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**Buantoscáireacht na hÉireann  
don Eagraíocht um Comhoibriú agus Slándáil san Eoraip**  
Permanent Mission of Ireland to the  
Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

Rotenturmstrasse 16-18  
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Austria

**Statement by Minister of State for European Affairs and Defence,  
Peter Burke T.D.  
OSCE Reinforced Permanent Council on the occasion of the second  
anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine  
23 February 2024**

Madame Chair

Ireland aligns with the statement of the EU and I would like to add the following points. Let me thank Malta, and in particular, the Chairperson in Office, Minister Ian Borg, for convening this important meeting and for his excellent leadership of the OSCE this year.

On this tragic second anniversary of the escalation of Russia's unprovoked and illegal war against Ukraine, Ireland reiterates its condemnation of Russia's invasion of a sovereign independent state in flagrant contravention of its OSCE commitments and international law.

We strongly condemn Russia's escalation of its aerial bombardment of Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure. Hospitals, schools, homes, transport and energy infrastructure in Ukraine are being routinely attacked by Russia. These objects were not so called "collateral damage" but directly targeted in an effort to terrorise and subdue the people of Ukraine.

Over the past ten years and in particular since the full-scale invasion of 2022, Ukrainian civil society and civilian witnesses have spoken, including here at the OSCE, of the brutality that Ukrainian people have experienced at the hands of occupying Russian forces. Where Russia's forces have been pushed back, horrifying discoveries of mass civilian graves have been made and an appalling vista of wanton destruction left in their wake.

Large numbers of children have been forcibly and illegally deported to Russia without the consent of parents or guardians. The OSCE's Moscow Mechanism report in May 2023 played an important role in documenting the numerous violations of the rights of Ukrainian children transferred to Russia-occupied parts of Ukraine or deported to the Russian Federation.

Russia's cruel targeting of civilians is continuing as we speak. Innocent civilians are being illegally detained and continue to be held in appalling conditions without adequate food, water or medical attention.

Amongst those illegally detained by Russia are three OSCE SMM staff. Their detention is unjust, illegal and unacceptable and I renew our call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally release them.

Madame Chair

I wish to take the opportunity to reiterate Ireland's condemnation of the shocking death in a Russian penal colony of Alexei Navalny on 16 February. Mr. Navalny was a fearless anti-corruption campaigner and champion of democracy and freedom of speech in Russia, for which he paid the ultimate price. Ireland joins calls for a full, independent and transparent investigation, and for the release of all political prisoners in Russia.

As established in the 2022 Moscow Mechanism report, and as we have seen time and time again, there is a clear link between Russia's internal repression and external aggression.

Madame Chair

Let me recall that Ireland's position with regard to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has remained unwavering over the last ten years. It is informed by the principles that drive our foreign policy - support for international human rights, humanitarian law and a rules-based international order with the UN Charter at its heart and in line with OSCE commitments. We support the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its international borders. We are committed to ensuring accountability for violations of international law arising from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Accountability will be relentlessly and tirelessly pursued to safeguard the security of our region and the values that all participating States of the OSCE have committed to protect.

Thank you