



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement
in response to Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov,
the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1381st meeting of the Permanent Council,
07 July 2022

Mr Chairperson,

While aligning with the statement delivered by the EU delegation, I wish to make several remarks in my national capacity.

The delegation of Ukraine joins others in welcoming OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for the report.

Dear High Commissioner,

It is the 134th day of resistance of the Ukrainian people to russia's full-scale invasion that obviously had never had any other goals than exterminating Ukrainians as a nation and erasing all signs of Ukrainian identity and culture.

We take note of your report in which many important issues are raised. We echo your call for the immediate protection of civilians and for humanitarian access to all, your appeal to russia to fulfil its obligations under international law and observe human rights, including minority rights, in all temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

We thank you for your attention to the reports of Ukrainian communities and representatives of Crimean Tatars experiencing grave restrictions on their rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and fully support your stance about the necessity of promoting tolerance, non-discrimination and protecting the rights of national minorities.

Dear High Commissioner,

In Ukraine's territories invaded by russia after 24 February 2022, the terror against the local population is closely accompanied by gross manifestations of racial discrimination, xenophobia, linguicide and promotion of superiority of the russian nation over others. Schools are receiving manuals for teachers from the russian ministry of education with instructions on how to justify the russian war against Ukraine. Textbooks of the Ukrainian history and literature are being seized from the libraries and burned. Teachers are being forcibly sent to russia for the so-called "certification" as the invaders want to start the new school year according to the russian curriculum, which nowadays is widely based on the ideas of aggressive nationalism and territorial expansionism.

I want to stress that any attempts to impose the policy of de-Ukrainization in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine are in grave breach of international norms and standards. We urge you, Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, to dedicate priority attention to addressing these violations.

I am pretty sure that you are very much aware that the issue of the so-called "persecution of the russian-speaking population of Ukraine" was put forward by russia back in 2014 in attempts to justify its illegal occupation of Crimea and russian armed invasion in Donbas.

Since 2014, such far-fetched and unsubstantiated manipulations have long been debunked as outright lies and russian propaganda in numerous reports of international organizations, including the UN.

Basically, the issue of russian language was gravely misused at that time in the same way as the russian federation has used allegations of the so-called “genocide” as a pretext for launching a new phase of its aggression against Ukraine on 24 February.

We would strongly encourage you to look more critically at these issues. Such attempts still continue – just today we can see in the list of current issues the issue of alleged “ongoing gross violations of the rights of the russian and russian-speaking population”, initiated by the rf.

What is true, however, is that while we meet here, the russian troops continue massive artillery fire and missile strikes destroying predominantly russian-speaking cities of Ukraine – Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson and many others.

What is also true is that after 24 February many people who used to speak russian have switched to Ukrainian, as they no longer want to use the language of the aggressor-state.

Dear High Commissioner,

We are deeply concerned by the level of anti-Ukrainian rhetoric and hate speech against Ukraine in russia as well as by the constant declarations, including in this hall, about the high level of support by russians for the war in Ukraine. Obviously, such public opinion is clear evidence of how russia’s propaganda works, manipulating facts and promoting its false narratives.

We cannot but mention the appalling attitude of putin’s regime towards national minorities in russia, inter alia, it applies to the conscription policy. If we analyse those participate in the war in Ukraine, we can clearly see that the number of representatives of the poorest national minorities from remote regions of russia disproportionately exceeds the respective share of ethnic russians from the large, economically and socially developed cities.

In the situation of acute shortage of the so called “cannon fodder” for the war, instead of full-scale mobilization, russia is engaging in the covert partial mobilization the male population from its remote depressive regions with compact residence of national minorities, particularly from russia’s Far East, North Caucasus, Buryatia, Khakassia, Yakutia.

It is high time for the HCNM to look closely at this outrageous practice of russian authorities, which has all the potential to turn into a full-fledged disaster for the respective national minorities in russia.

Dear High Commissioner,

Since 2014, grave human rights violations and discrimination in the temporarily occupied Crimea are faced by the Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians, who promote the unity of Ukraine and oppose the occupation.

russia’s full-scale war has led to grave deterioration of the situation. The latest OHCHR Report based on the findings of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine covering the period from 24 February until 15 May 2022 documents 41 cases of prosecution of Crimean residents for “discrediting” or “calling for obstruction” of russian armed forces.

Measures that have seriously restricted the right to freedom of expression and access to a range of sources of information on political and socioeconomic issues on the peninsula have been imposed. Multiple media outlets previously accessible in Crimea have been blocked since 24 February 2022, including a leading Crimea-focused outlet of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty – Crimea. Realities.

It is Vladyslav Yesypenko, one of its freelance correspondents, who was arrested by the russian occupation administration in March 2021, tortured and in February 2022 sentenced to six years in prison by the so-called “Simferopol District Court” on falsified

charges. This is one of many utterly unacceptable cases of serious human rights violations.

According to the information available, there are currently 120 Crimean Tatar and other Ukrainian political prisoners held in the temporarily occupied Crimea or Russia, including 12 civic journalists.

Dear High Commissioner,

Since 2014, Ukraine has been warning about gross and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law in the Russia-occupied Crimea and parts of Donbas, including persecution on national, ethnic, linguistic and religious grounds, and illegal mass displacement. On numerous occasions Ukraine urged to closely follow-up on the 2014-2015 reports of human rights assessment missions to Crimea to make the Russian occupying power implement their respective recommendations.

We called on the OSCE institutions to give priority and to address immediately these critical issues that have long undermined peace and security throughout the OSCE region and could have unpredictable consequences.

Let me reiterate that the HCNM's mandate provided your Institution with a wide range of instruments to be timely employed with the aim of safeguarding OSCE principles and commitments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.