates the work of the three Co-Chairs from the United Nations, the OSCE, and the European Union. We welcomed the GID Co-Chairs' efforts to deepen discussion on core GID issues. We appreciate the Co-Chairs' organization of the information session on public health issues, which hopefully will promote a broader discussion and generate concrete measures to build confidence among the affected communities. The United States looks forward to future information sessions on core GID issues and related areas of interest to the participants, and we hope these sessions will lead to concrete outcomes that reduce tensions and contribute to an environment conducive to resolving this conflict. In this light, we hope that an earlier information session on the non-use of force will bear positive results.

We welcomed news that the Enguri Bridge crossing point on the ABL with Abkhazia had recently reopened and encouraged de facto authorities to open additional crossing points.

However, we were disappointed at the closure in September of most crossing points on the ABL with South Ossetia, and have called on those responsible to reopen crossing points as soon as possible to facilitate movement for the affected populations.

The United States welcomed the September 26 meeting of the Georgian and Russian foreign ministers and hopes that renewed dialogue will enable progress on key issues of bilateral concern.

We reiterate our call on the de facto authorities to provide full access to international humanitarian organizations. We urge participants to improve transparency and stability by allowing the European Union Monitoring Mission to operate on both sides of the ABLs, in accordance with its mandate.

The United States supports full sharing of information between Georgian and Russian authorities as soon as possible on the death of Irakli Kvaratskhelia.

We reiterate our call for those responsible to provide a full account of the circumstances surrounding the deaths of Archil Tatunashvili, Giga Otkhozoria, and Davit Basharuli. All participants need to aid in the investigation of the fate of missing persons regardless of the circumstances.

The United States regrets that the participants from the Russian Federation and de facto authorities in Working Group II once again refused to engage in discussion of internally displaced persons and chose instead to walk out, thereby precluding discussion of the remainder of the agenda of Working Group II.

We call on Russia, as a party to the conflict, to withdraw its forces to preconflict positions in line with its obligation in the 2008 ceasefire agreement. The United States fully supports Georgia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

###