



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Address by OSCE Parliamentary Assembly President Pia Kauma

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 5, 2024

President Kauma, welcome back to the Permanent Council. We congratulate you and Secretary General Montella on your reelections.

The United States supports the Parliamentary Assembly's – and your personal – efforts to call out and to hold Russia accountable for its aggression against, and atrocities in, Ukraine. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, the Parliamentary Assembly has adopted many important resolutions condemning Russia's war. This year's Annual Session in Bucharest was no exception.

The Bucharest Declaration condemned “in the strongest possible terms, the Russian Federation's continued genocidal war of aggression against the sovereign State of Ukraine, which it has waged in an unceasing and uncompromising fashion in clear, gross and uncorrected violation of all of its obligations under the Helsinki Final Act.”

President Kauma, you have also raised Russian attacks against civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. We condemn Russia's assault on civilian infrastructure and remain concerned about the fate of Ukrainian civilians, especially children, thousands of whom Russia has forcibly transferred or deported from Ukraine. The Moscow Mechanism report last spring on the “Arbitrary Deprivation of Liberty of Ukrainian Civilians by the Russian Federation” found that Russia's systematic practice of detaining Ukrainian civilians violates both international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This includes the continued detention of three OSCE officials, Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov. All arbitrarily detained persons must be released, immediately and unconditionally.

This year, the PA also condemned sexual violence in conflict, including “conflict-related sexual violence committed by the Russian Federation's armed forces and by affiliated armed groups against the civilian population of Ukraine, including prisoners of war.” This must stop, and the perpetrators must be held accountable.

The Bucharest Annual Session adopted resolutions on other important issues, including ending the scourge of antisemitism in the OSCE region and combating human trafficking. We agree that OSCE states must step up anti-trafficking efforts by strengthening programs to lessen the vulnerability of Ukrainian refugees to human trafficking and to apply the OSCE/ODIHR National Referral Mechanism Handbook recommended practices and policies to ensure a trauma-informed, victim-centered, and age-appropriate approach to supporting survivors.

President Kauma, we share your concerns about the Top 4 vacancies and urge all participating States to heed the Chair's call to reach consensus as soon as possible, and certainly before our Ministers meet in December. We have many strong candidates from which to choose and we are very close to consensus. We need to get this done.

Madam President, lastly, we welcome the Assembly's ongoing collaboration with the OSCE institutions, including on election observation. Parliaments have a crucial role to play in the implementation of our shared OSCE commitments. We welcome the PA's new initiative to visit the OSCE field missions. We also look forward to welcoming you and all OSCE election observers to our elections this November.

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