**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

37th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of Georgia***

26 January 2021

Madame President,

Bulgaria warmly welcomes the delegation of Georgia and thanks for the presentation of the national report.

We commend the Government’s commitment to implement significant reforms aiming at improved standards of human rights promotion and protection, as well as the efforts made by Georgia in the fight against COVID-19.

We express concern that the human rights situation in the occupied regions of Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, continues to deteriorate. The Georgians living in the occupied territories are subject to ethnic discrimination and their property rights are gravely violated. Other persistent human rights challenges include restrictions on freedom of movement, access to personal documentation and the rights to education.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations to Georgia:

1. Develop the National Human Rights Strategy (2021–2030) on the basis of a transparent and participatory process involving civil society.
2. Continue mobilizing efforts of the international community to ensure unrestricted access of international human rights and humanitarian organizations to Abkhazia, Georgia, and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, to monitor, report and address the severe human rights and humanitarian situation of conflict-effected population living in the occupied territories as well as in the vicinity of the occupation line.

We wish the Delegation of Georgia a successful review!

Thank you.