



**UKRAINE**

**MISSION OF THE PRESIDENT OF UKRAINE  
IN THE AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC OF CRIMEA**

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**Statement by**

**Borys Babin, the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in  
the Autonomous Republic of Crimea**

**OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting  
“The Role of the Free Media in the Comprehensive Approach to Security”**

**2-3 November 2017, Vienna**

**Distinguished colleagues,**

I would like to draw the attention of the participants to the considerable deterioration of the human rights situation in the illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, in particular the oppression of the freedom of expression as well as suppression of independent media.

Since February 2014 the track record of violations by Russian occupation authorities in Crimea included numerous cases of physical violence, property damage, criminal and administrative persecution, including interrogations, searches, arrests, fines, restrictions on TV and radio broadcasting, internet media blocking, refusals of access to information, prohibitions of filming, dismissals, intimidation, censorship and other cases of suppression of journalists, bloggers, and other citizens who express their opinions publicly or spread information.

From 2014 until mid-2015 all independent media were eliminated in Crimea through mandatory reregistration introduced by the Russian occupation authorities. All independent media were unable to pass these procedures as artificial obstacles were established for them. Even participation in these procedures set a huge moral choice for media managers and journalists.

All the media broadcasting in the Crimean Tatar language is now under full control of the Russian occupation authorities. Publishing newspapers and issuing TV subtitles in the Crimean Tatar language using Latin alphabet is banned. The media in Crimea are prohibited from reporting about the activities of the Crimean Tatar representative bodies, such as the Kurultay and the Mejlis, as they continue to be

banned by the Russian occupation authorities as “extremist organizations”, despite the relevant Order of the International Court of Justice.

Regarding the Ukrainian language media, they are now totally eliminated in Crimea. As the free broadcasting from mainland Ukraine covers now some territories of the occupied Crimea, the Russian occupation authorities are making attempts to destroy the possibility for the Crimean residents to have access to independent and alternative media.

These illegal actions by the Russian occupation authorities violate the provisions of international law contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as a number of OSCE commitments.

Total occupation of information space in Ukraine’s Crimea by the Russian government controlled media, which was used since the beginning of the illegal occupation of Crimea in 2014 for aggressive propaganda and disinformation, continues to represent a serious security threat.

In this regard, we are deeply concerned with the construction by the Russian occupation authorities of a new powerful TV tower in the Dzhankoy district of occupied Crimea near the administrative border with mainland Ukraine – so called “Solenoye Ozero” project. Enactment of this project aims at extending Russian propaganda, hate speech, disinformation and false news deeper into the territory of Ukraine. Russia continues to brutally violate the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, including those relating to the promotion by States of climate of confidence and respect among peoples consonant with their duty to refrain from propaganda for wars of aggression.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

The OSCE’s concept of security is rooted in principles and commitments, which have been blatantly violated. This situation requires permanent monitoring and strong reaction from the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media of the media situation in the occupied Crimea. We also expect closer attention to the above problems from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, whose mandate covers the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.