



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Ukrainian Hostages Illegally Held by Russia

As delivered by Ambassador Daniel B. Baer
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
April 16, 2015

Russia and the separatists it backs continue to illegally hold Ukrainian hostages in defiance of the commitments they made in the September 2014 Minsk Protocol and Memorandum and in the Package of Measures signed this year. Among those held is Nadiya Savchenko, a member of the Verkhovna Rada and a helicopter pilot in the Ukrainian military, who was seized by Russia-backed separatists in 2014 before being illegally transferred to Russian custody. She languishes in Moscow's Matrosskaya Tishina prison on blatantly ridiculous charges. She has suffered greatly during her unjust imprisonment.

Another hostage, Oleg Sentsov, has been held in pre-trial detention for nearly a year since his arrest in Crimea on May 11, 2014, on trumped-up terrorism charges. r. Sentsov's arrest is a part of Russia's concerted efforts to quash any dissent against its occupation and attempted annexation of Crimea.

Ms. Savchenko and Mr. Sentsov are only two of the many Ukrainians that Russia and the separatists it backs are holding hostage. We once again reiterate our call for Russia and the separatists it backs to honor the commitments they have made, including by releasing all Ukrainian hostages.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.