



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine in response to
Mr. Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic
Institutions and Human Rights**

As delivered by Viktoria Kuvshynnykova, Chargée d'Affaires a.i,
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna
to the 1465th meeting of the Permanent Council

14 March 2024

Mr. Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine welcomes back to the Permanent Council meeting Director Matteo Mecacci and thanks him for the comprehensive presentation.

Ukraine sincerely appreciates ODIHR's priority attention to the situation on the ground in Ukraine against the backdrop of russia's war of aggression.

Mr. Director,

As you stressed in your statement on February 23, 2024 "As the war in Ukraine following Russia's military attack enters its third year, the suffering of Ukrainian civilians is worsening as indiscriminate military strikes continue together with cases of torture, arbitrary detention, and other serious human rights violations", "The terrible consequences of this war for civilians and particularly children cannot be overestimated".

All these atrocities are accompanied by a large-scale state sponsored propaganda in russia aimed at the dehumanization of the Ukrainian people.

This is how looks the new reality that russia with its so-called "russian world" and "traditional values" brought to the occupied territories of Ukraine and beyond.

Dear colleagues,

As of today, the Prosecutor General's Office registered over 127.000 russia's war crimes in Ukraine. 535 children have been killed, and 1254 children injured. This information doesn't take full account of the cases on the territories under russian occupation, for instance in Mariupol.

We have to be mindful that russia's gross systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, flouting of the OSCE fundamental principles and commitments, and norms of international law, will continue until russia acts in impunity.

Therefore, it remains critical to apply all efforts to ensure accountability so that russia and its war criminals bear all the legal consequences of internationally wrongful acts and international crimes, including through the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression, as well as the payment by the aggressor state of reparations and compensation for any damage, loss or injury caused to Ukraine and its people.

We commend ODIHR's well-established activities on monitoring and documenting russia's violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in

Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the temporarily occupied territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, of parts the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine.

ODIHR's interim reports together with the OSCE Moscow Mechanism reports form an important part of a wider international efforts to ensure justice and accountability.

Ukraine expects OSCE's more active involvement in facilitating the return of all deported Ukrainian children, arbitrarily detained civilians and medical personnel, to protect the rights of prisoners of war, to facilitate the release of Crimean political prisoners, and in addressing other critical issues where human life and dignity are at stake.

Mr. Director,

As international community has witnessed in 2014 in Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, and later in other regions of Ukraine following 24 February 2022, russian aggression is also a blatant attack on democratic institutions.

In its futile attempts to dismantle the Ukrainian statehood and legitimize the grab of lands, the aggressor state conducted the illegal so-called "referendums" and "elections" in the TOT of Ukraine in gross violation of the norms and principles of international law, OSCE commitments and national legislation of Ukraine.

We appreciate ODIHR's official reactions with the strong condemnation of russia's illegal actions, including the recent statement reiterating ODIHR's principled position that the forthcoming so-called "presidential elections" in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, on 15-17 March, "are contrary to international law and are therefore illegal".

The kremlin regime's actions clearly testify that the electoral system of the russian federation has completely discredited itself and can no longer be considered as ensuring the implementation of democratic norms in society.

It is important for the OSCE to make it clear for russia that its systematic and gross abuses of the key democratic institutions and human rights will not remain unpunished.

We therefore welcome ODIHR's recent statement on the alarming human rights situation and absolute crackdown on democratic institutions in russia.

It reiterates once again the importance of addressing the critical situation with human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law, tolerance and non-discrimination in the russian federation, which has a detrimental effect on international peace and security in the entire OSCE region.

We take this opportunity to repeat our call on ODIHR and other OSCE institutions to closely address one of the underpinning elements of russian aggression which manifests in the policy of dehumanization of the Ukrainian people brought in russia to a state level through the neo-Nazis concepts of so-called "denazification", "russian world" and "protection of russian-speaking population".

Without duly addressing human rights situation in russia, this huge human rights ghetto, with enormous legacy of decades of repressions and violations, will remain a source of permanent threat to peace and security in the OSCE region and beyond.

We count on ODIHR's continued engagement in addressing severe consequences of russia's war of aggression on the people of Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.