

Item 2: Joint Statement on the situation in Ukraine

Human Rights Council 25th Session Geneva, March 26, 2014

Thank you Mr President. This statement is delivered on behalf of Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Moldova, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the United States of America.

1. We stand with the people of Ukraine at this moment of crisis.
2. We strongly support the new Ukrainian government. That government was overwhelmingly approved by the democratically elected parliament, representing all regions of the country, and supported by all major political parties in Ukraine.
3. The new government has proposed and is preparing for presidential elections for May 25 that will give all the people of Ukraine the opportunity to decide their own future democratically, a decision they must be able to take freely without any outside interference.
4. We reiterate the importance of respecting the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine, according to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. We condemn all use or threat of the use of force against the territorial integrity or the political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.
5. We express our deepest concern regarding the continuing deterioration of the situation in Ukraine. We are further concerned by Russia's unsubstantiated narrative of human rights violations, including as a justification for its military incursion into Ukraine. We are further concerned by Russian actions that continue to contribute to the deterioration of the situation, including its ongoing violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, its actions in support of the illegal Crimean referendum—which took place despite a boycott of the referendum by the Crimean Tatars, who comprise 15% of the population of the region—and its purported annexation of Crimea. These actions are in violation of Russia's obligations under the UN Charter and inconsistent with its commitments under the Helsinki Final Act.
6. We are deeply concerned about credible reports of kidnappings of journalists and activists, the blocking of independent media, and the barring of independent international observers. Furthermore, the situation of minorities in Crimea, in particular the Crimean Tatars, is extremely vulnerable since the Russian military incursion. The best method to ensure the rights of all Ukrainians are being respected, including ethnic Russians, is for Russia to support international monitors in all of Ukraine, including Crimea, so that alleged human rights violations and abuses can be reported objectively and independently.

7. We commend the measured response shown so far by the new Ukrainian government and call upon the Ukrainian authorities, through an inclusive process, to continue efforts to ensure free and fair national elections, advance constitutional reform and investigate all acts of violence and human rights violations and abuses. Efforts should continue to reach out to all Ukrainian regions and population groups and to ensure full protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities, drawing on the expertise of the Council of Europe and the OSCE.
8. We support the call made by the High Commissioner at the beginning of this session for an immediate, comprehensive and independent investigation into all human rights violations and abuses including killings, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture and ill-treatment.
9. We welcome Assistant Secretary General Simonovic's recent visit to Ukraine and call for access to be granted to all parts of Ukraine, including Crimea, to the human rights monitoring mission. We request that the OHCHR publically release the findings of its assessment report from both the ASG's visit and the upcoming mission.
10. In addition to the UN presence, we welcome the involvement of Council of Europe mechanisms and the deployment of OSCE monitors in Ukraine. We call on Russia and all concerned to ensure full and unimpeded access and protection for the teams to all of Ukraine, including Crimea, in order to provide transparency and unbiased reporting on the human rights, economic, and security situation there, including the situation of persons belonging to all minority groups.
11. We support the actions undertaken by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who personally traveled to Ukraine and Russia in order to find a diplomatic solution to this crisis. We believe that the UN, pursuant to its Purposes and Principles, has a key role to perform in order to restore calm and promote dialog between the parties.
12. We call upon all member states to work together to provide necessary assistance to Ukraine, and welcome further engagement by the High Commissioner's office and the special procedures of the Council, to assist in ensuring that human rights are respected during this period of crisis.
13. Finally, we call upon the authorities of Ukraine and the Russian Federation to engage in direct dialogue in order to restore calm and order, as well as to find a peaceful solution to this crisis, in accordance with the Purposes and Principles enshrined in the UN Charter.