

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ANDREY RUDENKO, DEPUTY PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE
1006th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

3 July 2014

**On the results of the 28th round
of the Geneva Discussions on the Trans-Caucasus**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the frank exchange of views that took place two weeks ago during the latest round of the International Discussions on security and stability in the Trans-Caucasus on 17 and 18 June in Geneva under the co-chairmanship of the United Nations, the OSCE and the European Union and with the participation of representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Republic of South Ossetia.

We welcome the observation by the participants in the discussions regarding the relative stability on the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Georgia and the absence of any serious incidents. Although minor incidents do occur, for the most part caused by local farmers, the inhabitants are gradually realizing that it is pointless to participate in loud propaganda actions and that they need to comply with the border regime. The completion of fencing work on the State borders of the Republic of Abkhazia and Republic of South Ossetia with Georgia has also made a constructive contribution to stabilizing the situation.

We share the positive assessments heard in Geneva of the regular activities of the joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) on the South Ossetian-Georgian border. The visit to an IPRM meeting by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, the President of the Swiss Confederation Mr. Didier Burkhalter, was an important event. We welcome the willingness expressed by Abkhazia at the Geneva meeting to resume the work of a corresponding IPRM on its State border with Georgia as soon as Tbilisi brings its team of participants into line with the agreements reached earlier in Geneva. We note that during the June round of the Geneva Discussions their participants mentioned an improvement in the situation regarding the orderly crossing of regional borders by local inhabitants, especially in the Leningor district of South Ossetia and the Gali district of Abkhazia.

As for the subject of refugees in the second working group, unfortunately, as we have warned, dialogue on this matter has been stymied by Georgia's policy of undermining the work on humanitarian issues in Geneva. The delegations of Abkhazia and South Ossetia

predictably issued a joint statement on the pointlessness of any discussion at the Geneva talks of the problem of refugees until Georgia ceases the unnecessary politicization of this important topic at the United Nations General Assembly. As you know, the Abkhazians and South Ossetians have no opportunity to clarify their position in New York. The United States refuses to give them entry visas. Under these circumstances, the delegations of the two republics see no sense in substituting the work at the General Assembly with discussions in Geneva. For that reason, the representatives of Sukhum and Tskhinval called for the item on refugees to be removed from the working group's agenda. Russia supported the view of our Abkhazian and South Ossetian colleagues. Attempts by the Co-Chairmen to draw up a compromise solution for continuing the meeting have so far failed.

At the same time, the latest round generally contributed to the gradual establishment of dialogue on an issue of the utmost importance to the local inhabitants, the search for missing persons in the region.

We regret that in the light of the unwillingness of the Georgian delegation to discuss outstanding issues on the agenda in a flexible manner, including the key issue of the non-use of force and security guarantees in the region, their consideration has been postponed until the next Geneva meeting. In this context, we are obliged to reiterate that contrived attempts to raise the issue of some kind of unilateral commitments by Russia on the non-use of force against Georgia make no sense. Tbilisi needs to resolve this problem directly with its neighbours from Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We therefore regard such "demands" as unacceptable, as is the imposing of the concept of so-called "international security measures", of which there is no mention in the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreements.

We trust that during the next round of discussions scheduled for the start of October the Co-Chairmen will succeed in reaching agreement on a draft joint statement of the participants in the Geneva Discussions on the non-use of force. It would be an important interim step towards concluding fully fledged agreements and would bolster the positive momentum provided by the unilateral statements of the leaders of the three republics – Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia – on refraining from the use of force.

We believe that the relative stability in the region and the development a culture of respectful inter-State relations should provide an important basis for the effectiveness of the Geneva Discussions. A realistic approach without ventures involving the use of force is an essential condition for this. Relying on solutions from even the most influential backers will lead us nowhere. These problems need to be resolved on the basis of the countries' own national interests.

Thank you for your attention.