



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 26, 2023

President Cederfelt, welcome back to the Permanent Council. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly has always been a tried and true partner in defending and advancing OSCE principles. In 2014, the Parliamentary Assembly condemned Russia's purported annexation of Ukraine's Crimea as constituting clear, gross, and uncorrected violations of its Helsinki Final Act commitments. We join you in this assessment.

Each year since, the OSCE PA has unwaveringly called upon Russia to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from all temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine, recognize Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and renounce the illegitimate results of its sham referenda in the parts of Ukraine that it controls. Today, we join you in calling on Russia to immediately end its war of aggression against Ukraine, cease its imperialistic land grabs, and meet its international law obligations, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states and for the human rights of all.

Madam President, under your capable leadership, the OSCE PA has successfully adapted its work in 2022 to address the security threats posed by Russia and abetted by Belarus. We welcome the PA's efforts to ensure accountability for those responsible for war crimes and other atrocities in Ukraine. You have helped put the international spotlight on Russia's attacks wreaking unconscionable civilian suffering and death, as well as destruction to Ukraine's critical infrastructure, causing the largest humanitarian crisis Europe has seen since the Second World War, and exacerbating a global food crisis. We particularly commend the PA's efforts to address the increased risk of human trafficking in Ukraine and among the millions of refugees displaced by the war, the majority of whom are women and children.

We share the high value you place on the OSCE's field missions. We echo your concern that the mandate of the OSCE Mission in Moldova, which plays a critical role in the Transnistrian settlement process, has been limited to six months instead of one year. We call for the full immediate mandate to be restored, consistent with the OSCE's normal practice. Similarly, we welcome the PA's recent high-level visits to Georgia, Central Asia, and the Western Balkans to draw further attention to the impacts of protracted conflicts, regional instability, and continued threats from Russia's malign influence.

Finally, Madam President, I know the Parliamentary Assembly shares our deep concern about the Kremlin's intensifying crackdown on independent civil society in Russia, underscoring the connection between external aggression and the internal repression of brave voices of conscience. Yesterday, a Moscow City Court ruled in favor of a Justice Ministry motion to dissolve the Moscow Helsinki Group (MHG), the citizens' group that inspired the entire Helsinki monitoring movement. This ruling contravenes OSCE commitments regarding non-governmental organizations and the 2010 Astana Declaration's recognition of the important role civil society plays in ensuring respect for human rights. The United States stands in solidarity with the Moscow Helsinki Group in defense of OSCE principles and values of the Human Dimension.

We also join you in demanding the immediate release of Vladimir Kara-Murza who, as you rightly noted, is being illegally detained for no reason other than his exercise of his fundamental right to freedom of expression in criticizing Russia's war against Ukraine.

Madam President, I wish you every success as you prepare for the PA's Annual Session in Vancouver this July. You and the PA continue to have our support as you uphold Helsinki Final Act principles and press for implementation of OSCE commitments. We look forward to combining institutional strengths in support of sovereign, independent Ukraine, so that its people can continue on their chosen path of freedom and democracy.

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