



**United States Mission to the OSCE**

**Response to the Report by the  
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities,  
Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov**

As delivered by Deputy Chief of Mission Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
July 7, 2022

High Commissioner Abdrakhmanov, welcome back to the Permanent Council.

Since your last address to the Permanent Council in November 2021, Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shattered Europe's security, claimed the lives of thousands, displaced and made refugees out of millions, and contravened the foundational principles and commitments of this Organization. As always, women, children, and members of vulnerable groups, including national minorities, are disproportionately susceptible to the impacts of conflict, and this war is no different. We also draw attention to Russia's daily and ongoing abuse of Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians, and other members of ethnic and religious minority groups in areas of Ukraine under Russia's temporary control.

Russia's cynical attempt to use minority issues to justify its brutal war – a war which is wreaking death and destruction on Ukrainian citizens of many ethnicities, including ethnic Russians – is a chilling example of “the serious dangers of exploiting minority issues.”

High Commissioner, the United States welcomes your office's sustained and positive engagement with Ukrainian government institutions, civil society, and representatives of national minorities both before and since February 24<sup>th</sup>. However, we believe it important that you speak out more forcefully about the horrendous atrocities being perpetrated by Russia in Ukraine, especially since they are being committed with the aim of erasing a nation-state's sovereignty.

We appreciate your office's engagement with relevant actors in countries adjacent to Ukraine as they work to manage the ever-widening impacts of this conflict. In particular, the United States commends Moldova, Poland, Romania, and other participating States for accommodating millions of Ukrainian citizens fleeing Putin's war while striving to meet their commitments related to national minorities. Members of the Roma community face particular challenges in displacement.

We value the support of your office and the Mission to Moldova to help the country strengthen its inclusive and democratic society. Your January 24-26 visit to Moldova – just one month

before Russia's brutal full-scale attack on neighboring Ukraine – reinforced Moldova's implementation of the National Strategy for Consolidation of Inter-ethnic Relations.

We note also the support your office provides to Georgia to increase opportunities for members of national minorities throughout the country and welcome your office's work to cooperate with OSCE institutions, field missions, and participating States to incorporate a gender perspective in your work on the ground, including on issues of minority languages and education.

Ambassador, we underscore the importance of your independent institution's mandate to address tensions involving national minorities. The biggest war in Europe since the Second World War merits an even greater emphasis from you and your team on the key reason for this war: the attempted subjugation of one nation by another.

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