

**Statement of the Delegation of Ukraine  
at the Working Session 2 “Freedom of the media” of  
2018 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Mr. Moderator,  
Distinguished participants,**

This is almost the fifth year when Ukraine clangs a bell in attempt to warn the international community about hybrid threats to international security and democratic order. Threats that we physically encounter in Russia-occupied Crimea and Donbas. Millions of dollars have been spent to create a parallel reality and information bubble of the so called “democratic referendum in Crimea” and “historical justice of Russia reunion”, and “civil war in Donbas” against Ukrainian “fascism”. That is the same if you would be convinced of a “democratic referendum in Austria” during the Anschluss or imposed out-of-reality vision of people’s democracies in Eastern Europe during the Cold War behind the iron curtain.

An ongoing crime is being committed, where along with the seizure of 503 frequency acquisitions used by Ukrainian Media in Crimea, Russia stole digital and analogue broadcasting equipment from Ukraine’s TV and radio stations, thus denying them opportunities to broadcast. Almost 100 Russian entities illegally use Ukrainian frequencies and equipment to broadcast Russian propaganda messages, legitimizing and normalizing the attempted annexation of Crimea, vilifying Ukraine, the west and democratic values.

According to the Institute of mass information, Ukraine-based NGO, over 1200 media outlets had to shut down in Crimea since 2014.

Russia also blocks access to Ukrainian web sites. Monitoring conducted by Crimean Human Rights Group in March 2018 revealed that access to 30 Ukrainian news and other web sites was blocked by different providers in Crimea. Same in Donbas.

Efforts of the Ukrainian government to restore Ukrainian broadcasting into occupied territories from 3 newly constructed towers are to a large extent thwarted by the Russian jamming. Russia makes sure no information other than the one provided by the media under its control reaches millions of Ukrainian citizens.

Journalists who dare express views different from the official Russian position face trumped up separatism and extremism charges.

A well know Crimean independent journalist Mykola Semena was tried for calling Crimea Ukrainian territory, found guilty and sentenced to a three-year ban on public activity and a ban to leave the territory of Crimea. His colleagues Andriy Klymenko and Anna Andiyevska would have faced the same fate had they not left the peninsula and moved to the Ukrainian mainland.

Stanislav Asieiev - a Ukrainian journalist seized in Donbas more than a year ago, was tortured and forced to acknowledge “spying” for the Ukrainian

intelligence service. He is under hunger strike since the end of the June, 2018. The international observers were not allowed to see him.

Roman Sushchenko, a Ukrainian journalist, was detained in Moscow on September 30, 2016, on charges of espionage, and has since been detained in Lefortovo Prison. Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) claims that Sushchenko is a member of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry. The court has repeatedly renewed the term of his pre-trial detention, and on June 4, 2018 the Moscow City Court sentenced Sushchenko to 12 years in a maximum security after finding him guilty for spying.

The civic journalists, who cover illegal trials of Crimean activists a lot of whom are Muslim, also face persecution. Russia does not want the truth about brutal searches, ungrounded detentions and unfair trials to get out.

Nariman Memedinov, a civic journalist and an activist was detained in March 2018 and served with criminal charges because of his posts in social media made at the beginning of the occupation. He is accused of propagating terrorism. Recently, his detention term was extended to until 15 October.

Ismail Ramazanov, was held in custody for more than five months for "propagating extremism" with Zello, an Internet radio outlet.

Hulsum Alieva, is accused of inciting ethnic hatred with posts she published on an online page of Crimean Solidarity, an organisation that brings together relatives of Crimea's political prisoners. Hulsum's father is one of Crimea's political prisoners and his arrest had prompted her to become a civic journalist.

Elina Mamedova, young Crimean Tatar woman, is under home arrest for «purportedly inciting hatred and enmity and humiliating human dignity» with three reposts from pro-Ukrainian groups in social media.

Crimean Tatar poetess Alie Kenjalieva, against whom pre-investigation is undergoing according to 354.1 Article of CC of RF (rehabilitation of Nazism) for the poems condemning the war and the utmost soviet-like celebration of the 9th of May Victory Day published in the newspaper "Kirim" on May 9, 2018. The woman insists that she used to write on acute social issues and started self-censor the poetry.

Along with stealing freedom, Russia brings in hate.

The hatred towards Ukraine, Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and supporters of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people bear fruit in the occupied Crimea. The case of the pro-Ukrainian resident Ihor Movenko who was beaten up in the street for bearing Ukrainian state symbols is an example. Tombs at cemeteries and sacred places get regularly desecrated in Crimea.

We can see clearly that Russia silences all dissenting voices, no matter how small and weak.

We have to, unfortunately, state that thousands of concerns and numerous resolutions of the international community and organizations does not make Russia follow international law and stop human rights violations in the occupied Ukrainian territories. Moreover, it orchestrates hybrid warfare right at the doorstep of the OSCE HDMI -2018. Today's program of side-events informs us of the one convened by the Permanent Mission of the RF to the OSCE in Vienna on the

human rights and freedom in Crimea. Among the participants registered for the Fora we can easily find the representatives of the state-controlled Crimean Tatar TV channel “Millet” launched in 2015 in occupied Crimea after the TV channel ATR squeeze out. We don’t even need to attend the event to know what would be said. Crimea would be described as the prosperous region of the Russian Federation with happy people (especially Crimean Tatars) around. This is exactly what Millet is being launched for and run for. Yes, life is going on and Crimean Tatars still dance and sing, trying to survive hardships together. This is also the agenda of the channel.

But when the only CT TV channel in Crimea as they name themselves remains silent towards political persecutions, hundreds of CT house searches, unfair imprisonment and politically motivated criminal cases, destroy of cultural heritage, social ban for usage of CT symbols and more important ban of the Mejlis of the CT people, the self-governing body and a symbol of CT political identity - this is about selective coverage, interpretation and weak journalistic standards.

When the OSCE HDIM platform is being misused by NGOs financed by the runaway corrupted Ukrainian ex-ministers for the political purpose and Russia-backed narrative of “failed state” in Ukraine, we have to name it a hybrid warfare, where democratic tools are being used against democracies. When puppet controlled “journalists” turn the freedom of speech in the freedom of lie or selective truth. When NGOs established and financed by the people who involved my country into a greatest corruption index Ukraine has ever experienced, arrange round tables on the freedom of speech in Ukraine right here at this Forum, how should we react? When the army of fake social media users and bots cut the ground of reality and disseminate false truth around the globe, this is threat, not only for Ukraine.

Well, I guess, a lot to be done by all of us not to let to misuse credibility and principles of Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

**I thank you for your attention.**