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## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **U.S. Statement on the Situation in Georgia**

As delivered by Ambassador James S. Gilmore III  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
September 5, 2019

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

We observe our discussions here today at the Permanent Council. Later today there will be a discussion involving our activities on behalf of Ukraine, where there have been over 13,000 Ukrainians killed in that conflict. Then we have a discussion about behaviour for the repression of democracy in Moscow, and an effort to divert attention to well-established democracies like Germany, Canada, France; and an unwillingness to expand the monitoring of a border, which would have the ability to, perhaps, tamp down some of these conflicts in Ukraine; and now, Georgia.

The United States fully subscribes to the joint statement made by the *Group of Friends of Georgia*. We also want to speak as well in our national capacity.

The United States fully supports Georgia's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Russia's efforts to rewrite historical facts

and create a false narrative again undermine efforts to resolve the conflict, and will not succeed.

Like Canada, the United States is troubled by reports of the resumption of installation of fencing on Georgian territory near the administrative boundary line of the Russian-occupied Georgian region of South Ossetia. The process of “borderization” unfairly affects Georgian civilians living in the area, separating them from their farmlands, family, livelihoods, and critical infrastructure. Borderization infringes on Georgia’s sovereignty and is contrary to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

We call for the immediate halt of construction of new fencing and other barriers. Respect for the sovereignty of Georgia requires these physical impediments be dismantled.

Once again, we call on Russia to suspend its occupation of 20 percent of Georgian territory; to withdraw its forces to pre-conflict positions; and to allow unfettered access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with its commitment under the 2008 ceasefire agreement.

The United States continues to monitor recent reports of a military buildup by Russia near the *Administrative Boundary Line* of the Russian-occupied Georgian region of South Ossetia, and will expose violations of Georgia’s sovereignty.

We welcome the August 30 meeting between the parties to defuse tensions. We call on all sides to avoid further escalation and to continue to work through the European Union Monitoring Mission hotline and the Geneva International Discussions Co-Chairs to resolve the occupation. We call on Russia to utilize all available channels to prevent further escalation of the conflict and to withdraw its forces.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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