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**Security Council
Seventieth year**

Letter dated 4 November 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to inform you that the Russian Federation continues to blatantly ignore the fair demands of the international community to cease systematic violations of human rights in the occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Russian occupiers have been carrying out a large-scale policy of repression and harassment against everyone who opposes the regime, in particular against ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars.

On the morning of 2 November, the Russian Federal Security Service ransacked the houses of the former employees of the Crimean Tatar TV channel, ATR, and its owner, and seized documents, computers and telephones.

Since 1 April 2015, the world's only Crimean Tatar TV channel, ATR, has been off-air in Crimea, after the Russian occupation authorities refused to renew the channel's licence.

Despite intimidation and oppression, Crimean Tatars remain active opponents of the illegal Russian regime in Crimea.

Moreover, Russian authorities have been making every effort to destroy strongholds of everything Ukrainian in the Russian Federation. Recently, the starkest examples include searches of the premises of the Library of Ukrainian Literature in Moscow, provocative visits to the Ukraine Cultural Centre in Moscow, refusal to register the Ukrainian Congress of Russia and an entry ban for the co-chair of the regional public organization Ukrainians of Moscow.

In its statement in that regard, Ukraine demanded that the Russian Federation immediately stop such aggressive and unacceptable policies and fulfil its international obligations, both in the field of human rights and in the field of cultural and educational needs of minorities.



Moreover, on 30 October 2015, during the plenary session of the Third Committee of the General Assembly, a joint statement on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea was delivered by Ukraine on behalf of a group of 36 States Members of the United Nations (see annex).

Ukraine calls on the United Nations to prevent the extension of Russian aggression against Ukraine, and to make every effort to stop repression in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

Ukraine encourages the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to consider preparation of a separate report on the situation on human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine) and underlines the need for full access by the Human Rights Mission in Ukraine and other international human rights missions to the territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yuriy **Sergeyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 4 November 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Joint statement on the human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine)

This statement is delivered on behalf of Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The international community remains deeply concerned by the situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the status of which is prescribed by General Assembly resolution 68/262, which continues to be characterized by human rights abuses committed by the de facto authorities. We reiterate our support for the territorial integrity, political independence, unity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, which continues to be violated by the illegal occupation and annexation of Crimea.

Since the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in spring 2014 a number of internationally recognized human rights monitors have published reports on the human rights situation in Crimea, including those of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, and of the Human Rights Assessment Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, which were regrettably denied access by the de facto authorities. We also recall the 12 reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Ukraine, a substantive part of each of which is dedicated to the situation on human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

These reports reflect a number of serious and systematic human rights abuses that continue to take place in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. These include measures such as the forced implementation of the legal system of the Russian Federation, for example forced issuance of Russian passports, and intimidation, incarceration and politically motivated persecution of Crimea residents. Increasing impediments to the exercise of free expression include tightening control of the media and establishment of new regulations for media re-registration under the Russian Federation law, the intimidation of journalists, systematic harassment and disruption of the news media in the Crimean Tatar and the Ukrainian languages. The human rights violations also encompass police-led brutality against ethnic Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and other ethnicities, including arbitrary searches and seizures and arrests, torture and ill-treatment of detainees; the effective proscription in practice of the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages, particularly in public administration, education, religious and other services; the transfer of persons in detention to the Russian Federation; and the seizure and violation of property and other economic rights of non-Russian citizens along with their deprivation of proper medical care.

We strongly condemn the measures and practices of discrimination and human rights abuses against Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians and members of other minorities in Crimea committed by the Russian Federation as exercising de facto control over the peninsula.

We call upon the authorities of the Russian Federation as the occupying power in Crimea to address these concerns through the following measures.

First, the Russian Federation must take all necessary measures to bring to an immediate end all human rights abuses against Crimean Tatars, ethnic Ukrainians and persons belonging to other ethnicities and others opposed to the occupation living in Crimea, including, in particular, the discriminatory measures and practices, arbitrary searches and seizures, unfair trials and the practice of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. Discriminatory legislation, in particular that which has entered into force since March 2014, must be revoked.

Second, the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee, in particular on issues related to nationality, residence, labour, property and land, access to health care and education, as well as the freedoms of expression, association, religion, and peaceful assembly should be given due consideration. In this regard, we call for respect for individuals who self-identify as persons belonging to national minorities, as well as the promotion and protection of their rights.

Moreover, we call for the immediate release of Ukrainian citizens Oleg Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Ahtem Chygoz and other activists who were seized in Crimea, transferred to the Russian Federation and detained and judged in violation of elementary standards of justice.

The killing of Crimean Tatar Reshat Ametov and enforced disappearances of Crimean civil society and human rights activists Timur Shaimardanov, Seiran Zinedinov, Leonid Korzh¹ and Vasyl Chernysh² and others must be investigated in a transparent way and the perpetrators brought to justice. Lack of accountability remains one of the main sources of human rights abuses.

The Russian Federation must also reopen the cultural and religious institutions of the Crimean Tatars, cooperate fully and immediately with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and allow unconditional and immediate access of international and regional human rights mechanisms to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

We recall that the international community recognizes that Crimea is part of Ukraine and call upon Russia to end its occupation.

We believe that there needs to be an international presence in Crimea to monitor the situation of human rights. This is of paramount importance in preventing the situation from further deteriorating. We encourage the Secretary-General in this regard to consult regularly with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and relevant regional organizations.

¹ See “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 15 November 2014”, para. 214, covering the period 17 September to 31 October 2014.

² See “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 15 December 2014”, para. 80, covering the period 1-30 November 2014.

We encourage the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to consider preparation of a separate report on the situation on human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine) and underline the need for full access for the Human Rights Mission in Ukraine and other international human rights missions to the territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.
