



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to the Report of
Mrs. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic
Institutions and Human Rights**

as delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1267th meeting of the Permanent Council,
14 May 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

We join previous speakers in welcoming the Director of the ODIHR OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir back to the Permanent Council and thank her for the presented report on the activities of the Office in 2019 and plans for the current year.

On behalf of the Government of Ukraine I wish to assure the Director of Ukraine's support for ODIHR's mandate and its activities on assisting participating States in the implementation of their human dimension commitments, promoting human rights and democracy across the entire OSCE region.

While continuing to confront many security and humanitarian challenges stemming from the Russia's aggression, Ukraine is fully committed to strengthening its domestic reforms efforts to enhance implementation of relevant OSCE commitments and international standards.

We highly appreciate our close cooperation with the ODIHR in this regard and rely on drawing from its expertise and continued support in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law.

Distinguished colleagues,

The territories of Ukraine – Crimea and parts of Donbas, temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, – are the sites of the most troubling situation with the gross violation of human rights within the OSCE area.

We are profoundly concerned over the repressions, serious human rights violations and discrimination by the occupation authorities against everybody who does not accept the illegal occupation by Russia of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. This disturbing situation requires ODIHR's adequate reaction and continuous active engagement in seeking observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula.

We encourage the ODIHR to use all assets at its disposal and closely monitor the situation, in particular the implementation by the Russian Federation as occupying power of the recommendations contained in the 2015 ODIHR/HCNM Human Rights Assessment Mission report on Crimea.

It remains crucial to continue seeking access to the peninsula in compliance with the UN GA Resolutions 68/262 “Territorial integrity of Ukraine”, 71/205, 73/263 and 74/168 “Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)”.

We also encourage the ODIHR to cooperate with the SMM to seek responses to the plight of millions of Ukrainians who were internally displaced or stay as the hostages in the parts of Donbas, occupied by Russia, where human rights and freedoms were almost eradicated.

The situation worsened amid the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing armed aggression of the Russian Federation makes it impossible for the Ukrainian side to provide assistance to the population of the temporarily occupied territories directly. Aid from the international community also becomes significantly difficult in the context of continued hostilities and the actual closure of access by the occupation administration to the OSCE SMM, the UN agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international humanitarian organizations.

The occupation administrations deliberately resorted to actions that put under the serious threat the lives and health of the Ukrainian citizens in condition of fast spread of the COVID-19 virus, inappropriate medical protection in the occupied territories and particular epidemiological vulnerability in Russian prisons.

The jails and places of illegal detention in the occupied Crimea and parts of Donbas just could not guarantee the right to life and access to healthcare for illegally detained Ukrainians.

Approaching the Day of Remembrance of the victims of the Crimean Tatars Genocide, which took place 76 years ago on 18 May 1944, let me draw your attention to this sad anniversary. We plan to raise issue of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from their homeland by the totalitarian Stalin’s regime at the next meeting of the Permanent Council. As of now, let me underline that if we turn a blind eye to the crimes of totalitarian regimes, the history repeats itself.

Director Gísladóttir,

The current threats to human dignity and security in the OSCE region, emanating from the gross breach by one participating State of the Helsinki principles and commitments, have to be duly taken into account in ODIHR’s activities.

We should seek further possibilities to strengthen OSCE human rights protection mechanisms to address these challenges.

It would be also interesting, Director Gísladóttir, to know your vision of the further development of the OSCE ODIHR and its pivotal directions of work for the years to come.

We once again thank you, Director, for your report and wish success to you and your team in promoting and protecting human security across the OSCE region, including in the situations of foreign occupation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.