



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement
in response to Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov,
OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1455th meeting of the Permanent Council,
7 December 2023

Dear High Commissioner,

Thank you for presenting comprehensive Regular Report.

russia's war of aggression against Ukraine continues to have a devastating impact on ensuring the rights of persons belonging to national minorities (communities) and indigenous peoples of Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the person who started this war instead of immediately putting it to an end, continues imposing his own theories about "ruskiy mir" and "western russophobia", abusing the rights of russia's national minorities, misusing the so-called "russian language issue" and publicly reiterating his sick perception of what the "russian nation" is.

During his speech on russian identity at the world russian people's council on November 28, putin once again tried to justify his aggressive war. Among other things, he claimed the "russian nation" and people are composed of ethnic russians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians who were "artificially and violently divided after the fall of the Soviet Union".

He aggressively promotes unification of the "russian nation" at all costs and redrawing of internationally recognized borders of independent states by means of illegal occupation and war. Instead, it would be wise to finally face the truth and admit that the Soviet Union does not exist anymore, and that Ukraine is a sovereign, independent state.

Allocation of record expenditures in the federal budget for 2024-2026 to the maintenance of the military and defense-industrial complex also speaks volumes about plans of the dictator.

Dear High Commissioner,

We take note of your attention to the situation of people living in the temporarily occupied by russia territories of Ukraine and of your clear signal about the necessity to provide education in Ukrainian there as well as offer cultural and history instruction to preserve Ukrainian identity of the population.

In fact, the situation is as follows. russia continues violating the Geneva Conventions, which stipulate a number of rules to be observed by an occupying state with regard to civilians who remain in the occupied territory.

It brutally neglects both cultural and language rights of the population in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and cracks down on all who oppose reviving aggressor's imperialistic past.

The representatives of russian occupation administrations in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine implement policy of assimilation by forcibly involving Ukrainians in russian linguistic and cultural space. Access to education for millions of

children has been severely interrupted. Education in Ukrainian is banned. Ukrainian books are burnt. Russian propaganda-based curriculum is in place.

Apart from this, Russian army deliberately attacks educational facilities with missiles and drones, use schools and kindergartens for military purposes or turn them into torture chambers for Ukrainians. Cases of looting of school equipment are not rare.

In an attempt to change the ethnic composition of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine the aggressor state executes forcible transfer and/or deportation of Ukrainians, including children, to Russia and resettles people from the remote regions of Russia to Ukraine.

It has been confirmed by different international mechanisms that forcibly transferred or deported children are often subjected to various human rights violations, particularly those relating to a change of the child's personal status, including citizenship, separation from parents or guardians, adoption, leading to their forced assimilation and erasing their Ukrainian identity.

Such actions of the aggressor-state grossly violate international law and can be qualified as forcible transfer of children from one human group to another that falls under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide.

As you once mentioned, Ambassador Abdrakhmanov, actions and steps designed to assimilate individuals against their will can lead to irreparable harm. We fully support your stance and ask you to engage as much as possible to stop the aggressor from committing this crime.

Distinguished colleagues,

Almost ten years of illegal occupation of Crimea by Russia have significantly affected its local residents. Human rights of Crimean Tatars have been grossly violated, their historical monuments have been destroyed, the Mejlis has been banned. Crimean Tatar or Ukrainian language have been eliminated from the education process.

The occupying administration continues illegal conscription of Crimean residents into military service of the occupying army that constitute another war crime.

Thousands of Crimean Tatars were forced to flee the peninsula under the threat of physical and psychological abuse, other repressions, and politically motivated criminal prosecutions against them and their family members.

Illegal transfer of political prisoners from Crimea jailed on trumped up charges to Russia, where they are held in inhuman conditions and may die as they do not receive even basic medical care, remains of particular concern. According to the available data, currently, Russia is illegally detaining at least 180 Ukrainian political prisoners from Crimea.

We ask you, High Commissioner, to take concrete steps, in line with the entrusted mandate, to facilitate the immediate release of the illegally detained political prisoners, stop persecution and other flagrant human rights violations by Russia against the indigenous peoples of Ukraine.

I wish you, Dear High Commissioner, best of luck in your future endeavors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.