



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
on the invocation of the OSCE Human Dimension
Moscow Mechanism to address the arbitrary detention
of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation
amidst human rights violations and humanitarian impacts
of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine**

As delivered by Viktoriya Kuvshynnykova, Chargée d'Affaires a.i,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1463rd meeting of the Permanent Council,
29 February 2024

Madam Chairperson,

The Delegation of Ukraine wishes to express its full support to the important initiative, presented in the joint statement of 45 participating States, on the invocation of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism to address the arbitrary detention of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation amidst human rights violations and humanitarian impacts of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

As we informed the Permanent Council on numerous occasions, thousands of civilians in Ukraine have been illegally detained by the Russian Federation. Those detained are representatives of Ukrainian local authorities, humanitarian volunteers, human rights defenders, other members of civil society, journalists, media actors, members of clergy, teachers, and ordinary citizens.

All these persons became victims of arbitrary detentions, abductions, kidnapping, enforced disappearances and other forms of arbitrary deprivation of liberty. Many remain in Russian captivity or are considered missing, as their whereabouts are unknown.

Since the very beginning of Russian aggression in 2014, Ukrainian citizens in the temporarily occupied territories are being persecuted by the occupation administrations on political, religious, ethnic and other grounds. Only in the illegally occupied Crimea Russia is illegally holding 209 Ukrainian political prisoners, including 126 Crimean Tatars.

According to the latest information of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, since February 2022, about 28,000 persons are considered missing under special circumstances and illegally deprived of their liberty as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It was possible to free only 147 civilians from the Russian detention.

We stress that such actions of the aggressor state grossly violate international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In order to address this extremely grave situation, which endangers life and health of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula contains a special point, according to which, on 26 February 2024, the International Platform for the Release of Civilians illegally detained by the Russian Federation has been established to consolidate international efforts on this track.

Dear colleagues,

We sincerely appreciate that the overwhelming majority of participating States, following the consultations with Ukraine, supported the need to continue the documentation of Russia's gross violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, war crimes and crimes against humanity, and decided to invoke the Moscow Mechanism in order to establish the facts and circumstances related to the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation.

We believe that the invocation of the Mechanism will significantly contribute to the international efforts seeking the release of all Ukrainian civilians from the Russian captivity, as well as to the accountability mechanisms to ensure justice and hold to account the masterminds and perpetrators of Russia's crimes.

The Delegation of Ukraine expresses its readiness to invite a mission of experts in accordance with the procedures of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism.

I kindly ask that this Statement be attached to the Journal of the Day.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.