

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine
at the Working Session 1 “Freedom of expression, free media and
information, including best practices for safety of journalists” of
2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

Mr.Moderator,

Distinguished participants,

On the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and in the certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, where Ukrainian authorities do not temporarily exercise their powers, Russia's occupational "authority" is establishing prohibition on freedom of thought, speech and expression, carrying out measures aimed at coercing journalists and impeding their professional activities as well as other fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In Crimea and Donbas, Ukrainian TV channels are switched off and the illegal broadcasting of local television and radio companies and license-holders of Roskomnadzor (which stands for the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media) is ensured; access is blocked to 60 Ukrainian websites in Crimea and to 113 in Donbas.

From 2014 to 2017, the Institute of Mass Information has documented more than 200 cases of the violation of freedom of speech or pressure on the media in Crimea and nearly 150 similar cases in Donbas.

The categories of violations include the establishment of censorship, attacks on media offices, killings, detentions, interrogations, imprisonment of journalists and public activists, searches in their homes, restriction on access to meetings of self-proclaimed authorities, in particular courts, the introduction of pro-Ukrainian journalists to so-called lists of “terrorists” of the Russian Federation, the blocking of Ukrainian TV channels and websites.

Among cases of the violation of freedom of speech in Crimea, the following took place during June-August 2017:

1. In June 2017, the providers in occupied Crimea blocked Ukrainian Internet traffic.

2. In June 2017, a bill was submitted to the Russian State Duma on the prohibition of the use of technologies which allow evading the blocking of websites. Its provisions were illegally imposed in the illegally occupied territory of Crimea.

3. In July 2017, Crimean Tatar Emil Minasov was sentenced to a year and three months of imprisonment for allegedly disseminating extremist materials in the social media.

4. On 4 August 2017, a female resident of the Bakhchysarai district was fined 300,000 roubles by a "court" in occupied Crimea for pro-Ukrainian posts in the social media.

One of the the recent vivid examples of censorship in occupied Crimea is the case of Server Karametov. This a 76-year-old activist on August 8, 2017 was

apprehended for picketing alone in support of political prisoners with the poster "Putin, Aksyonov, our children, Akhtem Chyihoz, are not terrorists, stop accusing Crimean Tatars." According to the court's ruling, he was arrested for 10 days and fined 10,000 roubles.

On August 14, 2017, seven senior Crimean Tatars (Osman Abblaiev, Emir Suiunov, Sinaver Nimetulaiev, Davlatova Iarikul, Ridvan Aga, Shevkii Aga and a grandfather) carried out one-person pickets across Simferopol in support of Server Karametov and against the occupants' repressions of Crimean Tatars, and were apprehended for interrogation thereafter.

In the certain areas of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions controlled by illegal armed groups of the so-called "LPR" and "DPR" supported by the Russian Federation, there are no independent mass media. Media offices have been either seized or ransacked. Journalists are subject to attacks, captivity, and torture.

In 2017, the Institute of Mass Information has documented 5 cases of the violation of freedom of speech: 2 cases in February, 1 in April, 1 in June, and 1 in July.

According to human rights organizations and the mass media, the following cases are the recent ones:

1. Feb. 2, 2017, British photographer Christopher Nunn was injured as a result of a shelling of the city Avdiivka, Donetsk region, by Russian occupying forces. He got eye and face injuries. Doctors of the Mechvikov Regional Clinical Hospital of the city Dnipro managed to preserve his eyesight.

2. Feb. 4, 2017, Anastasiia Mahazova, a freelance journalist, was threatened by an identified man in Facebook after covering events in Avdiivka, Donetsk region.

3. Apr. 27, 2017, the so-called "ministry of interior of the LPR" declared as wanted military correspondents of the Podrobytsi (Particulars) programme of TV channel Inter, including Hennadii Vivdenko, Ruslan Smeshchuk, cameraman Serhiy Dubinin and Inter's former military correspondent Roman Bochkala. Pro-Russian mercenaries accused the journalists of "supporting terrorist activities" on the territories controlled by them.

4. In early June, journalist, blogger and author of Radio Donbas.Realii (Donbas.Realities) Stanislav Asieiev (Vasin) was kidnapped in Donetsk, his flat broken into and ransacked. Stanislav Vasin contributed to the Radio Svoboda (Radio Liberty) project Donbas. Realii as well as to Ukrainski Tyzhni (Ukrainian Weeks), Ukrainska Pravda (The Ukrainian Truth), ZN.ua.

Distinguished participants,

The restoration of Ukrainian TV and radio broadcasting on the abovementioned territories is instrumental for providing information security.

The development of broadcasting is carried out by the Commission on Ensuring the Stable Functioning of the National Television and Radio Broadcasting System under the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine.

During the Commission's work in 2015-2017:

1. TV and radio communications towers were constructed in order to provide Ukrainian broadcasting to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk region.

2. More than 60 transmitters and a TV tower have been received from foreign partners;

3. Ukrainian broadcasting coverage in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions has been increased by 27 percent;

4. The audience of FM-radio broadcasting has increased by 40 percent (up to 700,000 people). Analogue TV broadcasting has increased by 30 percent, and digital broadcasting by 9 percent;

5. 57 FM-radio frequencies have been allocated to the ATO area, which is approximately 30 percent of all the frequencies provided for the use in Ukraine. That is, a third of the radio frequencies resource has been given to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the Public Broadcasting has received 24 frequencies in the ATO area.

In case of “hybrid warfare”, including armed Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, the protection of Internet space is an essential component of information security. The following actions have been taken by Ukraine in this regard:

1. On 25 February 2017, Decree No. 47/2017 by the President of Ukraine approved the Decision of the Council of National Security and Defence of Ukraine dated 29 December 2016 "On the Doctrine of Information Security of Ukraine".

2. On 15 May 2017, Decree No. 133/2017 by the President of Ukraine imposed sanctions on 468 legal entities and 1228 natural persons of the Russian Federation, including Yandex, Mail.Ru Group, Odnoklassniki, Vkontakte, etc.

3. On 19 June 2017, the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine forwarded a list of 20 websites recommended for blocking to the Security Service of Ukraine, since they "contain information which instigates international enmity or violates the territorial integrity of Ukraine".

4. In June 2017, cyberspace was struck by a rapid proliferation of the encrypting virus “Petya”. Many experts believe that this was a planned cyber-attack on Ukraine with explicit political motives.

Responding to today’s claims by the Russian delegation concerning the limitations imposed by the Ukrainian authorities on certain Russian journalists, we wish to point out that it is both the duty and right of every state to defend itself from an external aggression. The international standards in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms provide for a possibility of limitations in the interests of protection of national security and public order. Such provisions are enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 19) and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Article 10).

I thank you, Mr.Moderator.