

PC.DEL/1303/18

2 November 2018

ENGLISH

Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION, AT THE 1199<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

1 November 2018

**On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists**

Mr. Chairperson,

Tomorrow, 2 November, we will mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. Combating such crimes is a priority for Russia in the context of ensuring freedom of expression and of the media. Unfortunately, our country too is not immune from isolated criminal cases involving journalists. These incidents are investigated. However, in contrast to several other countries, violence against members of the press has not been elevated to the rank of State policy in our country.

An especially intolerable situation has developed in Ukraine, where journalists continue to experience all forms of discrimination, including physical violence and threats to their lives. It is regrettable that the Ukrainian Government is making no effort to rectify this catastrophic state of affairs and continues to construct an openly totalitarian press system, cleansing the Ukrainian media space of all undesirable sources of information. A graphic example is the arrest of the RIA Novosti Ukraine bureau chief Kirill Vyshinsky on trumped-up charges. Despite condemnation from human rights defenders and the journalistic community, including the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir, the Ukrainian authorities continue to hype up this criminal case.

Even after 18 years, convincing conclusions from the investigation into the murder in Ukraine of the journalist Georgiy Gongadze are still missing. For some reason, the distinguished representative of the European Union failed to remember this. The murders of the journalists Anatoly Klyan, Anton Voloshin, Igor Kornelyuk, Andrei Stenin, Andrea Rocchelli, Oles Buzina, Sergei Dolgov, Vyacheslav Veremiy, Pavel Sheremet and others remain unsolved. With the connivance of the authorities in Ukraine and in the United States of America, the notorious website Mirotvorets continues to operate, and the inclusion of journalists' names in blacklists puts their lives at real risk.

We urge the Ukrainian Government to put an end to crimes against journalists, conduct objective and careful investigations, bring the perpetrators to account and ensure the

safety of members of the press. We trust that Mr. Désir will also make a contribution to these efforts.

Obstructing the work of the Russian media has become standard policy in a number of other OSCE participating States. Reporters are banned without proper authorization from entering certain countries, and there are expulsions, unauthorized detentions, denials of accreditation and so on. One of the most recent examples was the statement by the French Government spokesperson Benjamin Griveaux that the RT France television channel and the Sputnik news agency are not media outlets but propaganda tools. Their correspondents are therefore denied access to the Élysée Palace. Such statements, as experience has shown, are often perceived by radicals as a green light for attacks on journalists and generate an atmosphere of fear and impunity.

We call on the participating States to take effective measures to prevent crimes against journalists and not to use forceful methods to suppress freedom of the media.

We hope that these concerns will also be reflected in an OSCE Ministerial Council decision in Milan on the safety of journalists.

Thank you for your attention.