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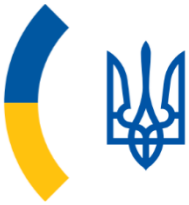

Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna

1584th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda Item 2, "Report be the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media"

(5 November 2026)

Mr Chairperson, Ambassador Braathu,

Thank you for **presenting your report and for your Office's sustained attention to the safety of journalists across the OSCE region**.

We value your Office's role in defending independent journalism and helping participating States meet their media freedom commitments.

Russia's war of aggression remains the greatest threat to journalists and media freedom in Ukraine. We welcome your continued attention to their protection, and your call for the immediate and unconditional release of Ukrainian journalists and media workers detained by Russia.

Ambassador Braathu,

Your Office's practical support matters. Through **the "Safety of Journalists" project**, Ukrainian journalists have received training and psychological support. We look forward to the upcoming training on journalists' mental health in Polyana, Ukraine.

We also thank your Office and **the Informal Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists in the OSCE** for organising, together with Ukraine, the side event on frontline journalists' safety, and accountability for Russia's violations at the **Warsaw Human Dimension Conference.**

We welcome, too, your Office's legal review of Ukraine's proposed anti-SLAPP legislation. Ukraine is committed to strengthening protection against abusive legal proceedings that seek to silence journalists and others taking part in public debate. We look forward to further cooperation on this legislation and its implementation.

Mr Chairperson,

According to the Institute of Mass Information, Russia has committed **989 crimes against journalists** and media in Ukraine since its full-scale invasion began. Russia has killed **143 media workers** during this period, including **15** while they were carrying out their professional duties.

Russian drone attacks pose a growing threat: in January–October 2026, the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine documented at least 35 drone-related incidents affecting journalists and media infrastructure.

Such Russian drone attacks are forcing journalists to rethink basic safety measures. **The National Union of Journalists of Ukraine now even advises against visible PRESS markings in areas of immediate drone danger, as they may help Russian drone operators identify and target journalists**.

At least **27 Ukrainian journalists and media workers** remain unlawfully detained by Russia. Russia abducts journalists in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine, tortures them, cuts them off from families and lawyers, and sentences them to lengthy prison terms on fabricated charges.

Needless to say, that each of these cases is a human tragedy.

Ukrainian journalist **Viktoria Roshchyna, who died in Russian captivity after sustaining beyond terrible torture, was recently posthumously honoured with the OXI Courage Award by the Washington Oxi Day Foundation,** in recognition of her courage in exposing Russian atrocities. Her horrible death underscores the urgency of protecting those still detained.

Iryna Danylovych, a citizen journalist from occupied Crimea, has lost hearing in one ear. She has described constant exposure to loud music in a Russian penal colony as torture, causing severe pain, while her appeals for adequate medical care went unanswered.

Anastasiia Hlukhovska, a journalist from Melitopol, has been held in the Russian captivity for more than three years and remains without access to a lawyer. Her former fellow detainee has provided testimony about her **torture with electric shocks**.

Mr Chairperson,

It is in this dark context that Ukraine strongly echoes the RFoM's **call for the release of Ukrainian journalists and media workers** unlawfully detained by Russia. We urge all participating States to add their voices to this call and intensify diplomatic efforts to secure their immediate and unconditional release.

We also call to, inparticular:

- **increase support for Ukrainian media, journalist associations and protection programmes**, including safety training and psychological assistance for journalists working in frontline areas;

- **support the documentation and investigation of crimes against journalists to ensure accountability**;

- **maintain coordinated political and diplomatic pressure on the Russian Federation**, including through **targeted sanctions against those responsible** for the persecution, torture and killing of journalists.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.