



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Transnistria

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Paul W. Jones
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 30, 2004

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Over the past three weeks, there have been few signs of an imminent resolution of tensions in the breakaway region of Transnistria. While some Moldovan-language schools have opened, Transnistrian authorities are making halting progress at best on ending the crisis.

Schools in Rybnitsa and Tiraspol only yesterday finally received their registration certificates. We applaud this overdue achievement.

However, the schools remain closed, as they lack buildings in which to hold classes. We strongly urge the Transnistrian authorities to help expedite the process and restore electricity and heating to the other schools lacking these basic utilities.

Transnistrian authorities have spoken of relocating children by force and are harassing parents who wish to send their children to Moldovan-language schools. This is uncivilized and counterproductive. On September 16, Transnistrian police prevented Moldova's Minister of Education from attending an OSCE-arranged meeting in Tiraspol.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to state our dismay with this ongoing situation. The Transnistrians continue to use children as pawns for their political ends. We hope yesterday's actions represent the beginnings of a new, more positive attitude by the Transnistrian authorities toward Moldovan children.

We express again our concern over the continuing efforts of the Transnistrian militia to seize control of the Moldovan national railway in Transnistria. Their occupation of the train station in Bender continues.

In a disturbing new development, a statement by the deputy head of Russia's Trade Chamber suggests that Russia will recognize Transnistrian certificates of origin. We hope this was in error, and we call on Russia -- as well as all other OSCE states -- to respect Moldova's denial of customs certification to Transnistria.

Mr. Chairman, we note again that the actions of the Transnistrian authorities make clear the need for Russia to fulfill its Istanbul commitments and withdraw its munitions and forces from Moldova. We call on Russia to take this step without further delay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.