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GEORGIA

UN Security Council Open Debate on

Maintenance of international peace and security: Strengthening multilateralism and the role of the United Nations

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Statement by

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Mr. President,

At the outset, let me express our gratitude to the Chinese Presidency for convening today's timely debate.

Undoubtedly, we are confronted with the crisis of multilateralism in today's globalized and interdependent world. Alternative to rules-based order is chaos. Hence our common duty to strengthen multilateral system by relevant reforms and making multilateral institutions with the UN at its core - more fit for purpose. In this context we welcome the UN reforms launched by the Secretary-General's within its three pillars.

When we talk about the disruption of rules-based order, the region I come from is no exception. And, unfortunately, it was shattered by destructive role of one of the UNSC permanent members. This year marks 10th anniversary since Georgia experienced full-scale military aggression by Russia, which resulted in illegal occupation of 20% of my country's territory. Few years later, Ukraine also fell victim to the very same aggressor. These blatant violation of fundamental norms and principles of international law and disregard for the territorial integrity of the sovereign states, was a massive blow to the European security and the entire international order.

The Government of Georgia remains firmly committed to pursue the peaceful conflict resolution policy that is directed towards the de-occupation of two Georgian regions, on the one hand, and reconciliation and confidence building between the communities divided by war and occupation line, on the other. Yet we are confronted with often asymmetric challenges countering our peace initiatives.

As we speak the Russian occupation regime in Tskhinvali continues to fortify the occupation line adjacent to the village of Atotsi in Kareli Municipality by installing 1 km long artificial barriers. Razor wire fences

and other artificial barriers erected along the occupation line already reached 100 km's, dividing families, depriving them of the right to free movement, access to their property, agricultural lands, religious sites and cemeteries, as well as to healthcare, emergency services and education in their native tongue. Earlier, I have informed Council on abductions, tortures and killings based on ethnic origin that had taken place against the civilian population living along the occupation line. It's been 10 years that the occupying power, instead of abiding to the agreement it signed – the EU mandated Ceasefire Agreement from 12 August 2008, continues its military buildup.

Clearly there is a need for of immediate creation of international security mechanisms on the ground, as well as the need for unimpeded access of international human rights monitors to Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia. What we see instead, is deliberate targeting on the part of the Russian Federation of the negotiation formats through undermining the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) established under the Geneva International Discussions (GID). Needless to emphasize the crucial importance of the GID and IPRMs – unique negotiation formats to address and solve security and humanitarian challenges of people affected by the unresolved conflict between Georgia and Russia. These formats have been essential in preventing the large-scale escalation of conflict in light of increased provocations on the ground.

I would like to remind the audience that the United Nations Security Council was actively engaged with Georgia from 1993 to 2009 until the Russian Federation brazenly used its veto power to block the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). By vetoing the extension of the UN Mission, when it was needed most (shortly after the August 2008 war), the Russian Federation created dangerous precedent in the history of UN peacekeeping.

Being the party to the conflict, Russia using its veto power to block the extension of UNOMIG mandate came in direct contradiction with the UN Charter Article 27, paragraph 3 that clearly stipulates that "the party to a dispute shall abstain from voting".

Misuse of Veto power had resulted in tragic consequences in other parts of the world as well, with record high numbers of vetoes cast in the last 2 years. Therefore, we consider it crucial to reform the Security Council, and the United Nations, in general, to increase effectiveness in addressing global challenges be that conflicts, humanitarian and economic crises, force displacement or climate change, so we can achieve cohesion, inclusivity and development of societies, having the respect of international law and rules-based order at heart.

I thank you.