



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement
in response to Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, the OSCE High Commissioner on
National Minorities**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1431st meeting of the Permanent Council,
06 July 2023

Dear High Commissioner,

Thank you for presenting the Report that raises important issues related to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the OSCE region.

Ukraine values the ethnic and national diversity of its society and embodies open policy of creating more opportunities for self-realization of national minorities (communities).

On 01 July the President of Ukraine signed the Law on the continuation of the transition period to the Ukrainian language of schools in which teaching is conducted in one of the languages of the EU countries until 01 September 2024.

State Service of Ukraine for Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience is working on the State Targeted National and Cultural Program "Unity in Diversity" for the period until 2034. The Concept of the Program was developed in an inclusive dialogue and taking into account interests of national minorities and indigenous peoples and approved by the Government of Ukraine.

The development of methodology on the peculiarities of the use of minority languages is also underway.

Ambassador Abdrakhmanov,

We welcome the fact that your Office pays attention to the grave violations perpetrated by russia in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

russia violates the Geneva Conventions, which stipulate a number of rules to be observed by an occupying state with regard to civilians who remain in the occupied territory.

The aggressor state is trying to change the ethnic composition of the temporarily occupied territories, actively deporting Ukrainians and forcibly resettling them in russia as well as carrying out large-scale resettlement of people from remote regions of russia to Ukraine.

We fully resonate your stance that actions and steps designed to assimilate individuals against their will can lead to irreparable harm.

russian occupiers make every effort to destroy European standards-based national education system, introduce education in russian and according to the russian curriculum. They enact measures aimed at undermining and erasing Ukrainian cultural identity and militarizing Ukrainian children, including through the installation of military-patriotic educational programs and camps.

The Russian occupation regime keeps discriminating, tormenting and repressing Crimean Tatars.

Under the threat of persecution local schools have been discouraged from teaching in Ukrainian and in Crimean Tatar language. Teachers and students living under occupation face pressure to switch to studying under Russian curriculum.

In violation of the norms of international humanitarian law, Russia continues forced mobilization campaign in Crimea that targets specifically Crimean Tatars, forcing them to fight against their own country.

Apart from conscription and mobilization, for their pro-Ukrainian position Crimean Tatars are subjected to illegal searches of their homes, intimidation, abductions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, sham trials for the so-called "discreditation of the Russian armed forces".

The so-called "investigations" and "trials" over Crimean Tatars conducted by the Russian occupation authorities are accompanied by the numerous reports of physical and psychological pressure, obstruction of the right to legal defense and neglecting the need for medical care. Crimean Tatar activist Dzhemil Hafarov died in prison because he was refused proper medical care, Amet Suleymanov, Iryna Danylovykh also were denied medical treatment while in prison as many other Crimean Tatar activists, journalists who have joined the list of victims of the occupation authorities.

In light of the abovementioned, we ask you, Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, to continue making full use of your mandate and provide response to serious human rights violations by the Russian occupying forces against the representatives of indigenous people of Ukraine - Crimean Tatars.

We expect concrete steps to be taken by the HCNM to address these grave violations.

Ambassador Abdrakhmanov,

Approach Russia takes in relation to its own national minorities deserves particular attention. It deliberately sends the male population from its remote poor regions with compact residence of national minorities to face certain death. This is nothing else but ethnic cleansings and another war crime.

We believe that the issue of Russia's mobilization campaigns that disproportionately target persons belonging to national minorities should remain in the focus of HCNM's attention.

In this regard, we encourage you, High Commissioner, to give necessary attention to these worrying trends and to examine the situation in Russia as well as take steps to urge Russia to fully comply with relevant OSCE commitments on the national minorities.

Dear High Commissioner,

Ban on education according to the Ukrainian curriculum is not the only crime Russia commits in its attempt to exterminate the Ukrainian nation.

Russia has forcibly relocated thousands of Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to its own territory, where they are subjected to numerous human rights violations and abuses, in particular those relating to a change of the child's personal status, including citizenship, separation from parents or guardians, adoption, and other violations or abuses leading to their forced assimilation and erasing their Ukrainian identity.

Such actions of the occupying state grossly violate the legislation of Ukraine and international law, including the IV Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

Moreover, this can be qualified as forcible transfer of children from one human group to another that falls under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide.

We therefore urge you, Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, to dedicate priority attention to addressing such violations, in particular those utterly unacceptable practices aiming to change child's personal status.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.