



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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Statement on the second anniversary of the illegal arrest of Ukrainian journalist Roman Sushchenko

As delivered by Ihor Lossovskiy,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1196th meeting of the Permanent Council,
4 October 2018

Mr. Chairperson,

The fate of the Ukrainian citizens, taken hostage by Kremlin as political prisoners, has been in the focus of the Permanent Council from the very beginning of Russia's invasion into Ukraine.

Today we reiterate our resolute protest against the ongoing unlawful actions of the Russian Federation towards Roman Sushchenko and many more Ukrainian citizens, who have been prosecuted by the Russian authorities for their opposition to the Russian occupation of Ukraine's Crimea.

Two years ago in Moscow, on 30 September 2016, Ukrainian journalist Roman Sushchenko was arrested by Russia's Federal Security Service, FSB, on trumped-up espionage charges. He remains imprisoned today.

Roman worked for Ukrainian online news agency Ukrinform as a foreign correspondent in France. Being a resolute independent defender of the freedom of speech, he reported and exposed the Russia's war against Ukraine after the Kremlin's illegal annexation of the Crimea and occupation of part of the Donbas in 2014, thereby opening the eyes of the French public to what is really happening in occupied territories of Ukraine.

In his articles, Sushchenko debunked Russian propaganda and showed the reality to the European audience.

On June 4 this year Sushchenko was sentenced to 12 years in prison. On September 12 the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation upheld the verdict of the Moscow City Court. The delivered sentence highlights one again that there are no independent fair courts in Russia.

In this regards Ukraine expresses its strong protest against the unlawful decision of the Russian Court to sentence Ukrainian journalist Roman Sushchenko to 12 years in a maximum security prison on the fabricated charges of "espionage".

The court's disregard of the facts of provocations against Roman Sushchenko as well as gross falsifications of the case, which were proven by defense, is yet another demonstration of the lack of justice in the Russian Federation.

Cynical dismissal by Russia of the fundamental human rights reflects the necessity to strengthen international pressure upon Moscow in order to stop its aggression, repressions and infringements of Ukrainian citizens.

We highly appreciate the international solidarity, including from the OSCE community, in urging the immediate and unconditional release by Russia of Roman Sushchenko and all other Ukrainian political prisoners.

We urge the Russian side to stop the judicial farce, which ruins human lives for the sake of political ambitions. We urge the Russian Federation to comply with their OSCE commitments and their obligations under international law, concerning the respect for fundamental freedoms, and to immediately release Roman Sushchenko and other Ukrainian political prisoners who are still kept in custody on the territory of the occupied Crimea and in the Russian Federation and provide for their unobstructed return back to Ukraine.

We call on the international community to condemn these cynical crimes against fundamental human rights and step up political and diplomatic pressure on the Russian Federation to ensure that all illegally detained citizens of Ukraine are released and guaranteed safe return home.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.