



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement in response to the Report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Madam Teresa Ribeiro**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1452<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
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**Mr. Chairperson,**

We thank Madam Teresa Ribeiro for the presentation of the comprehensive Regular Report to the Permanent Council, providing a clear picture of serious challenges to media freedom and the safety of journalists in the OSCE region.

**Madam Representative,**

At the outset, I wish to reaffirm that we strongly support activities of your Office directed towards promoting media literacy and media pluralism, handling censorship, protecting safety of female journalists online and offline, including the recent publication of the Guidelines for Monitoring online violence against female journalists.

Countering disinformation and propaganda of war and hatred that pose a direct threat to national security, territorial integrity, democratic processes, and public safety remains a priority as well.

Considering that russia's war of aggression has a direct detrimental impact on the work of journalists in Ukraine and many of them are often targeted by the russian troops while covering the situation on the front-line despite displaying "PRESS" identification, ending impunity for crimes against journalists and holding perpetrators accountable is of paramount importance for Ukraine.

We reaffirm our strong support to all steps taken by the RFoM in this regard, including the presentation of the Safety of Journalists Toolbox that has become an outcome of the first part of the "Safety of Journalists" Project and provided an important set of tools to guide stakeholders on how to implement relevant OSCE commitments.

For Ukraine, it remains crucial that Representative on Freedom of the Media continues monitoring and accordingly responding, in line with the entrusted mandate, to the cases of persecution of freedom of expression and suppression of independent journalism amidst russia's war. We commend your professionalism and initiative in this respect.

**Dear Madam Ribeiro,**

10 journalists have been killed while reporting and documenting various crimes that russian army commits in Ukraine. In total, russia has killed at least 69 journalists since February 24, 2022. The fate of 14 journalists remains unknown.

Victoria Roshchyna, Ukrainian freelance journalist, is among those who disappeared from the russian-occupied territory of Ukraine while she was reporting. There have been no updates about her exact whereabouts or health condition since August. However, according to the information available, she is a "frozen" prisoner that means a hidden detainee being secretly held in russian prison with no official status.

We have already brought to the attention of this audience numerous examples of persecution and reprisals by the russian occupation administrations of journalists in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, including Crimean Tatar citizen journalists, female journalists, and human rights defenders, for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Every tenth sentenced political prisoner from Crimea is a Crimean Tatar citizen journalist. Currently, Russia is illegally detaining at least 180 such Ukrainian political prisoners.

They are held captive in inhuman conditions in the pre-trial detention centers or prisons of the Russian occupation administrations without any right to legal defence, medical assistance and under immense physical and psychological pressure that in most cases amounts to torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

It has been proved that human rights defender and citizen journalist Iryna Danylovysh suffered one or even several strokes while in the Simferopol pre-trial detention center in the temporarily occupied Crimea because she was refused medical assistance.

Being sentenced on the trumped-up charges by the Russian occupation administration to seven years in penal colony in Zelenokumsk, she continues to face medical negligence like other political prisoners whose names are on the Hafarov – Shyring list, namely Amet Suleymanov, Nariman Dzelyal, Rustem Sheykhaliyev, Tymur Ibrahimov, Server Mustafayev, and many more.

### **Madam Representative, distinguished colleagues,**

It is a well-known fact that amidst a crackdown over coverage of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine practically all independent media in Russia have been blocked or declared "foreign agents" or "undesirable organizations".

Being the state where censorship is rampant and propaganda and disinformation flourish, Russia continues to manipulate law for its twisted purposes.

Among the most recent examples are changes that Putin approved to the law that governs presidential elections, which, inter alia, curtail media coverage of next year's presidential elections.

In pursuing its goal to redraw internationally recognized borders of the independent states Putin's regime does not disdain anything.

The recent pardoning of the person convicted to 20 years in prison for organizing the murder of Kremlin critic, investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, for his participation in the war against Ukraine is nothing else than mockery of justice. And as you fairly pointed out, Madam Representative, it further encourages and provokes impunity for crimes against journalists.

The scale of cynicism has no limits. While pardoning murderers Russia continues handing down severe sentences on the falsified charges to all those who speak out against its occupation strategy and war.

We reiterate our call for the RFoM and other OSCE institutions to continue fully use their mandates to facilitate medical assistance and immediate and unconditional release of journalists and activists who have become victims for their pro-Ukrainian position and revealing the truth about crimes Russia commits in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, namely, Oleksiy Bessarabov, Vladyslav Yesypenko, Seyran Saliyev, Marlen Asanov, Osman Arifmemetov, Ernes Ametov, Asan Akhmetov, Ruslan Suleymanov, Vilen Temeryanov, Remzi Bekirov, Nariman Dzelyal, Rustem Sheykhaliyev, Iryna Danylovysh, Victoria Roshchyna, Serhiy Tsyhipa and many others. The list is way too long.

### **Dear Madam Representative,**

As you have mentioned that it is the final report of your three-year term in Office, I wish to thank you for professionalism, dedication and meaningful dialogue throughout these turbulent times both for Ukraine and the whole OSCE region.

We reiterate our full support for the autonomous mandate of the RFoM and look forward to continuing our well-established fruitful cooperation.

**I thank you, Mr Chairperson.**