



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine  
in response to the reports by the Personal Representatives of the OSCE  
Chairperson-in-Office on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1295th meeting of the Permanent Council,  
10 December 2020

**Mr. Chairperson,**

We welcome the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Rabbi Andrew Baker, Ambassador Mehmet Paçacı and Associate Professor Dr. Regina Polak to the Permanent Council, and thank them for their presentations.

The OSCE commitments offer a comprehensive framework for participating States to address manifestations of intolerance and discrimination as they pose a serious threat to our common security. It remains important to promote full compliance with OSCE commitments on combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination on religious grounds, as well as against non-believers.

Ukraine attaches great importance to the promotion of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding within the Ukrainian society and strongly condemns manifestations of any kind of intolerance or discrimination. The national legislation, which provides for efficient system of legal protection, state policies, awareness raising programmes and statistical data collection, duly addresses this important area. The overwhelming majority of religious communities in Ukraine describe harmonious inter-faith relations and the environment of a genuine dialogue.

I take this opportunity to stress that despite the continued blatant provocations and attempts to manipulate the issues of freedom of religion and tolerance in Ukraine by the aggressor state and its GONGOs, my country will further pursue its comprehensive democratic policies aimed at strengthening the implementation of relevant OSCE commitments.

**Distinguished Personal Representatives,**

My country continues to face serious systemic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms by the Russian occupation administrations in the illegally occupied territories of Ukraine's Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and parts of Donbas.

We remain concerned that in the occupied parts of Donbas all faith traditions, except for the Russian Orthodox Church, continue to be targeted by the occupying administration.

In Crimea, the occupying power aims to eradicate everything Ukrainian, including Ukrainian churches, and to suppress religious freedoms of those with a voice against the attempted annexation. Such actions represent a grave violation by the Russian Federation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In the recent case, on 06 November 2020, the MFA of Ukraine expressed protest against the so-called "court ruling" by the occupation administration of aggressor state, ordering the demolition of a Ukrainian Orthodox Church temple in Yevpatoria.

According to the reports of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and reports of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights situation in Crimea, the occupying power, in violation of international humanitarian law, continued to apply Russian anti-extremist laws, widely known as the "Yarovaya package", to restrict the exercise of religious practices.

The occupation administration continues the intimidation and surveillance over Crimean Tatars in mosques and religious schools, labelling different religious groups as extremist. The OHCHR documented a pattern of reprisals against Crimean Tatars, including the emblematic Hizb ut-Tahrir case, where so-called "judges" continued to find defendants guilty in apparent disregard of fair trial guarantee. Almost 70 Crimean Tatars had been detained for alleged affiliation with that group.

Against this backdrop, Russia continues to deliberately disregard the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice in connection with the case against the Russian Federation on violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, including on lifting the ban on the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people.

We call on the Personal Representatives to add their voices in denouncing the illegal actions of the aggressor state and give a proper assessment of the grave violations of religious rights and freedoms, and manifestations of discrimination in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

We remain concerned over the cases of manifestation of xenophobia, radical nationalism, neo-Nazism, aggressive nationalistic sentiments and violent manifestations of intolerance in Russia, which continue to be largely underreported due to the ongoing clamp-down on civil society and independent NGOs in Russia.

For instance, according to the Russian NGO "SOVA Center for Information and Analysis", 36 individuals have suffered from xenophobic attacks, with one killed, and another five received death threats; more than 24 acts of ideologically motivated vandalism were recorded in 18 regions of the country since the beginning of 2020. Only in November 2020, more than two people were targeted by xenophobic attacks in St. Petersburg, and two instances of ideologically motivated vandalism of religious sites were registered in Bashkiria and Chelyabinsk. It also reported that the so-called "Russian March" was once again the primary ultra-right public event of the fall, taking place on 4 November. In Moscow, all nationalist actions were held in non-traditional formats, as no mass events were allowed in light of quarantine measures.

We urge the Personal Representatives to fully use their mandates to assist Russia to comply with the OSCE principles and commitments and international obligations in the area of combatting intolerance and discrimination.

In conclusion, let me wish the Personal Representatives every success in their important activities promoting tolerance and non-discrimination in the OSCE region.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**