



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Georgia Parliamentary Elections

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 20, 2003

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

We have cooperated closely with the OSCE, Georgia's political leaders, and the Georgian people to develop and implement a series of procedures aimed at ensuring an election that meets OSCE standards.

We are deeply disappointed that significant improvements in the conduct of the election flowing from this effort were undercut by massive vote fraud in Ajara and other regions of Georgia.

The United States remains deeply concerned that the breakdown in reporting official voting results has led to an overall lack of transparency.

We urge the Georgian election authorities to resolve these problems quickly, so as to restore the integrity of the election process and to ensure a result that meets OSCE standards for democratic elections.

According to Georgia's Unified Election Code, the government is required to announce final election results by today. We look forward to fulfillment of that requirement.

We again call on all sides to respect the role of peaceful assembly in the political process, and to take all steps to prevent violence. We are encouraged that, so far, calm has prevailed.

With run-off elections for majoritarian seats in a number of precincts scheduled for November 23, the United States again takes this opportunity to urge Georgian authorities to ensure that the voting this time is conducted in full accordance with the Unified Election Code and with international and OSCE standards of fairness and transparency.

We appreciate the efforts of the OSCE Mission in Tbilisi and the OSCE Election Observer Mission, as they continue to monitor the election process, and we will continue to follow developments closely.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.