

PC.DEL/1350/18  
8 November 2018

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
AT THE 1200th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

8 November 2018

**On the murder of Kateryna Handziuk in Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We note the initiative by our Ukrainian colleagues to report on the progress in the investigation into the brutal murder of Kateryna Handziuk, assistant to the mayor of Kherson and activist. We hope that all of those responsible for this crime will be found and brought to justice.

At the same time, we are obliged to note that this is far from the first and only attack on human rights defenders and public figures in Ukraine. The attacks, threats and violence towards activists undesired by the authorities have taken on massive proportions in the country in recent times. According to the International Society for Human Rights, 34 lawyers were attacked, five of them fatally, in Ukraine between 2016 and 2018. We may recall their names: Yuriy Grabovskiy, Viktor Loyko, Tetyana Popova, Valeriy Rybalchenko and Iryna Nozdrowska. According to human rights defenders, more often than not these acts of violence take place with the involvement of the police, the Ukrainian Security Service and the tax authorities.

One further eloquent example of the lawlessness in Ukraine is the recent incident with the well-known Ukrainian public figure Elena Berezhnaya. In fact, she has participated on several occasions in the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw and many colleagues have probably seen her in person. On 6 November members of the Ukrainian Security Service smashed in her door, broke into her apartment and searched it. According to the media and Ms. Berezhnaya herself, she was beaten up by members of the Security Service and left lying on the floor without the provision of medical aid. She is currently in hospital.

More than four years have gone by since the tragedy in Odessa. I recall that on 2 May 2014 Ukrainian nationalists forced defenceless people into Trade Union House and burned them alive. In the intervening years, the authorities in Kyiv have been unable to conduct a transparent and fair investigation. The culprits have still not been punished. We should like to ask the representative of Ukraine why an investigation commission has never

been formed with regard to the fire in Odessa, as, for example, was the case in the investigation of the attack on Ms. Handziuk.

It is not only public figures who have been victims of physical violence in Ukraine but also members of the press. Since the beginning of 2018, Ukraine's National Union of Journalists has registered 53 cases of the use of force against media workers. Moreover, United Nations experts analysing the situation in Ukraine from May to August this year have noted a 200 per cent increase in the number of attacks on journalists.

Let me cite some examples by way of illustration. In March this year Ukrainian radicals blocked the entrance to the offices of the ZIK television station; in May an attempt was made to set fire to the Inter television station building; and on 15 May, members of the Ukrainian Security Service burst into the office of RIA Novosti Ukraine and arrested the head of the agency Kirill Vyshinsky. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir has drawn attention to this matter on several occasions, criticizing the Ukrainian authorities for what is in fact Mr. Vyshinsky's illegal detention in custody.

As we recalled here last week, the murders of the journalists Georgiy Gongadze, Anatoly Klyan, Anton Voloshin, Igor Kornelyuk, Andrei Stenin, Andrea Rocchelli, Oles Buzina, Sergei Dolgov, Vyacheslav Veremiy, Pavel Sheremet and others still remain unsolved. The list could be run as a scrolling headline for information. The notorious Mirotvorets website is still in operation, with new names, particularly journalists and human rights defenders, being added to it. As has been shown in practice, inclusion in this "blacklist" represents a direct threat to the lives of those in question.

We urge the Ukrainian authorities to treat all victims of violence by radicals or the lawlessness of the security forces equally and to put an end to the persecution of activists, journalists and others who do not agree with the Ukrainian Government's destructive policy.

Thank you for your attention.