



STATEMENT

**As delivered by Ambassador Ketevan Tsikhelashvili,
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the OSCE
on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine
At the Special 1361st Meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
Vienna, 7 March 2022**

Mr. Chairman,

Georgia aligns with the statement delivered by the EU Delegation. In addition, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity and along these lines, from my side, as much as I did not have a chance to be present in person in this room in last two weeks for health reasons. My voice is still affected, for what I apologise, but hopefully strong enough to express the resolute condemnation of the massive aggression of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, which is devastating.

We have seen the results of aggression, the war and occupation ourselves in my country. We have seen many mothers who lost their children, many families whose loved ones were killed or gone missing, many more who lost their homes and refuge. It has caused an immense suffering.

Now we have horrific reports on Ukraine every day – according to the UN, already over 1.5 million Ukrainians have fled their homes to the neighbouring countries in search of shelter and safety. Others who stay, are daily subjected to heavy, direct and indiscriminate bombardment and shelling by the occupying forces.

This aggression already claimed lives of hundreds of innocent people, among them, heartrippingly, the children and sadly, these numbers are still growing. We know that behind every reported casualty there are tens and dozens of family and close ones whose lives are forever broken. These wounds never heal. And this is a disaster, which has to stop.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine blatantly violate the UN Charter and fundamental principles of international law, including the International humanitarian law, the Helsinki Final Act, as well as other OSCE commitments.

Dear colleagues,

We deeply regret that the Russian occupation forces violated an earlier agreed temporary ceasefire over the humanitarian corridors near Mariupol and Volnovakha. As a result, much needed civilian evacuations were halted. We highlight importance of unhindered access to humanitarian and medical assistance to people in need throughout the whole territory of Ukraine.

The horrific crimes that Russia is committing under the false pre-text, cannot go unpunished. With this in mind, Georgia joined 38 countries appeal to the International Criminal Court to launch an investigation into Russia's illegal actions. We also joined partners last week, by invoking the OSCE's so-called Moscow Mechanism and are proactively involved in Ukraine's supportive initiatives within the UN and the Council of Europe.

The humanitarian toll of Russia's aggression is increasing day by day. Under these circumstances, we acknowledge the importance of international burden sharing and Georgia has shipped the second batch of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine over the past weekend.

Mr. Chair,

We have been following with great alarm the developments around Ukraine's nuclear power plants. We reiterate our call on Russia to immediately cease military actions around nuclear sites, withdraw troops and allow unimpeded access of Ukrainian side to its facilities. We've narrowly avoided a nuclear catastrophe last week, as director general of the IAEA said we have been lucky that time in a sense that it did not hit the hardcore infrastructure. Yet, there is a hazard that Russia's irresponsible actions may bring tragic consequences for the entire continent.

Mr. Chairman,

Georgia reiterates its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and Donbas, and Ukraine's navigational rights in its territorial waters.

We call on Russia to immediately, completely and without preconditions cease aggression, withdraw all its forces and armaments from the territory of Ukraine; and to also allow immediate, safe and unfettered access to all international humanitarian and human rights mechanisms.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I kindly ask you to attach this statement to the Journal of the Day.

Slava Ukraini