

Between June 19 and 20, regular consultations were held in Geneva within the framework of the ongoing international discussions being held on the South Caucasus. Representatives from the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Republic of South Ossetia, the Russian Federation, and the United States took part in the event. The consultations were co-chaired by the UN, the OSCE, as well as the EU. The Russian delegation was headed by State Secretary and Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin.

The co-chairs invited the parties present to share their views on ways of improving the effectiveness of the Geneva discussions. The Russian delegation stressed that the only way to increase the productivity of the consultations is for the Georgian side to engage in a direct and respectful dialogue with the representatives of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to abandon any confrontational rhetoric and behaviour at other international platforms.

Unfortunately, this appeal was ignored by the Georgian side, which continued to bring up the absurd claims about "Russian occupation" of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and tried to politicise the tragic incidents that had resulted in the death of Georgian nationals Archil Tatunashvili, Giga Otkhozoria, and Davit Basharuli. The discussion of this matter took on an especially emotional character. All sides at the talks, with the exception of the Georgian representatives, agreed that the situation near the border areas remains stable and under control. The statistical data of the border crossings between Georgia and Abkhazia and South Ossetia indicates that there are no problems when it comes to freedom of movement.

During the talks devoted to the situation on the ground, the Russian, Abkhazian, and South Ossetian delegations pointed to the fact that the practical effectiveness of the meetings under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM) has been getting less and less.

The Georgian side, supported by the EU Monitoring Mission, is trying to substitute aggressive political rhetoric and public relations campaigns for serious professional efforts aimed at enhancing stability. It shows constant and express nd public relations campaigns in their practical effectivenessdisrespect when it comes to state borders and the authorities of the two republics. The representatives of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia stated that this attitude was unacceptable and called for a reduction in the frequency of meetings under the IPRM.

Unfortunately, the parties failed to engage in a constructive dialogue on the draft joint statement on the non-use of force. The Georgian delegation insisted on the need to continue working on the unacceptable US-sponsored draft, which essentially removes the Abkhazian and South Ossetian sides out of the framework of this document.

The Russian, Abkhazian, and South Ossetian representatives emphasised that they are against the growing NATO activity in the region, which poses a serious threat to the security in the region. They indicated that Moscow, Sukhum, and Tskhinval reserve the right to take appropriate retaliatory measures.

The politicised UN General Assembly resolution on refugees, which had been sponsored by Georgia for the eleventh consecutive time, predictably disrupted discussions in the humanitarian group. As a result, Georgia once again deliberately rejected the real opportunity to discuss the subject in detail at the Geneva platform. Instead, the Georgian side preferred to engage in fruitless propaganda exercises at various international forums in the absence of Abkhazian and South Ossetian representatives.

The next meeting in Geneva is scheduled for October 2018.