



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
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**JOINT STATEMENT OF CANADA AND NORWAY ON THE OSCE MOSCOW
MECHANISM INVOKED BY 45 PARTICIPATING STATES, FOLLOWING
CONSULTATIONS WITH UKRAINE, TO ADDRESS THE ARBITRARY DEPRIVATION
OF LIBERTY OF UKRAINIAN CIVILIANS BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AS PART
OF RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 25 April 2024

Madame Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of Canada and my own country, Norway.

Today, we stand together with the international community in addressing the grave findings detailed in the newly delivered Moscow Mechanism report. This critical document, prepared by esteemed experts Prof. Veronika Bílková, Dr. Cecilie Hellestveit, and Dr. Elīna Šteinerte, sheds light on the harsh realities faced by Ukrainian civilians who have been arbitrarily deprived of their liberty by the Russian Federation.

The report reveals that since the onset of Russian aggression in 2014, thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been unlawfully detained under the pretense of various unjustifiable accusations. These acts of detention are not only a breach of international law but also indicative of a broader strategy of intimidation, suppression, and control.

The findings underscore a systematic pattern of cruelty, including the widespread use of torture, enforced disappearances, and other forms of inhumane treatment. Such actions are not only unacceptable but are indicative of war crimes and crimes against humanity. It is imperative that these violations do not go unanswered.

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease these unlawful practices and to release all unlawfully detained civilians unconditionally. In accordance with the recommendations of the report, we urge the Russian Federation to provide the necessary

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procedural guarantees and ensure humane treatment for all detainees, in line with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Furthermore, the international community, including OSCE participating States, must work collaboratively to ensure accountability and justice for these egregious violations. We support the establishment of mechanisms that will enable effective remedies for victims, including compensation, rehabilitation, and guarantees of non-repetition, and endorse the report's recommendation that the Russian Federation establish a National Information Bureau and guarantee access to the ICRC, consistent with its international obligations.

Madame Chair,

This report is not just a collection of findings — it is a call to action. It demands a concerted and unified response to uphold the principles of justice and human dignity.

Point four of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula establishes a diplomatic platform dedicated to identifying and securing the release of children who have been illegally deported, as well as civilians unlawfully detained, political prisoners, and prisoners of war held in Russia, the Temporarily Occupied Territories, and the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

As co-chairs of Working Group 4 established under the Peace Formula, Norway and Canada are deeply committed to advocating for the respect of international law and to enhancing the coordination of international efforts. We are dedicated to ensuring the full implementation of the Moscow Mechanism report's recommendations and to the complete restoration and protection of the rights of Ukrainian civilians. Active collaboration between entities like the OSCE, the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances, as well as UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups is essential for implementing measures that safeguard the rights and dignity of those affected.

At the same time, we recall the appalling findings of last May's Moscow Mechanism report and strongly urge the Russian authorities to implement proper procedures for, and to actively facilitate, the reunification of families, particularly concerning all children who have been forcibly transferred or deported from Ukraine. We emphasize the urgent need for systematic efforts to restore these broken family bonds and ensure the swift and safe return of children to their homes, in line with the best interests of those children.

Madame Chair,

Today marks a pivotal moment in our pursuit of justice for Ukraine. We stand ready to support Ukraine and the international community in bringing an end to these injustices and working towards a lasting peace in the region.

Let me, on behalf of Canada and Norway, extend our profound gratitude to the experts for their thought-provoking and shocking report, eloquently written in a remarkably short period of time.

Finally, on a personal note, I earnestly hope that the Russian representative will pause and deeply reflect upon the discussions that have unfolded here today. May you consider the profound implications of these findings, not just as a delegate, but as a witness to history's judgment. It is in moments like these that individual conscience and collective responsibility are called upon to uphold the dignity and rights of humanity.

Thank you.