



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1460<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**8 February 2024**

Madam Chair,

Canada is a proud friend of Ukraine, in good times and bad.

Our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity goes back over three decades, and has only grown stronger since Russia groundlessly, unjustifiably and illegally invaded Ukraine almost two years ago.

Canada has donated more than \$9.7 billion in aid, of which 2.4 billion is for Ukraine's military defence.

Canada has trained over 40 thousand Ukrainian military and security personnel since 2014 as part of Op UNIFIER.

We have sanctioned over 7,800 individuals and entities involved in Russia's occupation and attempted illegal annexation of Crimea, the ongoing Russian occupation in parts of eastern Ukraine, and Russia's full-scale war.

And we will stay the course. We will provide ongoing, predictable, and long-term support Ukrainians can count on.

Why?

Because even after the war, Ukraine will live next to a dangerous neighbour. Ukraine must be strong, free, resilient and prosperous, not only for its own sake, but for the sake of our entire region. We are therefore investing – with Ukraine – in Ukraine's future.

We are in the process of negotiating long-term bilateral security commitments with Ukraine.

We are modernizing the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement.

And we are determined to help the return of thousands of Ukrainian children illegally transferred and deported to the Russian Federation and temporarily Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine, away from their families and caregivers.

We therefore launched last week, together with Ukraine, the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children. The goal of the Coalition is simple: bringing Ukrainian children back to their families and caregivers in Ukraine.

The Coalition will help coordinate joint efforts, and synchronize the various resources of Coalition partners, facilitate the timely and ethical sharing of information between Ukraine and partners, and raise awareness of the issue in diplomatic forums and high-level engagements.

Concretely the Coalition will work under four focus areas, namely (1) facilitating the return of children, (2) ensuring their physical return to Ukraine, (3) providing post-return support and psycho-social well-being, and (4) ensuring such heinous acts do not happen again.

Why is this important?

Because it's a matter of international law.

The OSCE's Moscow Mechanism report on this topic concluded last year that Russia's practices of "non-consensual evacuations, transfers and prolonged displacement of Ukrainian children constitute violations of international humanitarian law, and in certain cases amount to grave breaches of the Geneva Convention IV and war crimes". It also concluded that numerous and overlapping violations of the rights of the children deported to the Russian Federation have taken place.

The International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for the President of the Russian Federation and his Commissioner for Children's Rights, alleging responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of children.

But it is also importantly a matter of our own humanity. Children should not be exploited for political or military purposes – that is something on which we should all agree.

Membership is open to all states that endorse the declaration of the Coalition, and who demonstrate active engagement and common desire in support its objectives.

Thirty states have already joined the Coalition, and we encourage all those who have not yet done so to join us.

Madam Chair,

Canada has always believed in, and continues to believe in, the power of multilateralism and collective efforts to solve pressing challenges of our times.

This is no different.

We are heavily burdened by the news of child casualties, the agony of parents and caregivers who do not know the whereabouts of their children, stolen childhoods and attempts to wipe out Ukrainian identities and language. All of these are a direct result of Russia's war against Ukraine.

We cannot stay idle. Russia's aggression must stop.

Thank you, Madam Chair.