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Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
“Upholding the Principles of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination, including the
Promotion and Protection of Freedom of Religion or Belief”, Session 1
(Vienna, 1 April 2019)

Madam Moderator,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Delegation of Ukraine would like to commend the OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for organizing this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, devoted to the important topic of tolerance and non-discrimination.

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 behaviour. 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 that already took away the lives of over ten thousand people and left tens of thousands wounded and injured.

Madam Moderator,

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.

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. The last such massive raid of occupation authorities in Crimea against families of Crimean Tatars took place on 27 March 2019. 20 Crimean Tatars were arrested and deported to the Russian territory from the occupied peninsula in violation of Russia's obligations under international humanitarian law.

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. The Russian state-controlled media propagate hatred towards the followers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

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

Distinguished participants,

A matter of utmost concern for us is the link 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.

The growing aggressive nationalistic sentiments within Russia, combined with xenophobic public statements by mainstream politicians, represent a threat that stretches far beyond Russia's border.

It is in this worrisome context that we bring to the attention the Opinion by the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, prepared within the 4th monitoring cycle in Russia. The Opinion was published on 15 January 2019 and contains an independent evaluation of implementation of the Framework Convention by Russia's Government. The findings of this authoritative opinion are based on information submitted by Russia's state authorities, on other written sources and on information obtained by the Advisory Committee from governmental and non-governmental contacts during the visits to a few regions in Russia.

Madam Moderator,

Let me offer a quotation from the text of the mentioned opinion of the Advisory Committee: "Since the annexation of Crimea and conflict in eastern Ukraine, Russian government-controlled media are fuelling a patriotic mobilisation of society against Ukraine. The Advisory Committee is concerned that this discourse risks side-lining not only persons belonging to the Ukrainian national minority but also anyone not aligning with the majority, including persons belonging to other national minority groups".

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.

In 2018, at least 56 people became victims of violence, motivated by racist or neo-Nazi ideology. Four of them were killed. 21 acts of vandalism took place.

We are deeply alarmed that the violent manifestations of xenophobia and intolerance increasingly target Ukrainian citizens in the Russian Federation. Anti-Ukrainian sentiments

and hateful propaganda, actively fuelled by Russian media, are everyday realities in Russia, endangering the safety of Ukrainians. One of the last victims – Dynamo Kyiv trainee who was beaten by neo-Nazis in Chelyabinsk and family members of the famous Russian blogger of Ukrainian origin Yuriy Dud' who were beaten in Moscow.

The Russian Federation has never provided information on the results of investigations of brutal murder of Ukrainian citizen Roman Muzychenko in Moscow by a group of 21 young nationalists or a 16 year-old Ukrainian citizen Vitaliy Pop who was beaten to death by the personnel of the juvenile correctional facility in Krasnodar region of Russia.

The Russian authorities have incarcerated on fabricated charges over 70 Ukrainian citizens and made them political prisoners.

The clamp-down targeted civil society, including organizations protecting the rights of ethnic Ukrainians, indigenous peoples of the Russian North and East and those fighting racism and discrimination.

While the Russian authorities publicly speak about the freedom of religion and belief, severe discrimination is practiced in real life. The Russian so-called “anti-extremist” legislation is used to stifle dissenting voices and different communities, including Jehovah Witnesses, Church of Scientology, Muslim and Christian groups.

Appalling situation was presented in OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on alleged Human Rights Violations and Impunity in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation. The Report’s findings confirmed the major allegations of reported human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya and identified that there is a problem of total impunity of the Russian security forces that practice extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances and tortures in secret prisons.

Report also confirmed that people were executed by government security forces because of their sexual orientation.

In this situation, we recommend to:

CiO Personal Representatives, the OSCE ODIHR, OSCE HCNM to monitor situation in Russia to form the comprehensive program for this participating State to address the root causes of the rise of violent radicalism, neo-Nazism and xenophobia to comply with the OSCE principles and commitments and international obligations in the area of combatting intolerance and discrimination;

OSCE HCNM, OSCE ODIHR and OSCE RFoM to combine their efforts within existing mandates because of inter-relation of different aspects of restrictions of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Russian Federation that lead to further worsening of the situation for national minorities in that country;

the OSCE ODIHR, OSCE HCNM, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine to ensure close monitoring of and reporting on the human rights situation in the temporarily occupied by Russia Autonomous Republic of Crimea, city of Sevastopol and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (Ukraine), namely the cases of religious intolerance, to help restore the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in the affected regions and situations of occupation;

the OSCE HCNM and OSCE ODIHR to use all assets at their disposal and closely monitor the situation in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2015 HRAM Report on Crimea;

OSCE ODIHR, OSCE Secretariat to present recommendations on establishment of respective international mechanism of investigation of reported human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya identified in OSCE Rapporteur’s Report under the Moscow Mechanism on alleged Human Rights Violations and Impunity in the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation (ODIHR.GAL/76/18).

I thank you.