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United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on “Elections” in the Abkhazia Region of Georgia

As delivered by
Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Casey Christensen
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
December 17, 2009

The United States regrets the decision to hold “elections” in the Abkhazia region of Georgia on December 12 and recognizes neither their legitimacy nor their results.

We reiterate our support for Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We remain committed to the achievement of a long-term, peaceful resolution to the conflict. We strongly support the Geneva Talks and related mechanisms and urge all parties to work together constructively to achieve concrete progress on issues of mutual concern.

We also renew our call for Russia to fulfill the provisions of the August 12 cease-fire agreement and the September 8 implementing measures, including the withdrawal of Russian troops to positions held prior to the start of hostilities and the provision of free access for humanitarian assistance to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia’s characterization of these regions as independent does not relieve it of these commitments.

We remain convinced that the continued involvement of the international community is critical. We firmly believe an international presence should be established throughout Georgia, and once more call for access to the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions for international monitors.

Thank you, Madam Chair.