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United States Mission to the OSCE

Russia's Detention of OSCE Officials as part of its War of Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 21, 2023

For more than five hundred days, the Russian Federation has held three OSCE officials detained days after Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia has subjected these OSCE officials and their families to over five hundred days of anxiety, pain, and suffering. Russia's forces detained them for doing a job every participating State in this room, including the Russian Federation, mandated they carry out.

The Russian Federation must release these OSCE officials immediately: Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov. Russia must also provide the Permanent Council with information on these individuals' whereabouts and wellbeing. Russia's detention of these OSCE officials raises fundamental questions about the safety and security of all international organization staff operating in Russia or any territory it occupies.

By this action, Russia is choosing to actively undermine the OSCE. It has seized OSCE officials. It has stolen OSCE vehicles. It has refused to pay its dues for the last two years, and it owes this organization more than ten million dollars in arrears. But forget about the cars and the money: what matters most are people. And all the while, Russia is showing up each week for Permanent Council and committee meetings pretending we are conducting business as usual.

Mr. Chair, I want to thank Foreign Minister Osmani, Chairperson-in-Office, OSCE Secretary General Schmid, and the Delegation of Ukraine for their tireless efforts to secure the release of these OSCE officials. And, Mr. Chair, I commend you for your efforts to protect OSCE staff and to hold Russia accountable for its unconscionable actions.

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