



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Round XIX of the Geneva Discussions on Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 19, 2012

The Geneva Discussions are an important forum for improving security and humanitarian conditions in Georgia. Constructive engagement in the Geneva Discussions and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) is critical to advancing agreement on international security accords, fostering confidence-building measures, strengthening humanitarian initiatives, and bringing about a sustainable, peaceful resolution to the conflict.

The United States calls on the Russian Federation to abide by its commitments under the August 2008 ceasefire agreement and its September 2008 implementing measures, including the commitment to withdraw forces to positions held prior to the start of hostilities. We urge Russia to make a unilateral pledge of Non-Use of Force as Georgia has, and to allow unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia. The United States also calls for full respect of all individuals' human rights in the conflict areas, and for the safe, dignified, and voluntary return of internally displaced persons.

The EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia is a vital stabilizing factor, and plays a central role in the implementation of the IPRMs. The EUMM also is critical to the international community's efforts to monitor compliance with the cease-fire and implementing measures. Regrettably, these efforts cannot be fully realized as long as Russia continues to deny international observers access to the territories of Georgia.

The United States remains committed to helping Russia and Georgia find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Georgia, and we look forward to the next round of the Geneva Discussions scheduled for June 7-8, 2012. The regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are integral parts of Georgia, and we reiterate our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.