



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

As delivered by HE Yuri Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the
International Organizations in Vienna

1563rd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda Item 2, “Review of Current Issues”
“World Press Freedom Day”
(07 May 2026)

Mr Chairperson,

On 3 May 2026, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine issued a statement on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. Allow me to quote it.

“Ukraine reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the values of press freedom and freedom of speech, which form the foundation of democratic nations. As a democracy on the front lines of defending the free world, Ukraine proves daily that even in the face of full-scale war, democratic institutions remain the bedrock of our resilience.

Ukraine traditionally maintains a pluralistic and free media environment. The significant rise of our state in international press freedom rankings this year is an objective reflection of a positive trend—even under fire.

Today, the protection of freedom of speech is a struggle on two fronts: against terror and against propaganda.

For Ukraine, the protection of journalists against targeted Russian terrorist strikes, which hunt both media professionals and newsrooms, is a particularly acute issue. By waging war against journalists, Moscow attempts to conceal the truth about its crimes.

Beyond physical attacks, the aggressor seeks to poison the information space with its propaganda, misleading audiences worldwide and obstructing the work of professional journalists.

According to Ukrainian state authorities and monitoring groups, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has killed at least 149 media workers, including both Ukrainian and foreign journalists. At least 21 journalists have been killed directly in the line of duty.

This is a deliberate campaign of Russian terror against those who bring the truth to the world. There must be accountability for every attack on journalists within both national and international jurisdictions. Under no circumstances should the media be targeted.

In the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, Russia has established a regime of total censorship and repression. Freedom of speech there has been physically eradicated. We emphasize: the de-occupation of our lands is the only path to restoring freedom for journalists and the people's right to fact-based information.

At the same time, the catastrophic state of journalism within Russia itself, where independent speech is criminalized, poses a threat to global security. The world must increase consolidated pressure on the Kremlin regime to end the persecution of journalists and the destruction of all civil liberties.

We remember every Ukrainian journalist currently in Russian captivity. According to official data from Ukraine's National Union of Journalists, approximately 30 Ukrainian media workers are currently being held in Russian captivity or through illegal detention. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of all Ukrainian journalists.

Ukraine will not cease the fight for every one of its citizens—military or civilian—until everyone has returned home.

The struggle for the rights of journalists, press freedom, and freedom of speech is a common cause for the entire international community. It is not merely the task of a single country; it is the protection of a global immunity against tyranny.

We call upon the world to unite efforts to ensure the safety of media workers in conflict zones, to respond firmly to crimes against freedom of speech, and to support independent media as a safeguard against dictatorship.

Journalists must be able to do their work. When freedom of speech is under threat, the future of the entire free world is under threat.”

Thank you, Chairperson