



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY  
TO THE OSCE

STATEMENT MARKING SEVEN YEARS OF  
ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF THE CRIMEAN PENINSULA

Delivered by Minister-Counsellor Henning Hj. Johansen  
at the Permanent Council, Vienna, 4 March 2021

Mr. Chair,

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been ongoing for seven years and remains a serious threat to security and stability in Europe. Russia's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol on 18 March 2014 was a blatant violation of international law and the rules-based international order that this organisation is committed to uphold.

Norway condemns the ongoing militarization of the Crimean peninsula and the presence of Russian troops on Ukrainian territory. We are concerned about Russia's military activities in Crimea, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, which exacerbate tensions in the region. We further call on Russia to stop impeding the lawful exercise of navigational rights and freedoms.

Mr. Chair,

Norway is increasingly concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea. Any dissenting voices appear to be at risk, whether they belong to journalists, human rights defenders, civil society actors or others. However, Crimean Tatars and

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Ukrainians have been particularly targeted through arbitrary detentions and politically motivated convictions.

Norway sincerely urges Russia to release all illegally detained prisoners held in Crimea and Russia. As the occupying force, Russia has a responsibility to protect human rights such as the freedom of expression and the media, of religion and belief, and of peaceful assembly and association. Also, the illegal deprivation of civil and property rights through forced passportization and conscription must come to an end. Linguistic and cultural rights must be protected, and we call for the restoration of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars, as ordered by the International Court of Justice in 2017.

We call on Russia to respect its human rights and humanitarian law commitments and to ensure international human rights and humanitarian actors full and unhindered access to areas currently not under Ukrainian control, including the Crimean peninsula.

Mr. Chair,

Norway reiterates its consistent support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We reaffirm our policy of non-recognition of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, including through alignment with the EU's restrictive measures. We yet again urge Russia to reverse the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Until that happens, this issue must remain high on the OSCE's agenda.

Thank you.