

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Working Session 8 “Tolerance and non-discrimination” of
2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Mr. Moderator,
Distinguished participants,**

Ukraine aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and I would like to add some lines in my national capacity.

Ukraine firmly condemns all manifestations of intolerance, incitement of hatred, harassment or violence against persons or communities, wherever they occur and regardless of which groups they target.

The OSCE commitments present a comprehensive framework for participating States to address manifestations of intolerance and discrimination since they pose a threat to the security of the region.

As early as 1990, in the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting, the participating States had declared that they would “take effective measures to promote understanding and tolerance”. OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions adopted at Porto (2002), Maastricht (2003), Sofia (2004), Ljubljana (2005), Brussels (2006), Madrid (2007) and Athens (2009) have strengthened this commitment.

During Ukraine’s OSCE Chairmanship in 2013 my country invested significant efforts to promote the implementation of the relevant OSCE human dimension commitments, including on combating discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Jews, Muslims and members of other religions.

We recognize the important role of the OSCE Institutions - Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, High Commissioner on National Minorities, and Representative on Freedom of the Media - in assisting participating States in the implementation of their commitments on combating intolerance and discrimination and promoting mutual respect and understanding.

Mr. Moderator,

The Ukrainian authorities are vocal, at both national and international levels, in their condemnation of anti-Semitism, racism, neo-Nazism, fascism, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, chauvinism and any kind of discrimination. As a country with representatives of more than 130 nationalities and different religious backgrounds living in its territory, Ukraine attaches great importance to the promotion of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding within the Ukrainian society.

The topic of preventing and combating discrimination is duly addressed by the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine, which provides for efficient system at national and local levels, including legal protection, awareness raising programmes and statistical data collection.

The Government of Ukraine continues to closely cooperate with international organizations to further strengthen the implementation of relevant OSCE commitments. The Ukrainian authorities carefully examine the assessments

and recommendations of international organizations with due respect to their expertise, objectivity and impartiality.

Any changes of the jurisdictional affiliation of the Orthodox communities, the issue that was raised many times during this working session, are occurring according to the article 8 of the respective national law and OSCE recommendations on the basis of the decision of the majority of community members. So, in fact the openly expressed by the different representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate (either from Russia or Ukraine) rejection of the possibility for free choice for religious affiliation and believes in general is an obvious expression of the totalitarian way of thinking and denial of the liberal principles. This approach is especially dangerous because it intends to mask the real intentions of returning in the repressive past addressing and using, at the same time, mechanisms that offered by the international democratic institutions, including the OSCE.

Dear participants,

Democracy and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential safeguards of tolerance and non-discrimination. They constitute important factors for stability, security, co-operation and peaceful development throughout the entire OSCE region.

Our Meeting takes place at a challenging time, when Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea and on-going aggression in Donbas amply demonstrate that violation of international law by one participating State inflicts serious damage to democratic stability, human rights and peace in the entire Europe. Just as before in the past, the most glaring violation of human dignity, cases of persecution and discrimination take place in the situations of occupation.

Grave human rights violations, committed by the occupying power on part of Ukraine's territory affect people of all religious denominations, including Christians and Muslims, and of different ethnic background. We reiterate that the ban of a highest representative body of the Crimean Tatar people constitutes a grave violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Distinguished colleagues,

Topic of non-discrimination and combating the hate crime is closely related to the topic of full respect to the human rights. In this context, Ukrainian delegation would like one more time to remind about very dramatic and demonstrative fact that shows that a lack of respect to the human rights could have, as the logical consequence of such approach, experiencing of unacceptable forms of the state violence that stand in the same line with the obvious, almost terroristic activity.

I mean the enforced disappearance of 19-years-old Ukrainian Pavlo Hryb who was kidnaped by the representatives of the Russian secret services from the territory of Belarus.

Kidnaping happened on August 24, in a day of the biggest Ukrainian holiday – Independence Day. It shows one more time that this event had obvious political background.

Just in more than two weeks after the disappearance of the young man in Belarus the Russian officials confirmed that he was sentenced to prison in Krasnodar, in several thousand kilometers from the place of kidnaping.

It is important to emphasize on the fact that the father of the kidnaped person is one of the leading person in the chaplaincy department of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate and is working on creating the spiritual support of the Ukrainian army that opposed the Russian military aggression at the Donbas region of my country. So, it is an attempt to take revenge, on the personal, family level, to those representatives of the Ukrainian society who oppose most actively to the military aggression of the Russian Federation.

We also would like to remind about imprisonment for more than one and a half year of the very famous Ukrainian religious studies scientist Ihor Kozlosky, who was illegally arrested in Donetsk that is the temporary controlled by the Russian hybrid forces. The only accusation to the address of this person, that was presented by the so-called “authorities” of completely controlled by Russia so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic”, was his participation in organization of the inter-religious meeting, prayers and cooperation with the different religious unites

We call on Russia and its proxies for these people and all other Ukrainian detainees and political prisoners to be released.

Mr.Moderator,

We encourage the OSCE and its Institutions to be more persistent in their efforts to ensure monitoring of human rights situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

While addressing the current security challenges, a hallmark of our endeavors in the OSCE must remain upholding the principles and commitments we have all made as participating States on promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I thank you, Mr.Moderator.