



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**JOINT STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE ILLEGAL DETENTION OF
A GEORGIAN CITIZEN BY THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION FORCES
1302 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
11 February 2021**

Madam Chairperson,

I make this statement on behalf of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Canada. We are deeply concerned that the de facto authorities of the Georgian region of South Ossetia have extended the illegal detention of Zaza Gakheladze for a further 12 years and six months in prison. This extension comes just over two weeks after the historic ruling by the European Court of Human Rights on the war between Georgia and the Russian Federation in August 2008. We call for his immediate release from prison in Tskhinvali and safe return to his family,

We remind the Russian Federation of its responsibilities in line with the January 21 ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, which clearly found that Russia was responsible for human rights violations in Georgia's occupied territories. We also reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to abide by the fundamental principles of international law and to fully respect its commitments under the OSCE, in particular the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement and the Agreement on Implementing Measures of 8 September 2008.

We urge Russia and the de-facto authorities of the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia to refrain from all actions that hinder efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict and further violate Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We continue to strongly support Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you.