

**Open Joint Letter of Representatives of the Civil Society and Academic Community of Georgia on Russia's  
Military Buildup Along Ukraine's Border and the Enhancement of Strategic Cooperation to Counter  
Russian Aggression**

February 14, 2022

**To: The Honorable Antony J. Blinken  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520**

**CC: The Honorable Kelly C. Degnan  
Ambassador of the United States to Georgia  
U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi  
29 Georgian-American Friendship Avenue  
Didi Dighomi, 0131**

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We express our gratitude towards your ongoing leadership and efforts for maintaining international peace. We appreciate America's steadfast support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Throughout the last thirty years, our friendship and strategic partnership have been strong and unshakeable. This year we are celebrating 30 years of U.S.-Georgia diplomatic relations. After regaining Georgia's independence, the U.S. has provided multi-dimensional assistance to help Georgia to build democracy and become a modern state, capable of responsible self-defense, that contributes to the security and prosperity not only of all Georgians but of a Europe whole, free and at peace. The Georgian soldiers with American militaries have made a valuable contribution to maintaining international peace.

We acknowledge that the U.S. is a vital ally for Georgia, especially in the face of Russian aggressive behavior. In this regard, we are deeply concerned about the movements of the Russian Federation along Ukraine's border. Regardless of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation seeks to restore so-called "zones of influence". Russia's ongoing and possible destructive actions pose a threat to Euro-Atlantic security and modern international order. Because of such aggressive behavior, our key values and principles are at risk.

The Russian dangerous actions infringe the territorial integrity of Georgia and Ukraine every single day in the 21st century. We firmly stand with the Ukrainian people amidst the Russian troop buildup on the Ukrainian border.

We appreciate that our Western allies and partners are committed to the rules-based international order based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all states. In this regard, we welcome the Western leaders' statements that underscored "no third party could influence the sovereign choice of other countries". Georgia and Ukraine independently define their foreign policy priorities.

Amidst Russia's military buildup along Ukraine's border, we would like to request the possibility to begin discussions on amending the U.S.-Georgia Charter on Strategic Partnership. Amendments may intend to underline the continuation of a range of substantive measures to prevent Russian direct and hybrid aggressive actions including cyberattacks against Georgia, and hold the Kremlin accountable for such aggression, violations of international law. At the same time, the amendments would reaffirm the 2021 Brussels Summit Communiqué of NATO. As it is known, according to this decision, the Allies support Georgia's sovereign

right to decide its own future foreign policy course free from outside interference, including with respect to Georgia's aspirations to join NATO. Such formulations were considered in the new U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership signed in Washington, D.C. on November 10, 2021, and replaced the U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, signed in Washington in 2008.

We strongly believe that enhancing cooperation with strategic partners, especially in defense and security, is crucial to deter Russian aggressive actions. Simultaneously, in the changing security environment in the region, we express our readiness to contribute to the development of the initiatives that will facilitate the establishment of the framework to transform the U.S.-Georgia strategic partnership and officially become strategic allies.

Overall, we acknowledge that multi-dimensional strategic cooperation with the United States will assist Georgia to achieve its goals of being a full-fledged part of the Euro-Atlantic Community and create new opportunities for the Georgian society.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

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Fulbright Scholar at MIT (2017-2018)

An Alumna of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the Harvard Program on Negotiations

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