

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



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Délégation du Canada auprès de
l'Organisation pour la sécurité et la coopération
en Europe

**STATEMENT ON GEORGIA
BY FREDERICKA GREGORY, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES
DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
732ND MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
11 SEPTEMBER 2008**

Mr. Chairman,

As this is my first statement before the Permanent Council, allow me to say how delighted I am to be here and to have joined the team at Canada's Delegation to the OSCE. Please know that you can continue to count on Canada's cooperation and support, as we work together towards the Helsinki Ministerial, and beyond.

Canada welcomes the agreement by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev concerning the implementation of the six-point peace plan of August 12. We strongly urge Russia, and all other parties, to abide by this agreement, and urge Russia and Georgia to withdraw their forces to the positions that they held on August 6, 2008, by the October 1, 2008, deadline.

We are encouraged by Russia's commitment to allow the OSCE and the UN to continue with their mandates in Georgia. Moreover, we are pleased that the European Union will deploy an observer mission to ensure Russian forces withdraw to their August 6 positions. We also welcome the news that a meeting will be held in Geneva on October 15, 2008, to address security and stability issues in the Caucasus, and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes in Georgia.

Canada fully supports the efforts of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Alexander Stubb, the EU and the UN Security Council.

Canada will provide humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict. Therefore, we call upon both Russia and Georgia to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians, and to facilitate full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to assist those in need. For its part, Canada will provide \$3 million in humanitarian assistance to assist people affected by the recent fighting in Georgia.

Canada remains gravely concerned by Russia's unilateral recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We condemn this recognition, which violates Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, and is contrary to UN Security Council resolutions supported by Russia. The recognition also runs counter to the principles of peaceful conflict resolution reflected in the OSCE Charter for European Security and the Helsinki Final Act, and the express and firm commitment all participating states made at the Ljubljana Ministerial Council to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Canada urges Russia to agree to the rapid deployment of the remaining 80 OSCE monitors to the mission in Georgia by agreeing to a mandate that will allow all OSCE monitors the ability to operate freely throughout Georgia, including South Ossetia.

Canada strongly reasserts our strong and continued support for Georgia's sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders, and underlines our respect and support for the democratically elected and legitimate government of Georgia.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.