



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

**S T A T E M E N T**

*Delivered by Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Paata Gaprindashvili at the 747<sup>th</sup>  
Permanent Council  
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Madam Chair,

I would like to warmly welcome Ambassador Christopoulos and extend our best wishes to him. Ambassador traveled to Georgia just recently and his motivation and active involvement in solving humanitarian problems on the ground has already brought positive results and managed to shed light on the issue of gas supply to the Tskhinvali Region. As it was documented in the final report, gas pipeline is now repaired and as soon as the commercial issues are settled between “Itera” and the local gas companies in Tskhinvali, gas flow will be resumed. Unfortunately, we cannot say the same about the water supply issue, as the water is still shut by the proxy regime in Tskhinvali, and the peaceful population suffers as a result. This problem will become even more acute as spring approached. We hope, Ambassador, that your and OSCE’s role in resolving water supply issue will be just as instrumental as it has been in relation to gas supply.

To exhaust this issue, Madam Chair, the Georgian side would like to reiterate that it is essential for the OSCE to send assessment mission to the Tskhinvali Region to inspect the reasons for the disruption of water flow. Manipulation with water and other basic needs of human beings is unacceptable. Therefore we would like to ask the Chairmanship to continue sparing no effort in this direction.

Madam Chair,

Now, allow me to once again bring to the attention of the Permanent Council increasingly deteriorating security situation in the Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, Georgia and Abkhazia, Georgia and territories adjacent to them.

Over the last week a number of terrorist attacks occurred in Georgia, all originating from the territories occupied by the Russian Federation. As a result of these attacks one policeman died and three were injured.

On 16 January 2009 a policeman of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia was killed in the village of Knolevi, Kareli district. This incident was documented in the OSCE Spot Report, as the OSCE MMOs witnessed the shooting incident. Later the same day, in the usual demonstration of their theatrical abilities, Russian occupation airborne troops landed by military helicopters on the territory in the vicinity of the village and after a certain period of time withdrew.

On 18 January 2009 a Georgian police checkpoint situated in the **village of Koki**, Khurcha area, Zugdidi district came under fire from the territory controlled by Russia and Sokhumi proxy regime. The fire attack involved both rifles and grenade launchers. As a result, a policeman was wounded and hospitalized.

On 19 January 2009 Georgian police pick-up truck patrolling a Georgian checkpoint area in the vicinity of **Dvani village**, Kareli district came under fire. As a result of intensive attack, two policemen of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia were wounded. As a result death toll of Georgian law enforcers has increased to eleven, and more than several dozen citizens of Georgia have been wounded since August, 2008. The Georgian side is extremely concerned with this trend.

Madam Chair,

Obviously all responsibility for these actions rests exclusively with the Russian Federation. These attacks represent unacceptable breach of the August 12 cease-fire agreement under which the sides agreed to end hostilities. In a similar manner Russian Federation is in breach of almost every other provision of the cease-fire agreement. And we need to deter such aggressive acts and prevent Russia from going into another wave of aggression and further occupation of Georgian territories.

Madam Chair,

EU monitors, as well as the OSCE and UN observers should be immediately given a right to free movement throughout the occupied regions and to unhindered implementation of their mandated tasks. As the next stage, it is also necessary to bring international peacekeeping and police force to the occupied regions, to ensure that the peace and security on the ground is ensured and occupation forces withdraw.

Recent incidents confirm once again the necessity of launching a complex large-scale peacekeeping operation based on the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). But before the modalities of this new mission are elaborated mandate of the UNOMIG has to be maintained, therefore the technical extension of the mandate is the best way forward in this situation. In terms of removing the threat emanating from the occupied territories and preventing a possible military confrontation, it will be extremely important to grant this new mission increased peacekeeping, police and observer capabilities on both sides of the administrative border, on the occupied territories, in particular.

Also it is extremely important to create the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism, which was discussed during the Geneva Talks on 17-18 December 2008 and has been blocked by the Russian Federation and the proxy regimes under its control. It will be one of the most important tools to avoid and investigate facts similar to those indicated above. We call on Russia to allow an agreement on creation of the mechanism at the February round of the Geneva Talks.

Madam Chair,

We appreciate Greek Chairmanship's continued efforts on increased OSCE engagement in Georgia, including its occupied territories. As you are well aware, we have already provided our vision of future OSCE activities in Georgia, and allow me to outline main principles of it here:

- OSCE shall continue its presence in Georgia in all three – politico-military, economic and environment, and human dimensions;
- OSCE shall continue its work aimed at comprehensive conflict resolution, therefore OSCE has to maintain its active participation in the Geneva process
- OSCE shall continue involvement on the ground through its increased and robust monitoring of the existing security situation and in particular monitoring implementation of the August 12 cease-fire agreement.
- Also, OSCE shall become more actively engaged in Abkhazia, Georgia. This presence should not be limited only to monitoring of the security situation, but should also be reinforced through monitoring of human rights abuses in Gali, through the re-established and reinvigorated UN/OSCE Human Rights office;
- OSCE shall facilitate the creation of conditions for the safe and dignified return of IDPs;
- OSCE shall continue implementing the economic rehabilitation projects for the good of the local communities in order to bridge the division that the occupying power introduced as a result of the August aggression;
- Human rights and humanitarian situation in the Tskhinvali Region has to be under the constant spotlight of the international community. ODIHR/HCNM report was more than alarming, and this organization needs to find adequate ways to implement recommendations of the report.

Madam Chair,

We still want to retain hope that there will be a good will and enough political courage from the Kremlin side and efforts aimed at transparency, co-operation and confidence-building would prevail.

In concluding, I would like to wish Ambassador Christopulous all the success for the year ahead.

Thank you, Madam Chair