

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2019
Working Session 8: Tolerance and non-discrimination I, 20 September 2019

Olena Stefurak, NGO “European Youth of Ukraine”

Borys Babin, Prof., UIMTU

***Gender Dimension in Ukraine in Conditions of the Interstate Conflict:
Occupied Territories, Frontline, Hostages and Displaced Persons***

Dear Chairman, representatives of the Participating States, civil activists and experts!

We want to emphasize the extremely importance of the issues of violence against women and gender discrimination in conditions of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, temporal occupation of Crimea and East of Ukraine by Russian forces, and related internally displacement.

It is not only opinion of the Ukrainian civil society, as those issues were reflected in the Thematic Report “Gender Dimensions of SMM Monitoring” that observed events of 2017 and 2018 years and later was published by the OSCE SMM in Ukraine¹. This research emphasised the role of women’s participation in local communities near the frontline and some conflict-related trends in gender-based violence, also as trafficking in human beings.

Alas such important OSCE Report seems to be disproportional and eclectic, with broad gaps in conflict-related gender issues in Ukraine. SMM OSCE researched in Report the gender disproportion in military-civil administration near the frontline but did not show the common figures of such disproportion for elected local council in other parts of East of Ukraine and for Ukrainian parliament, for central executive and other governmental bodies.

Also SMM OSCE did not reflect in Report the gender situation in Ukrainian local bodies, established for registration, legal and administrative services for displaced persons and persons, temporarily visiting controlled territories from the occupied zoned in Crimea and Donbass. More, the gender issues regarding checkpoints functioning on the Crimean and Donbass frontlines are not reflected in this Report, also as the risks for travelling women connected will totally illegal transport, functioning via checkpoints.

And much more, the issue of gender-based violence in groups of the displaced persons in different regions of Ukraine are not lighted; the global relevant problem of non-functioning the Ukrainian on-line IDPs` Register is not even mentioned in the Report.

Alas SMM did not reflect in Report not only the common situation with gender discrimination in Crimea but also for occupied part of Donbass, where the OSCE officers have some access. The special attention in this area must be paid to vulnerable situation of hundreds mothers and family members of the politic prisoners, residing in Crimea and Donbass, also as of family members of Ukrianian Army personnel, residing in occupied territories. We had to mention specially that the Simferopol Office of the International Committee of the Red Cross Moscow delegation, established and functioned in Crimea since 2015 without any permission of the Ukrainian authorities, refused to solve any humanitarian problems of those women, directly connected with their residing in the occupied territory.

We demand to the OSCE Head bodies and to the Participating States, especially for the neutral to Russian-Ukrainian conflict ones, to enforce our attention to work and results of the OSCE SMM in Ukraine including its observations in area of the gender dimension in conditions of the current conflict, to demand Ukraine and Russia, as the occupying power, to fully execute the provisions of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, the relevant demands of Geneva Conventions, 1949 for ongoing situation in Crimea and East of Ukraine.

Thank You for Your attention.

¹ <https://www.osce.org/special-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine/407804>