



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine in response to  
Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic  
Institutions and Human Rights**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1309th meeting of the Permanent Council,  
15 April 2021

**Madam Chairperson,**

The Delegation of Ukraine welcomes to the Permanent Council meeting the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Mr. Matteo Mecacci and thanks him for the comprehensive presentation.

We are confident that under your leadership the ODIHR will act as a genuine OSCE human rights office making further progress in promoting human rights and democracy throughout the OSCE region, based on OSCE principles and commitments.

Let me assure you of Ukraine's support for ODIHR's mandate as autonomous OSCE Institution established to assist participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments.

Ukraine and ODIHR have a great track record of efficient and constructive cooperation in the areas of democracy and rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, tolerance and non-discrimination. We stand ready to strengthen our fruitful contacts and would welcome your, Director Mecacci, visit to Ukraine in order to discuss the agenda of future cooperation.

**Mr. Director,**

ODIHR's professional, independent and transparent activities remain of greatest importance especially at present time, when security and stability must be restored in the OSCE region.

For 7 years of ongoing Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, more than 14,000 people were killed and almost 40,000 wounded. More than 1.5 million Crimean and Donbas residents have been forced to flee their homes as internally displaced persons, while up to 500 000 Russians have been relocated by Russia to the occupied Crimea in violation of the international humanitarian law.

The Russia-occupied Crimea and parts of Donbas transformed into a territory of lawlessness, where human rights and fundamental freedoms are violated, illegal passportization and forced imposition of Russian citizenship are being carried out; where violence, torture, persecution and suppression of any dissent became an everyday practice.

In the temporarily occupied Crimea, since 2014, Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars face systematic violations of their political, cultural and religious rights, which amounts to racial discrimination. Since 2016, the Mejlis of the Crimean

Tatar people remains banned, contrary to Russia's international obligations and the Order of the International Court of Justice. After the occupation, 1300 religious organizations in Crimea were banned. The Russian occupation administration conducts systemic policy of forcing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine out of the peninsula. The human rights' abuses also encompass violations of the prohibition of torture, the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought and conscience, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, as well as restriction of property rights of non-Russian citizens.

We emphasise the importance of stepping up efforts of the OSCE as a regional international organisation, with the ODIHR at the core of its human dimension architecture, in contributing to the full implementation of the respective UN GA resolutions on the "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine."

We also underline the need for enhanced international cooperation aimed at the de-occupation of Crimea, including through the implementation of the Ukrainian initiative "Crimean Platform".

**Mr. Mecacci,**

We are convinced it is high time for ODIHR to take more decisive steps to help protect the human rights of Ukrainian citizens affected by the Russian aggression.

Of particular concern for the ODIHR from the human rights perspective must be the fate of over 100 political prisoners, most of them Crimean Tatars, illegally detained by the Russian Federation. We look forward to ODIHR's active involvement in monitoring the observance of their rights and facilitation of their immediate and unconditional release.

Even more people continue to be illegally detained in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in the places like sadly known illegal prison "Isolyatsia" (Isolation) in the occupied Donetsk, where, according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, prisoners have been tortured and exposed to sexual violence.

The OSCE Institution led by you, Mr. Mecacci, has all the tools and mandate to identify, denounce and address any violation of the human dimension commitments by the aggressor State, including multiple and grave human rights abuses in Crimea and in parts of Donbas.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Ukraine consistently voices its deep concern over the human rights situation in Russia and its significant departure in the past years from implementation of respective OSCE commitments and international obligations.

The total clampdown on democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms in Russia is marked, in particular, by restrictive legislation on "foreign agents" and "undesirable organizations", shrinking space for civil society, independent media and political opposition, restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression, violation of the rights of national and other minorities, accompanied by the rise of aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism, chauvinism, as well as xenophobic public statements by mainstream politicians.

The state of affairs with human rights in Russia requires close attention and reaction of the ODIHR to assist the country in meeting its OSCE commitments.

**Mr. Director,**

Before I conclude, last but not least, I wish to stress that Ukraine regards the OSCE human dimension events as important instrument for the monitoring of compliance by all participating States with their human dimension commitments, including through the unique involvement of civil society, which we fully support.

In this context, we do expect that under your leadership the ODIHR will strictly adhere to the OSCE principles and commitments, and the norms of international law, including the UN GA Resolution 68/262 “Territorial Integrity of Ukraine”, and will put an end to the continued attempts of Russia as occupying power in Crimea to misuse the human dimension fora.

We once again thank you, Director Mecacci, for your presentation and wish every success to you and your able team.

**Thank you, Madam Chairperson.**