



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Incident in Georgia

As delivered by Chargé d' Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 26, 2009

Madam Chairwoman,

The daily patrol report just issued by our Military Monitoring Officers (MMOs) in Georgia reports on possible mortar explosions and machine gun fire in a village called Muguti on the South Ossetian side. As was the case in the incident on February 27, in which four ethnic Georgians were kidnapped, this appears to be a situation that would benefit from activation of the incident prevention mechanism agreed to in the Geneva talks on February 17 and 18.

This reported incident underscores the importance of granting access for international monitors to the South Ossetian and Abkhaz regions of Georgia. We call on all parties to allow for joint visits, together with international monitors, to the site of incidents. These mechanisms should be operational as soon as possible.

The goal for us in this forum must be to work quickly and rapidly on a solution for the future of our OSCE mission in Georgia and modalities for the work of our MMOs to allow broad access to the conflict zone. This is a complicated and difficult issue. We agree with the statement of Foreign Minister Bakoyannis that we need to find a way to depoliticize the status elements of it to find a practical solution for access for our military monitors. The fact that it is complicated and difficult need not mean that we should be opaque in how we are approaching this.

The United States delegation believes in the transparent effort to bring a proposal before the 56 members of the OSCE on a way forward for our mission in Georgia and our MMOs. Pink slips are being handed out, people are making their plans, and we owe it to our employees and we owe it to the stability and security in the region to actively engage on this openly in the OSCE. I urge all parties here and our partners in the OSCE to work rapidly on this issue.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.