



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

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Statement of Mr. David Rakviashvili - Deputy State Minister for Reintegration,
Georgia

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to say a few words about the situation with regard to the refugees and the IDPs in Georgia. As a result of last year's Russian invasion and occupation of Georgia's two regions 35.000 more IDPs sought shelter in their own country. This forced displacement occurred as a result of massive violations of humanitarian and human rights law, as confirmed by the Tagliavini report. Let me also draw your attention to the fact that the same report also says that "several elements suggest the conclusion that ethnic cleansing was carried out against ethnic Georgians in South Ossetia both during and after the August 2008 conflict."

Currently, while the international community is contemplating over its response to the problem of the displaced throughout the OSCE area, the situation in the aftermath of the August 2008 war is actually worsening. Human rights continue to be violated in the occupied territories. Security is fragile. IDPs are unable to return, neither in dignity, nor safety. No international presence is permitted to report on the developments from the ground. Cease-fire agreement of August 12 lies in tatters, as Russia refuses to implement it. Geneva Discussions, and particularly the negotiations within the Second Working Group are going nowhere, while the Russian authorities and their proxy regimes are creating all kinds of obstacles for the start of the real dialogue aimed at the safe and dignified return of the IDPs and refugees to their homes.

So what can we do to tackle these issues here in the OSCE?

Not much, as the practice shows, but substantially more than what we have been doing so far.

As early as in 1993, Rome Ministerial Council adopted a decision, according to which the Ministers pledged to address the displaced persons in the context of "conflict prevention and crisis management". Unfortunately, we have not gone far since then.

Though, we need to continue that approach, but we need to reinforce it with concrete steps.

Mr. Chairman,

Today we have at least two authoritative sources, which set forth the principles how

the IDP related situation should be addressed. Tagliavini report says that “the authorities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, together with Russia, should take all appropriate measures to ensure that IDPs are able to return to their homes. No conditions for exercising this right, other than those laid down by international standards, shall be imposed on IDPs.”

On the other hand we have a report issued by the ODIHR and HCNM last year, which sets forth a whole range of recommendations that need to be carried out by everyone, including the governments of Russia and Georgia, as well as the proxy authorities of the two occupied regions, to ensure that the IDPs and refugees return to their homes in safety and dignity.

Let’s ask ourselves, how the OSCE can follow up on these recommendations.

Excellencies,

Let me answer this question briefly, in just four short points.

For the start, the current Chairmanship-in-Office can follow the suit started by the Finnish Chairmanship last year. This means instructing the ODIHR and the HCNM to follow up on the last year’s report as well as the Tagliavini conclusions. These institutions should inform us how the proposed recommendations are implemented and if they are not, what should be done to have a progress.

Secondly, OSCE community should continue insisting on the establishment of the OSCE monitoring on the ground, to make sure that the security and the human rights situation of the people in the occupied Georgian regions is reported to the international community. We need to revitalize the role of the OSCE in Abkhazia not only through the establishment of the Human Rights office there, but also through taking part in the Gali IPRM, where human rights and humanitarian issues are also addressed.

Thirdly, I think that it is a high time for us to think which OSCE instruments and mechanisms, including the ODIHR mechanisms could be operational when it comes to the massive violations of the human rights, risking such atrocities, as ethnic cleansing. For this end, the Permanent Council, or a CiO can instruct the ODIHR and the HCNM as well as the Secretary General to provide a food-for thought paper on how the mechanisms and instruments in the third dimension can be improved, to make sure that the human rights situation in the challenging regions and the plight of the IDPs and refugees are addressed more effectively. Meanwhile, we should start thinking of a Ministerial Decision on the IDPs and refugees in the OSCE area.

I hope that next year, when we gather here in Warsaw again, we will be able to boast more progress with regard to the OSCE involvement in the IDP related problems.

Thank you.