



United States Mission to the OSCE

Condemnation of the so-called “Treaty of Alliance and Integration” between Russia and the South Ossetian Region of Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 19, 2015

First Deputy Minister Dondua, I welcome you to the Permanent Council. Your presence here today serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, and non-intervention into the internal affairs of another country.

The United States’ position on Abkhazia and South Ossetia remains clear: these occupied regions are integral parts of Georgia. We continue to support Georgia’s independence, its sovereignty, and its territorial integrity consistent with its internationally recognized borders. The United States does not recognize any so-called “treaty” between the de facto leaders of Georgia’s occupied region of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation. Neither this agreement nor the one signed between Russia and the de facto leaders in Abkhazia in November 2014 constitute a valid international agreement.

The United States shares the concerns about the situation in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, including concerns over Russia’s continued efforts to build permanent barriers and establish “security zones” along the administrative boundary lines of the occupied territories in Georgia without the Georgian government’s consent. Not only do these actions contradict the 2008 ceasefire agreement, they have a direct and negative impact on the lives of people living on both sides of the administrative boundary lines.

We once again urge Russia to fulfill all of its obligations under the 2008 ceasefire agreement, to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions, to reverse its recognition of Georgia’s occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, and to provide free access for humanitarian assistance to these regions. Russia continues to violate the ceasefire agreement by stationing its troops and conducting military exercises in the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, most recently on March 5. We also call on Russia to join Georgia in making a legally binding commitment to the non-use of force.

We reiterate our full support for the Geneva International Discussions as a means to achieve concrete progress on the security and humanitarian issues that continue to affect the communities on the ground in Georgia. This format is also critical to enhancing security, stability, and respect for human rights in Georgia. We are concerned by reports that the signing of this so-called agreement coincided with the current round of Geneva Discussions on the conflict in Georgia. We remain convinced that, through the Geneva format, the OSCE, EU, and UN play a valuable role in monitoring the security situation, human rights, and humanitarian conditions in the conflict-affected regions. Along with the Geneva

International Discussions and the EU's Monitoring Mission, the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms in Ergneti and Gali can contribute to stability. We urge the participants to find a mutually agreeable solution for restarting the Gali IPRM as soon as possible.

First Deputy Minister Dondua, your presence here today also demonstrates the importance Georgia attaches to the OSCE. We call on all members of the OSCE to support the reestablishment of an OSCE presence in Georgia with unhindered access throughout the country's internationally recognized borders, as well as the need for continued dialogue at the OSCE on all of the protracted conflicts.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.