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PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GEORGIA'S BREAKAWAY REGIONS

As delivered by Counsellor Hilde Austad
to the Permanent Council
Vienna, 3 March 2016

Mr Chairman,

This statement is on behalf of Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway.

We thank the delegation of Georgia for bringing up the human rights situation in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. We take note of their statement, which illustrates that the situation in these territories remains a cause for grave concern.

Mr Chairman,

The situation clearly warrants our continued attention and demonstrates the need for re-establishing a robust OSCE presence in Georgia, with a mandate covering the entirety of the country and all three dimensions. We would also welcome increased engagement from the autonomous institutions, and we encourage ODIHR and the HCNM to follow up on their 2008 report on the situation in the breakaway regions.

We reiterate our call for unimpeded access for OSCE representatives and other international observers to the entire territory of Georgia – notably including the breakaway regions, which represent particular challenges when it comes to respect for OSCE commitments. We fully acknowledge that access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia requires the cooperation not only of Georgian authorities. We call on all parties involved to ensure unhindered access to the breakaway regions.

Mr Chairman,

We confirm our full support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We call on the Russian Federation to fulfil its obligations under the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement and its subsequent Implementing Measures.

We reiterate our denouncement of Russia's so-called "treaties" with the de facto authorities of the breakaway Georgian regions. They represent clear violations of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and have no legal standing.

Thank you, Mr Chairman