



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

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ENGLISH only

**Statement  
on the occasion of the International Day  
to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1162<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
2 November 2017

**Mr. Chairman,**

On the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists we wish to reaffirm Ukraine's resolve to safeguard and promote media freedom and protection of journalists in the country in line with the OSCE commitments and international standards.

Ukraine strongly condemns all attacks against journalists and maintains a firm view that journalists' safety must be guaranteed at all times. Ukraine undertook important legislative measures to strengthen the safety of journalists and increase responsibility for obstruction of their work. The Ukrainian authorities give utmost attention to the thorough and impartial investigation of all cases of violence and intimidation of members of the media. Unfortunately, a number of cases remain unresolved and investigations continue.

Ukraine closely co-operates with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media receiving valuable expertise and assistance in enhancing the implementation of relevant commitments, and will continue to do so in the efforts to enhance media freedom and protection of journalists in the country.

**Mr. Chairman,**

As a country suffering from Russia's aggression we regularly voice our concerns relating to journalists' safety, significant restrictions of media freedom and freedom of expression in Russia. Together with the Russian state propaganda they create the breeding ground for state-sponsored generation of "enemies" and aggression, stemming from the Russian Federation towards its neighbours and beyond.

With over three hundred of journalists killed and disappeared in Russia since 1993, where in most cases the perpetrators have not been brought to justice, the Russian Federation remains one of the most dangerous places for journalists in the

OSCE region with the highest number of journalists brutally attacked and killed in the past 15 years. Russia is a single OSCE participating State among 12 countries world-wide featuring in the 2017 Global Impunity Index, titled “Getting away with murder” and prepared by an independent and authoritative NGO “The Committee to Protect Journalists”.

Only this year two media professionals are reported killed in Russia. The attacks continue as most recently demonstrated by the attack on “Echo of Moscow” journalist Tatyana Felgengauer. Fearing for their safety, scores of journalists, including from “Novaya gazeta” and “Echo of Moscow”, have been forced to leave the country.

Serious risks confront not only Russian but also foreign journalists, working in Russia. Among numerous uninvestigated cases we recall the one on 9 March, 2016, when a group of Russian and foreign journalists was brutally attacked and beaten on the way from Ingushetia to Chechnya, and their minibus was burned down. This case had been repeatedly raised in the Permanent Council, but the Russian delegation failed to provide any meaningful update on the investigation.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We draw attention to the on-going illegal detention of the Ukrainian citizen and journalist Roman Sushchenko in Moscow on trumped-up charges of “espionage”. Roman Sushchenko was taken hostage by Russian authorities for being a Ukrainian journalist and defender of the freedom of speech, known for his exposure of Russia’s illegal actions against Ukraine.

Many international media organizations, including the International and European Federation of Journalists, the European Alliance of News Agencies and Reporters without Borders have called on Russia to free the Ukrainian reporter. These calls remain ignored so far by Russian authorities. We urge Russia to immediately release Roma Sushchenko.

The extremely vulnerable position of independent journalists in those parts of Ukraine, temporarily occupied by Russia, remains a matter of our serious concern. Cases of Ukrainian journalists M.Semena, who received a suspended sentence by the occupation “court” in Crimea and was banned from profession, and S.Asieiev (Vasin), kidnapped by Russian militants in Donetsk, must remain in our focus until both are in safety with their professional rights being fully guaranteed.

We call on the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media to use all available instruments to facilitate his immediate release as well as to remain fully seized of the issues threatening freedom of the media and expression in Russia.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**