



United States Mission to the OSCE

Treatment of Ukrainian Hostages

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 29, 2015

We are appalled by recent reports that the Russia-backed separatists have beaten, tortured, and subsequently publicly paraded Ukrainian security forces captured at the Donetsk airport. The detainees were forcibly dragged to the site of the trolleybus bombing in Donetsk, where they were forced to ask the public for “forgiveness.” The separatists took pictures of the captured soldiers and posted them all over the Internet. We condemn these actions. They are further examples of the Russia-backed separatists’ blatant disregard for human decency, as well as the commitments they made in Minsk.

We reiterate our condemnation of Russia’s continued detention of Ukrainians including Nadiya Savchenko, a member of the Verkhovna Rada, and Crimean filmmaker Oleg Sentsov. We are deeply concerned by reports that Ms. Savchenko has been on a hunger strike since December 13 to protest the terms of her detention, and that her health is deteriorating as a result. We also note that Ms. Savchenko is a delegate to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, a body dedicated to protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. We repeat our call that Russia and the Russia-backed separatists immediately release all hostages as they agreed to do in Minsk.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.