

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Working Session 11 “Fundamental Freedoms, including freedom
of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, national human
rights institutions and role of civil society in the protection of human rights
and freedom of movement” of
2018 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

Mr. Moderator,

Faced with Russia's ongoing aggression, Ukraine has consistently maintained that there is a direct link between the domestic oppression of human rights and freedoms in Russia and the external aggression of this country posing a grave threat to its neighbors and the European security order. This link underscores the enduring relevance and validity of the OSCE's comprehensive security concept which relates the maintenance of peace to the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Last year we drew attention to the unprecedented in last decades number of detention during the events in Russia when people exercised their right to peaceful assembly. In particular, more than 1000 protesters were detained in peaceful assemblies against corruption in the single day.

Presently we continue to witness the full-scale clamp-down by Russian authorities on human rights and freedoms, particularly in the territories illegally occupied by Russia, unfounded denial of the right to peaceful assembly, abuse by the authorities of their powers and unwillingness to grant equal political opportunities. We strongly condemned the brutal attacks of the punitive units of the Kremlin regime on Russian citizens who had taken to the streets in numerous cities to participate in #HeIsNotOurTsar (#ОнНашеЦарь) peaceful protest of 5 May. We note with concern that the Kremlin employed so-called “Cossaks” paramilitaries to beat and disperse the peaceful demonstrators in Moscow. It must be noted that former members of terrorist organizations in the Donbas region of Ukraine were identified among these “Cossaks”. Detentions and arrests of reportedly over 1,600 citizens, who wished to exercise their Constitutional right, testified to the fear of the regime and the shameful state policy of suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms, attempts to stamp out dissent in Russia. Use of violence against minors and young people is particularly outrageous.

Distinguished participants,

In the current environment in Russia there are no possibilities for people to make their voice heard in protest of Russia's war against Ukraine. While this HDIM takes place in Warsaw, in Russia at the same time the law-enforcement keep detaining the individuals who go out on single pickets to support Oleg Sentsov and demand his immediate release. Today is the 127th day of Oleg's hunger strike.

I use this opportunity to demand from the Russian Federation the immediate and unconditional release of Oleg Sentsov and other Ukrainian citizens, who are political prisoners. Among them also Roman Sushchenko – a Ukrainian journalist, sentenced to 12 years in prison on fabricated charges of “espionage”.

In this extremely worrying context, we recommend, in particular:

to the Russian Federation to invite an OSCE Human Rights Assessment Mission to thoroughly examine the situation and elaborate respective recommendations in line with the OSCE commitments and international standards;

to the OSCE Chairmanship, its Special Representatives, and the OSCE Institutions to use all available assets and instruments to monitor and react to the developments in Russia.

I thank you.