



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions on the Conflict in Georgia

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 16, 2023

Welcome Ambassador Moşanu, Special Representative Klaar, and Ambassador Sultanoğlu back to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your objective analysis of the situation on the ground as well as your efforts in dealing with the repercussions of Russia's overt defiance of its neighbors' sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The tragic case of Georgian citizen Tamaz Ginturi reminds us how Russia's continued occupation of Georgia's territory impacts the people of Georgia. On October 6, Mr. Ginturi visited a cemetery and a church near the village of Kirbali when Russia's military forces opened fire on his car. He was shot dead by Russia's occupation forces for driving in his own country. We condemn this killing.

Regrettably, Russia persists in fortifying the administrative boundary lines delineating its occupation of 20 percent of Georgia's territory. Russia has the obligation under international law to respect Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are integral parts of Georgia. We reiterate our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

We once again call on Russia to fulfill its obligation under the 2008 EU-mediated ceasefire agreement to withdraw its forces to the pre-conflict positions. We also call for complete and unrestricted access for humanitarian organizations to the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia. The suffering and hardships faced by people living in conflict-affected areas have gone on for far too long.

We welcome your role as Co-Chairs in safeguarding the space for a peaceful process to resolve this conflict and we acknowledge the complexity of this mission. On November 1, the *Ergneti Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism*, or *IPRM*, met for the 115th time, co-facilitated by the OSCE Special Representative, Ambassador Moşanu, and the EU Monitoring Mission. The United States welcomes these ongoing Ergneti-IPRM meetings and reaffirms its insistence on the immediate resumption of the *Gali IPRM* without preconditions.

We reiterate our strong support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The United States stands ready for constructive engagement within the format of the Geneva International Discussions.

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