

## INSTITUTIONAL DECLARATION BY BARCELONA PROVINCIAL COUNCIL CONDEMNING THE ATTACKS ON AND ABDUCTION OF LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS IN UKRAINE AND CALLING FOR THEIR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Twelve weeks after the start of the war in the Republic of Ukraine, elected representatives of Ukrainian local authorities have been attacked and abducted by Russian military forces. This represents an attack on the democratic institutions of Ukraine. In response, we, the members of the Plenary Body of Barcelona Provincial Council:

- Declare our solidarity with all the democratically elected local representatives who have been subject to direct and personal attacks, suffering under the most appalling conditions in recent weeks while endeavouring, together with municipal employees, to ensure the continuity of their councils and to provide the population with basic services.
  - We condemn all forms of aggression committed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation against local elected officials in Ukraine, public employees and all members of civil society, and call for the immediate release of those held in captivity.
  - Six mayors and seven other local officials are currently being held (two deputy mayors, one municipal council chief officer, three *starostas* (a type of administrative official) and one local councillor). In addition, since the start of the war more than 30 mayors and 23 other local officials have been abducted (four deputy mayors, two municipal council chief officers, ten *starostas*, five local councillors and two civil servants).
  - We add our voice to the #FreeOurPeople campaign organised by the Association of Ukrainian Cities to demand the release of abducted mayors, councillors and municipal workers in Ukraine and call on the entire community of local authorities to declare their affiliation to this campaign, bringing this initiative to the attention of international local authority networks.
  - We call for an immediate response at the highest intergovernmental level and from the European Union to secure the release of people held without just cause and to continue efforts to de-escalate the violence and protect the civilian population.
  - We consider that these abductions and violence against the elected representatives and employees of local authorities in Ukraine represent an attack on our democracy and core values. We therefore call on international municipal networks, whose purpose is to build bridges and strengthen ties between the members of the global family of municipal authorities, to show that we are united in solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues.
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