



United States Mission to the OSCE

Abduction, Detention, and Sentencing of Ukrainian Citizens by the Russian Federation

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Kate Byrnes
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
November 26, 2015

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the continued detention of Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov, Oleksander Kolchenko, Stanislav Klich and all other Ukrainians unjustly held as prisoners and hostages in Russia.

We note that on November 24, the Russian Supreme Court upheld the wrongful convictions of Oleg Sentsov and Oleksander Kolchenko. We regret these decisions, and that the Russian justice system missed the opportunity to overturn this miscarriage of justice.

The United States continues to monitor Ms. Savchenko's trial closely. We are deeply concerned by the reported secret testimony in her trial of Igor Plotnytsky, the head of the so-called Luhansk Peoples Republic. We call on the Russian Federation to cease intimidating Ms. Savchenko's defense team, and expect that Ms. Savchenko's sister will be allowed to testify on her behalf in an upcoming session.

We also call on the Russian Federation to promptly and impartially investigate allegations of torture made by Ukrainian citizens Stanislav Klich and Mykola Karpyuk, who are the subject of a show trial in Chechnya based on absurd charges that they killed Russians over 20 years ago during the first Chechen War.

Taken together, these cases raise serious concerns about the rule of law and due process, as well as respect for fundamental human rights, in the Russian Federation. The charges against Ukrainian hostages and citizens held for politically-motivated reasons should be dismissed, and they should be released immediately and allowed to return to Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.