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**STATEMENT BY MR. ANVAR AZIMOV,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 May 2011

**Regarding the incident involving the detention of Georgian citizens in
South Ossetia**

Mr. Chairperson,

Further to our statement to the Permanent Council on 19 May of this year regarding the detention on 18 May of five citizens of Georgia in the vicinity of the village of Lapani in the western part of the Republic of South Ossetia, we should like to say the following.

On 19 May of this year an emergency meeting was held under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRM). The meeting was devoted to the incident that had occurred on 18 May. In the opinion of the Russian and South Ossetian authorities the meeting took place in a constructive spirit, although, unfortunately, there was no OSCE representative in attendance.

At the meeting the South Ossetian side outlined its version of the events of the morning of 18 May. We should like to note that that version is consistent with the information that we made available to the Permanent Council last week.

The Georgian authorities' account of the events is somewhat different. Specifically, it is denied that there was firing from a hunting rifle at the South Ossetian patrol that detained the Georgian citizens.

We hope that in time for the next meeting under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms the parties will study the information and evidence that has been made available to them, thus putting an end to this matter. We are counting on the Chairmanship to inform the Permanent Council of the conclusions drawn by the participants in the IPRM in the very near future.

Thank you for your attention.