



Press Statement (Revised)
Sean McCormack, Spokesman
Washington, DC
December 22, 2008

Closure of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Georgia

The United States deplores Russia's decision effectively to veto a measure supported by the overwhelming majority of OSCE participating States to renew the mandate of the Mission to Georgia. Through persistence and patient diplomacy, the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship forged consensus among the vast majority of OSCE participating States in favor of extending the Mission's current mandate. In opposition to the rest of the international community, however, Russia alone has insisted on changing the mandate to reflect its recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The U.S., EU, and G-7 have all condemned Russia's recognition of these regions and every other participating State of the OSCE has reaffirmed Georgia's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The OSCE Mission to Georgia has been a valuable contributor to conflict resolution efforts. The Mission's monitors have played an invaluable role in promoting military transparency and assessing the humanitarian and human rights situation amid reports of serious violations of minority rights and forced displacement of civilian populations in or from Georgia's region of South Ossetia.

Russia's decision to block the extension of the mission is difficult to justify, given ongoing tensions and significant humanitarian concerns in the region.

Despite its obligation under the August 12 and September 8 cease fire agreements to ensure access into South Ossetia for humanitarian assistance and to counter human rights abuses against vulnerable populations, Russia has blocked continuation of a crucial OSCE Mission that could address these serious concerns.

We urge Russia to join with other OSCE members to allow the OSCE mission to carry out its important work in the region.

2008/1091

Released on December 22, 2008

 [BACK TO TOP](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of State Website at <http://www.state.gov> maintained by the Bureau of Public Affairs.