



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  
1476<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**30 May 2024**

Madam Chair,

The humanitarian impacts created by Russian attacks that are in violation of IHL are enormous.

The fact that Ukraine and Ukrainians are united in their resistance to Russia's aggression does not make everything and everyone in Ukraine a legitimate military target. A blanket approach to killing civilians or damaging civilian infrastructure is contrary to international humanitarian law.

International humanitarian law exists to protect persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare.

In this context, States must distinguish between civilian and military objects, and expected civilian collateral damage must not be disproportionate to the military advantage anticipated from the attack.

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine is rife with examples of predominantly civilian areas and civilian infrastructure being hit, although they are far from the vicinity of military objects or the battlefield.

In March and April this year, Russia intensified its attacks on energy infrastructure across Ukraine. Since 22 March 2024, there have been five waves of attacks directed against Ukraine's energy infrastructure. According to Ukrainian officials, Russia changed its tactics to be more effective in destroying Ukraine's energy infrastructure by using more precision missiles to target single objects. The CEO of Ukraine's largest private power company said Russia has shifted its focus to targeting energy generation infrastructure. During the recent attacks, Russia has destroyed the majority of Ukraine's thermal and hydro power plants, leaving only about 60 percent of the country's power generation facilities – mostly nuclear power stations - intact.

The Trypillya plant was among Ukraine's largest to be destroyed. The Chairman of Centrengo assessed this would become a "huge problem" come winter. What was President Putin's reason for targeting Ukrainian energy infrastructure? Simply put, revenge. Our delegation has noted this explanation from Russian delegates in this chamber, including last week.

President Putin went as far as claiming that Russia didn't strike in winter for humanitarian reasons, having seemingly forgotten his country's assault on Ukraine's energy infrastructure in October 2022, which caused widespread disruption to daily life for Ukrainian civilians across the country, including prolonged periods of darkness and lack of heating.

That winter, over half of Ukraine's energy sector and energy generation capacity were reportedly destroyed. Russian strikes left a reported 17 million Ukrainians without a regular supply of electricity for extended periods of time during the colder seasons of 2022 and 2023.

Between 1 October 2022 and 30 April 2023, the Yale Humanitarian Research Lab identified 223 damage events across 23 of Ukraine's 24 oblasts. The Director of the Conflict Observatory at Yale, Caitlin Howarth, observed this is a rate of over 7 damage events per week, with peak impact timed for the height of winter.

Though this year the attacks have intensified in the spring, President Putin's apparent humanitarian concern for Ukrainians is dishonest and mendacious when accounting for the pain and suffering his war of choice is causing them.

Madam Chair,

The intensified strikes in March and April this year forced Ukrainian authorities to introduce planned power outages causing disruptions to the daily lives of millions of civilians, compromising water supply, preventing on-line education for children already severely impacted by the war, and sometimes knocking out vital air raid systems.

The head of Ukraine's energy grid operator said attacks this year are worse, noting that in Kharkiv, Russia tried to destroy all the main energy facilities feeding the city.

We therefore welcome the Chairpersonship's and Austrian EEC Chair's initiative to call for an additional meeting of the Economic and Environmental Committee to draw participating States' attention to Russia's relentless attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure.

Our concerns are not without reason. Earlier this year, the International Criminal Court issued warrants of arrest for two Russian military commanders allegedly responsible for the war crime of directing attacks at civilian objects and causing excessive incidental harm to civilians or damage to civilian objects.

We call on the Russian Federation to abide by international humanitarian law. Russia has lost all credibility and notion of humanity provoking and conducting this senseless war. We should learn from history, not repeat it.

Finally, Madam Chair, we also join your call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov, the three SMM employees that have been detained unlawfully for over two years now.

Thank you, Madam Chair.