



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

PC.DEL/1654/17  
1 December 2017

ENGLISH only

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

As delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1166<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
30 November 2017

**Mr. Chairman,**

We welcome the Personal Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Professor Ingeborg Gabriel, Rabbi Andrew Baker and Professor Bülent Şenay back to the Permanent Council and thank them for their comprehensive reports on their activities over the past year.

Ukraine supports their respective mandates and the role they play in promoting full compliance with OSCE commitments on combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and members of other religions.

We note that the OSCE commitments constitute a comprehensive framework for participating States to address manifestations of intolerance and discrimination.

The Government of 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 topic of preventing and combating discrimination is duly addressed by the National Human Rights Strategy of Ukraine, which provides for further development of efficient system at national and local levels, including legal protection, awareness raising programmes and statistical data collection. The religious communities in Ukraine enjoy harmonious inter-faith relations and conditions of non-discrimination. Isolated incidents of tension are dealt with through promoting dialogue and respectful behavior. The entire nation and society are deeply scarred and traumatized by the ongoing aggression against Ukraine of a neighbouring OSCE participating State – the Russian Federation which already took away the lives of over ten thousand people and left tens of thousands wounded and injured.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In sharp contrast to the territories under Ukraine's government control, numerous independent reports, including the last report of the UN High

Commissioner for Human Rights, testify to the significant deterioration of human rights situation in other parts of Ukraine which have been illegally occupied by the Russian Federation or placed by its force under its effective control.

In Crimea, the Russian occupying authorities made the indigenous Crimean Tatar people, Ukrainians and all those who oppose the occupation to be the main targets of discrimination and repressive policies. The basic norms of non-discrimination have been and continue to be brutally violated. Among the most conspicuous forms of discrimination are the ban of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis, raids and searches in the Crimean Tatars' mosques and madrasas, restrictions on the distribution of Muslim religious literature under the false pretext of fighting extremism, fabrication of criminal cases against Muslims. Until today Russia defies the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice in connection with the case against Russia on violation of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The occupation authorities attacked and forced expulsion from Crimea of the priests of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate. The Russian state-controlled media propagate hatred towards the followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate.

In certain areas of Donbas, which are under Russia's effective control, all faith traditions, clergy members and believers, except for the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, are subjected to persecution, seizure of property, abductions, unlawful deprivation of liberty, torture and ill-treatment and even killings.

We strongly condemn these manifestations of religious-biased violence and discrimination and consider as highly important for the OSCE Institutions and respective CiO's Personal Representatives to closely monitor the situation and react to the glaring violations that persist.

### **Distinguished colleagues,**

A matter of utmost concern for us is the correlation between Russia's external aggression and the tendencies inside that country, marked by the strengthening of aggressive nationalism, xenophobia and intolerance, which represent a vital ingredient for pursuit of Russia's expansionist and neo-imperial policy.

Anti-Ukrainian sentiments and propaganda, actively fuelled by Russian state media, are everyday realities, endangering the safety of Ukrainians. The resurgence of anti-Semitism has been manifested in statements of politicians, including from State Duma, together with the most recent revival of judaphobic myths of the past.

The Russian legislation has been rigorously used to stifle belief and voices of different communities. This year Russia banned the Jehovah Witnesses as "an extremist organisation" and now members of this religious community are criminally prosecuted for exercising their belief. Restrictions and persecutions of a similar nature are well remembered from the period of the Soviet totalitarian regime.

As manifestations of aggression, xenophobia, neo-Nazism, intolerance and discrimination gain strength in Russia, we call upon the Personal Representatives to offer their expertise to the Russian Federation as well as assistance in addressing the root causes of numerous worrisome tendencies in the country.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

I will conclude by wishing success to the Personal Representatives in their very important activities and by reiterating Ukraine's strong commitment to implement fully its international obligations and OSCE commitments in relation to tolerance and non-discrimination, including through active cooperation with the OSCE and other international organizations.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**