

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Working Session 18 “Discussion on human rights activities (with special
emphasis on project work)”
of 2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Mr. Moderator,
Distinguished participants,**

I would like to begin my statement by reaffirming the direct connection between the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and true, lasting peace and security in the OSCE region.

While realizing this interlinkage Ukraine, confronting the ongoing military aggression from a neighboring state, remains committed to the chosen course of profound transformations that will consolidate democracy, good-governance, rule of law and protection of human rights, enhancing the implementation of relevant OSCE commitments.

The Government of Ukraine co-operates closely with the OSCE and its institutions, their representatives paid numerous visits to Ukraine, many joint projects are fulfilled. We value this cooperation, which assists the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities to strengthen the democratic processes, institutions and civil society.

We are convinced that the OSCE needs to have strong institutions in order to effectively fulfil its functions. In this respect we strongly support the work of the three OSCE autonomous institutions –ODIHR, HCNM and RFOM and consider them as one of the OSCE’s greatest assets.

Distinguished colleagues,

Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, ensuring the rule of law, promoting principles of democracy as well as protecting democratic institutions and free elections are at the core of the OSCE concept of comprehensive security and I should note with satisfaction the cooperation between my country and OSCE/ODIHR in this area.

At the same time we encourage the ODIHR to use its mandate and available instruments to contribute to full implementation of the UN GA Resolution “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)”.

We encourage the ODIHR to use its assets to carry out human rights monitoring in the Crimean peninsula illegally occupied by Russia and again urge the Russian Federation to remove all impediments for access and permanent monitoring in Crimea by international organizations.

We value our close cooperation with the High Commissioner on National Minorities. My government stays committed to further protecting and promoting the rights of all national minorities in Ukraine in line with OSCE commitments and international standards.

Ukraine is confident that the HCNM should further play a key role in identifying and addressing short term triggers of inter-ethnic tension as well as long term structural concerns.

In this regards Ukraine's most concern is the growing repressions, serious human rights violations and discrimination against the Crimean Tatar national minority and ethnic Ukrainians in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol .

We encourage the OSCE High Commissioner to take as a matter of priority the issue of mass illegal detentions of persons belonging to national minorities in the occupied Crimea, including the case of Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis Ahtem Ciygoz along with other Crimean Tatar activists.

This highly disturbing situation requires adequate reaction and continuous active engagement of the OSCE High Commissioner in seeking observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula.

Strengthening freedom of the media, including the safety of journalists, is a priority for Ukraine.

The Russian aggression against my country undermines the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the entire OSCE space and poses significant threats to the freedom of expression, freedom of the media and safety of journalists in Ukraine.

While reiterating our full support for the mandate of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Ukraine urges RFoM to continue its monitoring of the media situation in the occupied Crimea and parts of Donbas, where the journalists face ongoing intimidation and threats and committed crimes remain without due investigation.

Distinguished colleagues,

We appreciate the role of the OSCE as part of international efforts aimed at assisting Ukraine's Government in pursuing the reforms, many of which strengthen at the national level the implementation of the OSCE commitments.

In this context, we wish to highlight our close interaction with the PCU in implementing projects offering training on psychological support to people in conflict-affected areas; promoting the safety of journalists; improving election legislations and proceedings; promoting partnership and dialogue between Ukrainian central authorities and civil society; assisting judicial reform in Ukraine and

improving citizens' access to justice ; providing recommendations and expertise on law-enforcement reforms, good governance and anticorruption.

Our experience shows that to raise efficiency and effectiveness of the OSCE project activities in Ukraine, there is a need to should focus on the areas where the OSCE has a recognized expertise, and which correspond to the security mandate of the Organization, avoiding duplication of efforts with other international organizations. Priorities and needs of the Ukrainian partners should be the main driving force in the development and implementation of project activity.

We look forward to further fostering our cooperation and mutual understanding.

Thank you, Mr. Moderator