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Генеральная Ассамблея

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Совет по правам человека
Двадцать четвертая сессия
Пункт 1 повестки дня
Организационные и процедурные вопросы

Письмо Постоянного представителя Грузии при Отделении Организации Объединенных Наций в Женеве от 16 сентября 2013 года на имя Председателя Совета по правам человека

Был бы весьма признателен, если бы секретариат Совета по правам человека распространил прилагаемую речь Министра иностранных дел Грузии д-ра Майи Панджикидзе, произнесенную 11 сентября 2013 года*, в качестве документа двадцать четвертой сессии Совета по правам человека по пункту 1 повестки дня.

(подпись) Шалва Цискарашвили
Постоянный Представитель

* Воспроизводится в том виде, в каком она была получена, только на языке оригинала.

Просьба отправить на вторичную переработку

Annex

[English only]

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, H.E. Dr. Maia Panjikidze at the 24th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to start my intervention by paying tribute to all victims of the tragic events of September 11, 2001, and express sympathies towards their families.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honor to address the 24th session of the UN Human Rights Council. Let me, first of all, commend your activities in promoting and protecting human rights worldwide and express gratitude for the opportunity to speak about the considerably improved Georgia's human rights records, as well as the ongoing reforms and existing challenges. I am proud to say that it is the first time, when the Foreign Minister of Georgia addresses this august body.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, today's world continues to witness dramatic deterioration of humanitarian situation in many parts of the world. In this context, Georgia condemns the violence against civilians in Syria and deplores the death of more than 100 thousand people. We believe that the protection of the civilians should be the highest priority for each Government and the entire international community. Georgia supports the readiness of the international community to play an active role in resolving humanitarian crisis in Syria. We responded to the urgent appeal by the OCHA and made modest contribution to this humanitarian cause.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our path to build a state based on rule of law and accountability is unwavering. Fully aware of its responsibility before its own citizens, the Government is committed to the open and participatory approach towards ongoing reforms based on its active cooperation with the international community and the increased participation of civil society.

Let me briefly overview the principal reforms that continue to be the main priority for the Government. Recently, Georgia has adopted a number of legislative changes aimed at increasing independence of the judiciary targeting wider decentralization and balanced allocation of powers within the judiciary, as well as civil society's involvement in the decision-making on organizational issues.

Reform of the Prosecution Service is aimed at strengthening its institutional independence and ensuring that the prosecutors carry out their professional functions impartially and objectively.

Furthermore, the Government initiated robust steps to ensure fair and truly voluntary plea bargaining process for the defendant, with particular emphasis on bringing protection of victim's rights in compliance with the best standards is among the planned legislative reforms.

In addition to the consolidation of justice sector reforms, the Government is highly devoted to the protection of social rights. National Concept of Tolerance and Civil Integration was adopted in order to promote and enhance minority rights in the country.

As a result of our close cooperation with the UN Women, we are actively working towards empowerment of women and promoting gender equality. The protection of the rights of the child constitutes one of the key priorities for the Government.

Georgia has made a remarkable breakthrough in fighting corruption that has been acknowledged by the respected institutions, among them, the World Bank.

The amendments and additions to the Labor Code, entered into force recently, represent a major step forward in the way of regulating labor relations in Georgia through bringing labor laws to full compliance with the international labor conventions.

Mr. President,

Significant efforts undertaken by the Government with the aim of strengthening democracy and rule of law, and ensuring protection and promotion of political, economic, social and cultural rights of each individual, and the readiness to share our experience with other states through cooperation within the HRC, gives me a solid ground to seek Georgia's membership in the Human Rights Council for the term 2016-2018. I am convinced that increased representation of new democracies in the work of the HRC will give an additional positive impetus to the work of the Council.

Mr. President,

We continue our close cooperation with the Offices of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees. In this context, let me commend them for their leadership and critical engagement in responding different challenges across the world.

Georgia attaches high importance to the activities of special procedures and committed to cooperation with its mandate holders. Since March 2010, when Georgia extended a standing invitation to the UN Special Procedures, a number of special representatives visited Georgia and gave us unique opportunity to receive constructive evaluations and recommendations for the further development.

My country has been systematically submitting reports to the relevant bodies on the implementation of the international human rights treaties. To ensure the efficiency of the reporting process, a special unit was established within the MFA.

Here, I would like to particularly highlight Georgia's strong commitment to the Universal Periodic Review - the unique mechanism to review the human rights progress of all member states. In January 2011, Georgia went through its first Universal Periodic Review. Georgia has voluntarily made a pledge to present Interim report concerning the implementation of the received recommendations, which will be submitted timely.

Dear Colleagues,

While we all agree that the UPR mechanism's modus operandi has to be universally transparent, fair and objective, I would like to share with you a serious concern with recent developments in the course of the second cycle review of the Russian Federation, which, I believe, has severely damaged universal and objective foundation of the UPR mechanism. It is clear that any deviation from this principle will cause a dangerous precedent that inevitably questions the effectiveness and integrity of the UPR process. I call upon on you to solidify efforts to remedy the misstep, so we can keep the impartiality and universality of the UPR process.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

I must express our extreme concern over the critical situation in two regions of Georgia currently under the Russian occupation – the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Despite the concerns raised by the relevant UN agencies, the local residents of Georgia's occupied regions continue to be deprived of minimal safeguards for their basic rights and freedoms, including but not limited to the right to education in native language and freedom of movement.

Moreover, while the Government, in close partnership with the UNHCR, follows a comprehensive strategy to ensure adequate living conditions for IDPs, the ultimate goal and the only durable solution is to fully and unconditionally ensure the right of return of IDPs, co to the places of their origin in safety and dignity. Regardless of the international call, voiced by numerous UNSC and UNGA Resolutions on Georgia, they are still deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes.

The Government is seriously concerned about the increasing tendency of illegal detentions for crossing the occupation line and serious obstacles imposed on the crossing regime. Severe restrictions on freedom of movement extend even to the most vulnerable population seeking an immediate medical assistance. Unfortunately, such activities already have led to the fatalities.

To isolate the local population and cut off the remaining links between the war-divided societies, the occupation forces have launched the massive process of installation of barbwire fences and embankments along the occupation line, which represents a clear violation of the fundamental principles of international law, human rights law and the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement.

Needless to underline that these illegal activities significantly affects the livelihoods of the local population, divide families and communities and prevent people-to-people contacts. Local residents have found themselves completely deprived of their civil and economic rights. Such alarming developments compel the local population to flee the places of permanent residence and join the ranks of several hundreds of IDPs.

These illegal activities cause particular concerns in the context of Moscow's failure to reciprocate the non-use of force pledge, unilaterally undertaken by Georgia in November 2010 and reiterated in March 2013, and in the absence of international security arrangement and human rights monitoring mechanisms within the regions. In addition, they are totally inconceivable against the backdrop of the positive dynamic recently established in the economic and cultural relations.

I am convinced that the ongoing violations in Georgia's occupied regions and adjacent areas require your immediate attention and urgent measures.

Mr. President,

We live in a world that raises a multiple challenges. The only way to face such challenges is to be unwaveringly committed to the democratic values and human rights. On behalf of my Government, let me once again reiterate our readiness to contribute to our joint efforts and play an active role in ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights.

Thank you.