



RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

PETITION No.: **421-03128**

BY: **Ms. DUNCAN (EDMONTON STRATHCONA)**

DATE: **JANUARY 29, 2019**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

SUBJECT

RUSSIA

ORIGINAL TEXT

REPLY

Canada unequivocally condemns the illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea by Russia. Since this illegal occupation of Crimea, we have witnessed severe human rights violations—committed by state agents of Russia— including the suppression of freedom of expression and association, arbitrary arrests, torture, detentions and disappearances.

Canada is deeply concerned for the well-being of Ukrainian political prisoners held in Russia. Canada advocates strongly for the release of these prisoners both publicly and through multiple multilateral channels. We condemn these unlawful and arbitrary detentions and arrests, and have publicly raised concerns about apparent bias and politically motivated prosecution.

On March 16 2018, the Minister of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on the fourth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, calling for the release of all political prisoners held by Russia, including Oleg Sentsov, a writer and a filmmaker, who for his outspoken criticism of Russia's occupation is serving a politically driven sentence of 20 years in a maximum security penal colony. In June 2018, the Minister of Foreign Affairs again reiterated Canada's concern for Mr. Sentsov, and called on Russia to release him.

In June 2018, Canada also signed onto a joint letter with like-minded partners calling for further United Nations (UN) engagement on the issue of Ukrainians unlawfully detained by Russia and for the UN Secretary General to facilitate the release of all Ukrainians illegally detained by Russia.

Canada has taken a strong position against Russia's aggression in Ukraine, including imposing economic sanctions under the Special Economic Measures Act. Canada took further concrete actions in the fall of 2018 by sanctioning 30 Russian individuals in relation to the case of Sergei Magnitsky under the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act. In November 2018, Canada spearheaded a G7 Foreign Ministers' statement that condemned Russia's continued aggression in Ukraine.

Canada is closely monitoring the situation in Ukraine and continues to consider all possible options at its disposal to maintain pressure on Russia.

The Government of Canada also monitors the situation of human rights in Crimea and will take every opportunity to voice its ongoing concerns, including through channels such as the UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Canada will continue to work closely with its partners, including the G7, to maintain pressure on Russia to end its illegal annexation of Crimea and respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our support for the people of Ukraine remains strong, and Canada will continue to contribute to efforts in support of Ukraine, including by hosting the third Ukraine Reform Conference in 2019.