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Protecting civilians: urgent action to save civilians in Russian captivity

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Ms Mariia MEZENTSEVA-FEDORENKO and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe is gravely concerned by the ongoing illegal detention and inhumane treatment of Ukrainian civilians by the Russian Federation, which continues to flagrantly violate the Geneva Conventions. With approximately 17 000 civilians missing and detained, there is an urgent need for co-ordinated international actions to secure their immediate release.

The Assembly should urge the development and implementation of a unified legal mechanism for the identification, search, and repatriation of Ukrainian civilians held in captivity. This mechanism should involve close co-operation with international organisations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. However, it is concerning to note that the engagement of these organisations has been significantly hampered by the obstruction of their activities by the Russian Federation. Representatives of these international bodies are usually denied access to monitor places of detention, severely limiting their ability to assess conditions and ensure the safety and rights of detainees. It is imperative that the unified mechanism includes measures to overcome such obstructions and to ensure that international law is upheld.

The Assembly should further advocate for the activation of broader political, legal and economic pressure mechanisms, including leveraging transnational corporations and influential religious groups, to compel the Russian Federation to comply with international humanitarian law. A special international sanctions package should target Russian officials responsible for the unlawful detention of Ukrainian civilians, ensuring that those who orchestrate and execute these violations are held accountable.

Finally, a comprehensive report should be prepared outlining the grave violations of international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation in protecting civilians and robust legal reforms. This report should serve as a strategic document to mobilise international community and ensure swift and safe return of all illegally detained Ukrainian civilians.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EC/DA: European Conservatives Group and Democratic Alliance
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group