



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement on “Abduction and illegal detention of Ukrainian citizens
by the Russian Federation”**

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1086th meeting of the Permanent Council,
21 January 2016

Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine takes the floor to reiterate again its resolute protest against abduction and continuing illegal detention by the Russian Federation of Ukrainian citizens, including Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and others. Despite strong international condemnation of Russia’s unlawful actions and calls by the international community to release the above Ukrainian citizens the Russian Federation continues to violate the norms of international law, the OSCE commitments and the Minsk agreements by holding them behind bars and moving further in their illegal and illegitimate prosecution.

Recent developments in the trial of the Ukrainian people’s deputy and PACE member Nadiya Savchenko show yet again its politically motivated nature. The institution in the Russian town of Donetsk vested with powers to serve justice continues to take on board all fabrications of the prosecution despite their gross inconsistencies while ignoring ample evidence of Ms.Savchenko’s innocence, provided by the defence.

In particular, on 13 January the court refused to include in the case of Nadiya Savchenko the witnesses’ examination records, which again tore down the version of the prosecution. The same happened in relation to the documents from the Prosecutor-General’s Office of Ukraine.

Last Monday the court heard defence’s witness Ivan Rusnak, Nadiya’s fellow soldier in 2014, whose evidence on the fighting of 17 June 2014 near Luhansk further proved the baselessness of all allegations, invented by the Russian authorities. According to his testimonies, during the fighting Nadiya Savchenko helped the wounded and had no special equipment for alleged “correction of fire”. As was proved before and as Mr.Rusnak confirmed, she was captured several hours earlier the reported time of death of the two Russian journalists.

Mr.Chairman,

Ms. Nadiya Savchenko will not be able to take part at the upcoming session of the

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, scheduled for 25-29 January in Strasbourg. I recall that a year ago Ms.Savchenko was confirmed by the PACE as its member, a position that grants international immunities, including from prosecution.

We remind that according to the Article 15 of the 1949 General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe, which was ratified by Russia, during the sessions of the Assembly, the Representatives to the Assembly shall enjoy exemption from arrest and prosecution on the territory of all member States. This immunity also applies when they are travelling to and from the place of meeting of the Assembly. By holding a PACE member behind bars Russia flagrantly violates its international obligations. We urge Russia to halt this unacceptable practice.

For more than a month Nadiya Savchenko has been on a hunger strike in protest against extension of her arrest by the Russian authorities. We are concerned over her health condition, which has significantly deteriorated.

Given that unlawful criminal case against Nadiya Savchenko is nearing its end, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has requested foreign diplomats and NGOs to be present at the final stage of the so-called "trial".

Mr.Chairman,

We wish to stress that the OSCE ODIHR should be able to monitor court proceedings and conditions of confinement in relation to all illegally detained persons.

We deplore that our concerns, expressed in different frameworks, including the OSCE Permanent Council, about reported torture and other ill-treatment of Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Henadiy Afanasiev, Mykola Karpyuk, Stanislav Klyh and other Ukrainians – political prisoners in Russia remains unaddressed by the Russian Federation. We urge the Russian Federation to conduct impartial investigation, in close cooperation with the ODIHR and other competent international institutions, of the reported acts of torture against Ukrainian citizens in Russia. We reiterate that the Russian Federation bears full responsibility for the life, health and observance of the rights of all Ukrainian citizens, keeping in custody in Russia.

The Russian Federation continues to ignore its Minsk commitment regarding the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons on the basis of "all for all" principle, which applies to abducted Ukrainian citizens illegally detained in Russia. We urge their immediate and unconditional release.

We call on the German Chairmanship to use its mandate to the full in facilitating the release of all abducted and illegally detained or imprisoned Ukrainian citizens in Russia.

Thank you, Mr.Chairman.