



United States Mission to the OSCE

Abduction, Detention, and Sentencing of Ukrainian Citizens by the Russian Federation

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 28, 2016

We are pleased that Ms. Savchenko ended her dry hunger strike in response to requests from her family members and President Poroshenko. We would like to remind Russia that it remains responsible for Ms. Savchenko's health and welfare. We have also seen reports that President Poroshenko and President Putin have agreed to exchange Ms. Savchenko for two Russian GRU officers convicted on terrorism charges in Ukraine. As President Obama told President Putin in their April 18 phone call, Russia must release Ms. Savchenko without delay.

We also note reports that Russia's Ministry of Justice initiated a process which could allow Oleg Sentsov, Gennady Afanasiev, Oleksander Kolchenko, and Yuri Soloshenko to be released to Ukraine. We call again on the Russian Federation to release these hostages and all other Ukrainians held by Russia for politically-motivated reasons, including Akhtem Chygoz.

We continue to urge the Russian Federation, as a signatory of the Minsk agreements, to support efforts in the Trilateral Contact Group on the exchange of prisoners between the Ukrainian authorities and combined Russian-separatist forces on the basis of the all-for-all principle.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.