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

### **Statement in response to the Report by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Madam Teresa Ribeiro**

As for delivery by Viktoriia Kuvshynnykova, Chargée D'affaires a.i.  
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1478th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council  
13 June 2024

#### **Madam Representative,**

Thank you for presenting the comprehensive Regular Report, which provides an analytical overview of the media freedom situation in the OSCE region.

Ukraine fully supports the activities of RFoM's Office aimed at promoting media freedom, ensuring safe environment for journalists, fostering media literacy, addressing censorship, and countering disinformation and propaganda.

We fully agree that there can be no security or democracy without media freedom. And media freedom can only exist if the safety of journalists is guaranteed, and they can do their work without fear of reprisal.

Regrettably, 599 crimes have been committed against journalists and media outlets in Ukraine since the beginning of russia's full-scale invasion.

81 journalists have been killed. In the past two weeks alone, several journalists have been killed on the frontline. Freedom TV channel 31-year-old war correspondent Anastasia Volkova, who died in a tragic accident in Slovyansk, in Ukraine's Donetsk region, and Iryna Tsybukh, journalist, public activist and paramedic, who was killed in action during a rotation near the front in the Kharkiv region, are among the victims.

At least 30 journalists are currently being held in captivity by russian forces, some in incommunicado detention.

Only recently russia has finally admitted to holding captive journalist Viktoria Roshchyna, almost a year after she was abducted while carrying out investigation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. No further details have been provided about the journalist and russia is illegally refusing to allow the ICRC to visit her.

russia has also admitted to holding in prison Ukrainian journalist Dmytro Khyliuk two years after abducting him from then- occupied Dmytriv, in the Kyiv region.

In addition to Dmytro Khyliuk and Victoria Roshchyna many more journalists are being held in russian captivity: Iryna Levchenko, Iryna Danylovykh, Aziz Azizov and Rustem Osmanov, Osman Arifmemetov, Remzi Bekirov, Oleksiy Bessarabov, Vladyslav Yesypenko, Maksym Butkevych, Nariman Dzhelyal and others. The list is far too long.

Your persistent calls, Madam Representative, for the immediate release of all illegally imprisoned journalists and cease the suppression of their legitimate work remain essential to ensure their safety.

As long as the international community remembers them, there is a hope that they will not be tortured to death in prisons for speaking up the truth and for not supporting the war. The immediate release of journalists and dropping all falsified charges against them remains vital both for Ukraine and for the whole civilized world.

**Esteemed colleagues,**

Russia has seized or destroyed at least 300 media outlets in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. The rest have been forced to relocate to continue operating. Seized Ukrainian media outlets are being used by Russian forces to spread propaganda and disinformation to the local population.

According to the Institute of Mass Information, Russia is creating a new propaganda outlet "Novoe.Media", which is set to operate in the occupied territories of the Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions of Ukraine.

While Russian propagandists are trying to create an illusion of "happy life" in the temporarily occupied territories, important work of Ukrainian citizen journalists in documenting gross human rights violations cannot be overestimated. This is crucial for ensuring future accountability.

Targeting TV towers by launching missile attacks, as it happened in the Rivne region and in Kyiv in 2022, and last month in Kharkiv and Bilopillya, the Sumy region, is yet another war crime, both according to Ukrainian legislation and international humanitarian law.

On 23 May 2024, Russia fired three missiles at the Kharkiv printing house of the Vivat publishing house – one of the largest printing houses in Europe, Factor-Druk, where books from almost all Ukrainian publishers are printed. The destruction of Ukrainian printing houses and killing of Ukrainian book publishers and writers is yet another attempt by Russia to destroy Ukrainian culture and identity.

Such brutal attacks should be thoroughly investigated and receive a strong response from the international community.

**Madam Representative,**

It is an undeniable fact that all the atrocities committed by Russia on the frontline are accompanied by a large-scale state-sponsored propaganda campaign to justify the invasion, war crimes and to dehumanize Ukrainian people.

We are grateful to all our partners for their efforts in countering disinformation and information manipulation that Russia uses in its abundant attempts to justify its war against Ukraine and destabilize the situation in the neighboring countries. The EU's recent decision to suspend the broadcasting activities of four additional media outlets under the permanent direct or indirect control of the Russian leadership is very important in this respect.

We fully share the view that every effort should be made to make society more resilient to disinformation, propaganda and manipulation of information, and to improve skills to critically assess information flows.

In this regard, we welcome the launch of the OSCE RFoM's Report "Fostering Media Freedom Literacy across the OSCE region".

**Esteemed colleagues,**

Ukraine is taking consistent steps to promote media literacy to increase the ability of Ukrainians to recognize and respond to fake news and disinformation as one of the ways to counter and neutralize Russia's aggressive plans.

All these steps were covered in detail by Mr Taras Shevchenko, Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy for European Integration, in his keynote address at the Opening session of the second SHDM on Media Literacy and Democracy.

I'll just list the most important. Raising the level of media culture and media literacy in the society is integrated into the Information Security Strategy.

The national media literacy project "FILTER" founded under the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy in 2021 is being implemented to increase the resilience of Ukrainians to information threats.

On 03 June 2024, the Ministry presented the Strategy for the Development of Media Literacy until 2026.

**Madam Representative, dear Teresa,**

As this is your seventh and last report as the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, I would like to acknowledge your high professionalism and commitment in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to you, which, as you said, requires impartiality but is not neutral.

I also wish to thank you and your dedicated team for the meaningful dialogue and well-established fruitful co-operation during these turbulent times both for Ukraine and the whole OSCE region.

I wish you best of luck in your future endeavours.

**I thank you, Madam Chairperson.**