

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Lasha Darsalia, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
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Excellencies,

I would like to use this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the High Commissioner, and his Office for their tireless efforts. At a time when the scale and complexity of forced displacement are reaching unprecedented levels, the work of UNHCR remains truly indispensable. Georgia actively contributes to global and regional responsibility-sharing efforts through active engagement in the UNHCR global initiatives, including through undertaking concrete pledges under the GRF.

Mr. High Commissioner,

As we speak, hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens that were expelled from Russian-occupied Georgian regions - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali through several waves of ethnic cleansing, continue to be deprived of their fundamental right to return to their homes in safety and dignity. Unfortunately, every year the UN Secretary General in his reports (on "Status of IDPs and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia") has to repeat that *"no major changes were observed during the reporting period with regard to IDPs and refugees exercising their right to return."*

Yet, the humanitarian and human rights situation in the occupied regions continues to deteriorate. Ethnic discrimination against Georgians persists. Recently, in 2025, the Russian occupation regime in Sokhumi prohibited inheritance or real estate transfer to Georgians and their relatives who allegedly participated in 1992-1993 armed hostilities or engaging in activities against Russian aggression.

Let me stress that the Government of Georgia continues its efforts to protect the rights of IDPs and provide them with decent living conditions, as well as durable social services and housing solutions, until their voluntary, safe and dignified return to their places of origin. However, we are continuously prevented from extending same protection to those residing in Georgia's both occupied regions who are deprived of minimal safeguards for their safety and are stripped of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

In the absolute absence of international monitoring mechanisms on the ground, Russia's ongoing occupation and militarization of Georgia's occupied regions, continue to severely affect the everyday lives of people living therein and pose an imminent threat of the new wave of forced displacement. We renew our call on the Russian Federation - the authority exercising effective

control over the occupied regions of Georgia - to fulfil its obligations under the EU-mediated 2008 Ceasefire Agreement and allow international security and human rights mechanisms on the ground, cease the grave human rights violations and ensure safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees to their homes.

Distinguished delegates,

Since the start of Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, Georgia has welcomed and supported more than 28,000 war-affected Ukrainians by providing accommodation, schooling, healthcare services, and socio-economic support program.

In recent years, Georgia has implemented significant reforms to protect those forcibly displaced. Our country continues to provide legal and socio-economic guarantees to persons under international protection in line with the 1951 Refugee Convention. According to Georgian legislation, these individuals are entitled to a range of rights and services, including social assistance, healthcare, education, employment and related support. Asylum seekers as well as people granted international protection are covered by national social and legal frameworks securing their basic rights. They have access to social assistance programs and other state services equivalent to those available to Georgian citizens.

In addition, persons under international protection are included in Georgia's universal healthcare programs, which cover primary and mental health services. Their access to health care is part of the country's effort to realize the right to health for all persons of concern.

Georgia also implements a state integration program, helping persons under international protection and asylum seekers with social integration. The Integration Center provides Georgian language courses, information on local laws and introduction to Georgian history and culture. It also offers consultations on healthcare, social protection, education and employment.

Mr. High Commissioner,

To conclude, we reiterate full support to the UNHCR in its global efforts to protect millions of refugees, returnees, stateless people, the internally displaced and asylum-seekers around the world.

I thank you.