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Delegation of Canada

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1585th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL

12 November 2026

On the situation with the three OSCE officials illegally detained by Russia as part of its war of aggression against Ukraine (raised by the delegation of Ukraine)

Mister Chair,

It has been reported by Ukrainian authorities that Vadym Golda, a security assistant who served in the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, has been transferred to a medical-correctional facility in the Russian Federation's Tambov region. If confirmed, Vadym Golda would be the third OSCE staff member from Ukraine's temporarily occupied territory to be transferred to the Russian Federation.

We recall that all three were OSCE officials serving under a political mandate agreed by all participating States, including the Russian Federation. The previous Secretary General confirmed that the OSCE had not waived their immunities at the time of their arrests.

The OSCE is an organization distinguished by its ability to put peace into practice through its presence in the field. That is precisely what these officials were doing when they were detained. Their continued detention is an attack on the OSCE's greatest strength.

Mr. Chairperson,

This case cannot be viewed in isolation.

It forms part of a broader pattern that we have been witnessing since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine: a rejection of the fundamental principles of international law and a repeated failure to respect established norms. These include the protection of personnel acting under international mandates, the ability of humanitarian workers to deliver aid safely, and the expectation that diplomats and international staff can carry out their duties without fearing for their lives.

Even within the broader context of Russian aggression, the detention of OSCE officials appears particularly unconscionable, as it directly targets the mechanisms designed to prevent conflicts and sustain peace.

Mr. Chairperson,

We urge the Swiss Chairmanship to continue its efforts to secure the immediate and unconditional release of the three illegally detained OSCE officials, as previous Chairmanships have done.

We thank the Secretary General for his steadfast commitment and the Secretariat for the support provided to their families. While welcoming these endeavours, we call upon the Secretary General to continue and step up his efforts to secure their release. This is an urgent matter that has a direct impact on the credibility of our Organization, the importance of which the Secretary General fully appreciates.

Canada therefore calls once again upon the Russian Federation to secure the immediate and unconditional release of the three detained OSCE officials.

We express our solidarity with their families and loved ones, who continue to endure the pain and uncertainty caused by their prolonged detention. Canada remains firmly committed to advocating for their release and will continue its efforts until they can be safely reunited with their families.