



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the occasion of the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists

As for delivery by Viktoriia Kuvshynnykova, Chargée d'affaires a.i.,
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna
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Madam Chairperson,

The role of journalists and other media professionals in the protection and promotion of the right to freedom of expression and democracy can hardly be overestimated.

Regrettably, journalism remains a dangerous and all too often deadly profession.

Journalists are the people who, at the cost of their own safety and freedom, stand as guardians of the truth, and in times of war their role is as powerful as a weapon. Their work shatters lies, opens the world's eyes to reality and prevents oppressive regimes from hiding their crimes.

Since the beginning of Russian aggression back in 2014, followed by its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, thousands of Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied territories have been persecuted for their journalistic activities and exercise of freedom of expression.

At least 112 Ukrainian and foreign journalists have been detained or taken hostage by Russian forces to date. At least 30 journalists and media professionals remain among the Ukrainian political prisoners held in Russia.

The appalling conditions of their detention, which amount to inhuman treatment and torture, is yet another instrument of pressure by the aggressor state that threatens the lives and health of Ukrainian citizens.

For documenting war crimes and exposing the truth about the war Iryna Danylovysh, Vladyslav Yesypenko, Oleksiy Bessarabov, Iryna Levchenko, Dmytro Shtyblikov, Seyran Saliyev, Marlen Asanov, Osman Arifmemetov, Tymur Ibrahimov, Ernes Ametov, Asan Akhmetov, Ruslan Suleymanov, Vilen Temeryanov, Remzi Bekirov, Anastasia Hlukhovska and many other journalists, including Crimean Tatar citizen journalists, activists and human rights defenders, continue to face medical negligence and other serious human rights violations in Russian prisons.

Despite such a dire situation, there is hope that with our collective efforts these people can still be saved, unlike 27-year-old Ukrainian journalist Victoria Roshchyna, whose detention ended in death.

We call on the international community to end impunity for Russia once and for all, as it kills, tortures, persecutes, threatens and unlawfully arrests journalists and media professionals.

Distinguished colleagues,

Media workers and journalists are classified as civilians under international humanitarian law and are entitled to protection as such in all situations of armed conflict.

The international community can clearly observe that Russia's actions constitute a gross violation of the norms of international humanitarian law, which is also confirmed by the findings of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism report on the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The OSCE Moscow Mechanism report, together with other international reports, confirms that journalists are among the thousands of Ukrainian civilians arbitrarily detained by Russia.

Every unpunished crime against journalists sets a dangerous precedent that threatens democratic values and freedoms.

Together with our partners, we will continue our efforts to investigate crimes against journalists and other media professionals, as well as the activities of Russian propagandists involved in criminal information operations as an integral part of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

We pay tribute to the thousands of Ukrainian and international journalists who, often at the risk of their own lives, are telling the world the truth about Russia's crimes in Ukraine and elsewhere. Their work remains crucial for future accountability and justice.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.