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**STATEMENT BY
MR. ALEKSANDR VOLGAREV, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1419th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

20 April 2023

Geneva consultations on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus

Mr. Chairperson,

The 57th round of the Geneva International Discussions on Security and Stability in the Trans-Caucasus took place in Geneva on 4 and 5 April this year with the participation of representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Republic of South Ossetia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America under the co-chairmanship of the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union.

During the consultations, Russia emphasized the inadmissibility of politicizing the Geneva Discussions, including through the unmotivated cancellation or postponement of previously agreed regular meetings. Given that extended pauses in the negotiation process can trigger a rise in tensions in the region, a situation where the work of the Geneva format becomes stalled must not be allowed to repeat itself. We call upon the parties concerned, first and foremost the Co-Chairs, to take this into account when preparing the next round, which is scheduled for July this year.

The parties noted in Geneva that the situation in the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian border regions had remained relatively calm and that the parties had succeeded in supporting dialogue via the hotlines and under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism in Ergnet on the Georgian-South Ossetian border. As before, an issue that remains unresolved is the resumption of the work of the similar mechanism in Gal on the border between Georgia and Abkhazia.

When it comes to ensuring sustainable stability and security in the Trans-Caucasus, we believe it is important to take practical steps to fulfil the key tasks, namely the drawing up of a legally binding agreement on the non-use of force by Georgia with regard to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the delimitation of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian borders together with their subsequent demarcation.

Thank you for your attention.