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ENGLISH only

Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna

1585th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda Item 7, "Review of Current Issues"

On the situation with the three OSCE officials illegally detained by Russia as part of its war of aggression against Ukraine

(12 November 2026)

Mr. Chair,

Dmytro Shabanov. Maksym Petrov. Vadym Golda.

These names should be familiar to everyone in this room. The Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine was established by this Council, by consensus, including with the support of the Russian Federation. For eight years, it was the eyes and ears of our Organization on the ground. These three men were part of it. They wore the OSCE emblem and carried out the mandate that all of us entrusted to them. For more than four and a half years, they have been paying for that service with their freedom.

Today, Ukraine brings this issue to the Permanent Council because the situation of one of them, Vadym Golda, has become alarming.

Since 15 October, Mr. Golda has been held incommunicado. According to information that emerged on 9 November, he has been transferred from the temporarily occupied part of the Donetsk region to a medical-correctional facility in the Tambov region of the Russian Federation. Russia has provided no notification – neither to the OSCE, nor to Ukraine, nor to his family. We are working to verify this information. If confirmed, Vadym Golda is the third OSCE staff member deported by Russia from occupied territory, after Dmytro Shabanov and Maksym Petrov were moved in 2025 to the Omsk and Chelyabinsk regions. Such transfers are prohibited by Articles 49 and 76 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and may amount to war crimes.

The reported place of detention deepens our concern. The facility is officially designated for prisoners requiring treatment for tuberculosis, HIV and addiction. These are no places for civilians whose only "crime" was to serve the OSCE. Nor can we ignore the wider context: the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation has documented both the revival of punitive psychiatry in Russia and the complicity of medical personnel in the torture of Ukrainian detainees, including civilians.

Mr. Chair,

Russia has turned three OSCE staff members into hostages, and their families into hostages of uncertainty. This is not only a grave violation of international humanitarian law. It is an attack on this Organization itself – on the integrity of its field operations and on the safety of everyone who serves under the OSCE flag. If those who work for peace can be seized, sentenced and moved ever deeper into Russia with impunity, no OSCE mission anywhere can feel safe.

Yesterday, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Mykyta Poturaiev and its Special Rapporteur Boris Dittrich expressed grave concern over the reported transfer of Mr. Golda to Russia. Let me also recall the Hague Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly of 8 July 2026, which demands the immediate release of all three OSCE officials.

We therefore call on the Russian Federation to:

- immediately disclose the whereabouts, state of health and conditions of detention of Vadym Golda, Dmytro Shabanov and Maksym Petrov;
- ensure them proper medical care, access to legal counsel and regular contact with their families;
- release all three immediately and unconditionally.

We are grateful to the Secretary General and the Swiss Chairpersonship for their efforts, and we encourage them to use every channel and every opportunity, at the highest level, to bring our colleagues home. We express thanks the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, its Special Rapporteur Senator Boris Dittrich and its Special Representative Congressman Steve Cohen for keeping this cause high on the agenda. And we thank all delegations that consistently raise their voices on this issue in this Council.

Mr. Chair,

In a few weeks, our Ministers will gather for the Ministerial Council. Let the names of these three men be heard there too – and let it be the last Ministerial Council they spend in captivity.

Dmytro, Maksym and Vadym believed in this Organization. They served it when it was difficult and dangerous. Now it is our turn not to let them down. Ukraine will keep saying their names in this Council until they are home.

I kindly ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.