



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement
on “Abduction and illegal detention of Ukrainian citizens
by the Russian Federation”

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1093rd meeting of the Permanent Council,
17 March 2016

Mr. Chairman,

For almost two years we bear witness to the flagrant violation by the Russian Federation of the norms of international law, the OSCE commitments and the Minsk agreements as the Russian authorities continue to illegally hold behind bars Ukrainian citizens Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and others.

So far the Russian Federation has not only shown disrespect to its international commitments and obligations but also demonstrated the intention to pursue its illegal practices consistent with the political persecutions of the Soviet times.

Such Russia’s stance was further evidenced by its manifest disregard for numerous and persistent calls by the international community to release Nadiya Savchenko and others. These calls, based on Russia’s commitments in the Minsk agreements and its international obligations, have been made by the OSCE, the United Nations and the Council of Europe, as well as the high governmental and parliamentary officials of many participating States.

We note with appreciation a remarkable and unprecedented manifestation of support and unity throughout the world to seek freedom for N.Savchenko. We welcome the most recent statement by the United Nations Secretary General as well as the G7’s serious concerns about the health of Nadiya Savchenko and call on the Russian authorities to immediately release her and to comply with the commitments made in the “Package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements” on the release of all hostages and illegally detained persons.

We remain extremely alarmed that the Ukrainian consuls, doctors and Nadia’s family members are not allowed visiting Savchenko, despite the extreme graveness of the situation. We stress that Russia bears the entire responsibility for Savchenko’s life and health.

As the court hearing to announce the verdict is scheduled for 21 March 2016, we express again our protest against this mockery trial and the prosecutor's demand to jail Ms.Savchenko to 23 years. We reiterate our call on Russia to immediately stop this shameful politically-motivated process and release Nadiya Savchenko.

Dear colleagues,

We draw attention to another on-going judicial farce against illegally detained citizens of Ukraine Mykola Karpyuk and Stanislav Klykh, taking place in the Supreme Court of the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The hearing, scheduled in Grozny for 14 March, was suddenly postponed with the date of the next meeting remaining unknown. The access to the courtroom for witnesses from Ukraine, representatives of the media, volunteers and relatives of the defendants, accompanied by diplomats of the Consulate General of Ukraine in Rostov-on-Don, was denied. Incidentally, yesterday in Grozny the head of the "Committee for prevention of torture" I.Kalyapin, who had plans to meet with the Ukrainian representatives, was attacked by a group of masked men. This attack follows an attack of last week on a group of human rights defenders and Russian and foreign journalists, who were on their way from Ingushetia to Chechnya and had legitimate interest in this case of Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain concerned over the new reports about the degrading conditions of illegal detention of Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko and Henadiy Afanasiev.

We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to inform the Permanent Council on the steps taken by the Russian authorities to effectively investigate the reports on torture against the Ukrainian citizens held in captivity in Russia.

The kidnapping of the Ukrainian citizens, their illegal transfer across the Ukrainian-Russian state border, and their further placement in detention to face trumped-up charges constitute grave violation of human rights and lead to accountability under the international law.

We urge Russia to comply with the norms of international law and its commitments under the Minsk agreements and to immediately and unconditionally release all Ukrainian citizens illegally detained or imprisoned in Russia.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.