



EMBASSY OF GEORGIA TO THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA  
PERMANENT MISSION OF GEORGIA TO THE OSCE AND OTHER  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA

**Statement on Seventeenth round of Geneva talks**

As delivered by the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE,  
Ambassador Paata Gaprindashvili

at the 882<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Vienna, October 13, 2011

Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

Seventeenth round of Geneva talks was held on October 4, 2011. It addressed the issues of security and stability in Georgia's occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and safe and dignified return of the IDPs and refugees to the places of their habitual residence. Deliberations were moderated by the representatives of the UN, EU, and OSCE and attended by the participants from Georgia, Russian Federation and the United States.

For the first time the talks were attended by the new Co-Chair - Special Representative of the EU to the South Caucasus and Crisis in Georgia Mr. Philippe Lefort. Former Representative of the EU Mr. Pierre Morel also participated in the talks. I would like to underline the ample tribute provided by Mr. Morel in formation and heading of the working process of the Geneva Talks. We are indeed grateful to him for his dedication, tireless efforts, efficiency and creativity. We welcome the new Co-Chair of the EU and wish him a success in this most responsible job.

The October 4<sup>th</sup> round once again demonstrated that Russia together with its proxy regimes do not intend to seriously consider the issues related to security and stability and return of IDPs. Due to the extremely politicized position of Russia it was impossible to achieve any progress not only on the fundamental items of the agenda of the Geneva Talks but also on the issues of purely humanitarian character.

The Russian Federation has once again refused to accept the legally binding international obligation of non-use of force against Georgia. Instead Moscow tried to promote an absurd idea that Russia could become a guarantor of peace and non-use of

force in Georgia. All efforts made by Russia in the Geneva Talks to promote the status of a 'mediator' and a 'peacekeeper' and to escape from its true face of being a party to the conflict have completely failed. Position of the Co-Chairs as well as the United States of America was clear and unequivocal to this end.

The Georgian representatives at the First Working Group once again requested from Moscow to cooperate in the investigation to the terrorist acts committed by the Russian special services on the territory of Georgia during the past two years. Despite the fact that the Russian side was provided with all necessary evidence materials Georgia has not received formal answer to its legitimate request so far.

The First Working Group also discussed specific steps which would contribute to the establishment of international mechanism of stability in occupied regions. Georgia shares the approach of the Co-Chairs that introduction of security and stability into the Tskhinvali and Abkhazian regions of Georgia should be occurring step by step. It goes without saying that the final establishment of security and stability will only be possible after the Russian occupation forces leave Georgia according to the August 12 Ceasefire Agreement, provisions of this agreement are fully implemented and international peacekeeping and police forces are deployed in the occupied regions of Georgia.

The Co-Chairs also proposed concrete ideas aimed at recreating or rebuilding confidence between the communities torn by the war and artificially created divided lines. Information session was also held on the measures of confidence building where some NGOs operating in the occupied regions presented insights of their activities to the participants of the Geneva Talks. Sadly, at this stage the Russian Federation and its proxy regimes did not turn out to be ready to support those ideas.

In the Second Working Group Moscow and its proxy regimes have once again refused to discuss issues related to the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees. All efforts made by the Co-Chairs and the Georgian side to address the fundamental rights have failed because of the rigid position of Moscow and its clients.

Concern over the illegal detentions of local population by the Russian occupation forces as well as Tskhinvali militia was raised once again by the Georgian side as well as Co-Chairs, the US and the EUMM. Russia and Tskhinvali were once again called to stop this destructive practice and to immediately release all detainees. Georgia will continue to raise this issue in its talks with official Moscow.

The participants agreed that 18th round of the Geneva Talks will take place on December 14 2011.

Thank you.