



United States Mission to the OSCE

On the Detention of Nadiya Savchenko by the Russian Federation

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
March 10, 2016

The United States calls on Russia once again to immediately release Nadiya Savchenko and drop all charges against her.

Ms. Savchenko has been unjustly imprisoned in Russia since 2014 – detained and facing trial on trumped up charges. Ms. Savchenko was proudly serving her country as a member of the Ukrainian armed forces, fighting in the eastern part of the country when she was abducted by separatists and taken across the border against her will.

In the 20 months since she was captured in eastern Ukraine and taken to Russia, Ms. Savchenko has reportedly endured interrogations, solitary confinement, and forced so-called “psychiatric evaluation.” She has endured a sham trial in which Russian authorities denied her defense team the opportunity to present evidence of her innocence or question those implicated in her capture.

Nadiya Savchenko has been systematically denied the basic protections of the rule of law and fair trial guarantees. Her detention also contravenes Russia’s commitment to release all hostages and illegally detained persons under the Minsk agreements.

We saw reports this morning that Ms. Savchenko is once again drinking water, but that she continues to refuse food in protest of her continued detention by the Russian Federation.

We remind Russia that it bears responsibility for the health and welfare of Nadiya Savchenko, as evidenced by the calls from around the globe – from governments, civil society, and thousands of concerned individuals – the world is watching.

As Vice President Biden has said, the United States stands with Nadiya Savchenko and with the Ukrainian people. We call on Russia to make the right choice—to drop all charges and release her at once. Nadiya Savchenko deserves to go home to her family and friends and join her fellow Rada members in shaping a new Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.