

Canadian Delegation to the
Organization for Security & Cooperation
in Europe



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

**DELEGATION OF CANADA TO THE OSCE
STATEMENT ON GEORGIA
DELIVERED BY FREDERICKA GREGORY, CHARGE D'AFFAIRES
736TH MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
23 OCTOBER 2008**

I wish today to take stock of the situation and recent developments concerning the crisis in Georgia. Canada welcomes the withdrawal of Russian troops from the areas adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in keeping with the September 8 agreement between Presidents Sarkozy and Medvedev regarding the implementation of the six-point peace plan of August 12. In this regard, we also warmly welcome the deployment of the EU observer mission to Georgia.

We strongly urge Russia to abide fully by this agreement, which stipulates a return to the August 6 positions. We further urge Russia to allow the 28 OSCE Military Observers deployed in Georgia to be allowed to operate freely throughout Georgia, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia while additionally hoping to see an augmentation of the number of OSCE and EU monitors soon. Canada stands ready to contribute to the additional OSCE monitors should their mandate question be resolved.

Canada was disappointed by the outcome of the security conference in Geneva on October 15. This postponement delays the stabilization of the region and a return to normalcy for all those affected by the August conflict. Like our other partners, however, we are pleased that the parties aim to resume the talks on November 18, and we hope that this meeting will be successful.

Canada reiterates its 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. We are disturbed by reports of human rights abuses in South Ossetia. Russia's failure to protect human rights and personal security in areas under its control underscores the crucial need for international monitors to have full and unimpeded access.

Canada strongly believes that the OSCE joint fact-finding mission by the head of ODIHR and the High Commissioner for National Minorities (HCNM), mandated by the CiO, should enjoy free and unrestricted access to the whole of Georgia, particularly the area affected by the conflict. Such access is imperative to the success of the mission and its credibility. Our recent contacts with ODIHR and HCNM indicate that their access was indeed hindered on this mission, which is a matter of serious concern. We are looking forward to the report on the outcome of this critical mission.

The European Commission and the World Bank hosted a Georgia Donors' Conference in Brussels on October 22. Canada was pleased to announce at the Conference that we will contribute up to an additional \$3 million towards ongoing stabilization efforts in Georgia, in addition to the \$3 million we have already disbursed for the purposes of humanitarian assistance.

Canada reiterates our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and continues to respect and stand by the democratically elected and legitimate Government of Georgia.