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

S T A T E M E N T

*Delivered by Deputy Head of Mission Paata Gaprindashvili at the 736th
Permanent Council
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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to provide you with an update on the situation in Georgia.

On October 29, legislative body of the Russian Federation is planning to ratify the agreements “On the Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance” with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These agreements will result in establishment of four military bases on the territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, militarization of these regions and their absorption by Russia. These agreements can not be viewed as anything but another, continuing attempt to annex parts of the sovereign territory of Georgia.

There are continuous armed provocations from the sites under the Russian occupation. Several bombings have occurred during recent weeks. Georgian population is constantly being terrorized by Ossetian paramilitaries, acting under the tacit approval of the Russian occupying forces. Thus lives of the local residents are in constant danger.

Proxy regimes, which are responsible for ethnic cleansing, are now attempting to establish “border” with the rest of Georgia. What is the most despicable is that the FSB border troops of the Russian Federation will be responsible for protecting this so-called “state border”. Such actions are directed not only against the fundamental principles of the international law and the Georgian statehood, but against the very basic requirements of the communities who reside in those areas.

We also have information that the Russian Federation is planning to increase its military contingent in Abkhazia and South Ossetia by 2000 personnel. Let me remind everyone that according to the six-point cease-fire agreement of August 12, Russia is supposed to withdraw its forces to lines held on August 6. As you see, this agreement is being violated constantly.

Mr.Chairman,

For the peace and security to be established in my country it is absolutely necessary for the Russian Federation to fully implement the cease-fire agreement brokered by the President of the French Republic. This means that the *status quo ante*, which existed on the August 6, before the hostilities broke out, has to be restored. There are several issues which are extremely important in this regard:

Georgian jurisdiction over the Akhagori region and Upper Abkhazia, as well as over the Georgian controlled enclaves within the Tskhinvali region has to be restored. In this regard, Akhagori region is of paramount importance. This region had never been under the control of Russian or separatist authorities in the past; Akhagori region was occupied by the Russian troops after the cease-fire had been brokered on August 12, as Russian troops entered the region on August 15. Russian illegal presence should be immediately ceased as well in the village of Perevi, Sachkhere district.

Russia has to cease its military presence in the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, including the illegal build-up of the military bases; at the same time Russian Federation should remove all its soldiers from the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia, including the seconded Russian officers who are in charge of the proxy regimes.

Russia has to revoke the recognition of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Illegal recognition of the independence of Georgian regions by President Medvedev contradicts to the fundamental principles of international law, and directly undermines the six-point cease-fire agreement.

Russia should join efforts of the international community and according to the six point cease-fire agreement should participate in the discussions in the new Geneva format in a good faith.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to use this opportunity to once again express my condolences to the family and relatives of Dutch journalist, RTL cameraman Mr. Stan Stromans. Few days ago, on October 20 mission set up by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs found that the journalist was killed as a result of the missile attack involving the use of Russian SS-26 Iskander ballistic missile equipped with a cluster warhead. And this happened in Gori, outside of the conflict zone, in the middle of a peaceful town, in a residential area. And this tragedy happened because Russian armed forces used cluster munitions to bomb civilian and residential areas.

Georgia joins Netherlands and others in condemning the use of cluster weapons by Russia against the peaceful population and calls on the international community to undertake an objective and unbiased investigation into every detail of Russia's military aggression against Georgia.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally I would like to address one more issue and inform the Permanent Council of a great success of the donors' conference held on 22 October in Brussels to raise funds for post-war reconstruction in Georgia, where state and private donors together have pledged USD 4.55 billion over the next three years to help Georgia in post-war recovery.

The sum far exceeds the expectations that we all had. The message economically and politically is very strong for Georgia, especially at the time of international financial crisis. I would like to express our greatest gratitude and extend our deep sympathies to all donors who pledged funds. This is an utmost important and sizeable input into strengthening the Georgian democracy, economy and social infrastructure after the war.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.