



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  
1403<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**22 December 2022**

Mr. Chair,

I would like to thank Mr. Mykola Lukashuk for sharing with us the extremely worrying and unacceptable conditions that the people he represents in Dnipropetrovsk are having to endure. Thank you for being with us today. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Poland for organizing this meeting, and once again for their leadership as Chair in Office for 2022. In the face of a shocking and brutal assault on the fundamental principles of this organization, the CiO has remained steadfast and focused on ensuring that this organization continues to work towards its goal: a just and comprehensive security for all in the region.

The Permanent Council has played an important role in the last ten months holding Russia accountable for its unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. The OSCE autonomous institutions have also diligently monitored and spoke out against Russia's betrayal of its OSCE commitments. Last week, on December 14<sup>th</sup>, ODIHR released its second Interim Report on alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine.

ODIHR's Ukraine Monitoring Initiative has produced a thorough report, documenting extensive credible accounts of serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Its findings are clear – this war has had devastating and widespread impacts on the civilian population. In the occupied Ukrainian territories, the report is a striking chronicle of accounts of the contravention of the law of occupation by the Russian Federation and its proxies: unlawful conscriptions into the Russian armed forces; unlawful killings; unlawful confinement; torture and other forms of mistreatment; conflict-related sexual violence; and unlawful deportations, including of children. The report also notes the heavy restrictions imposed by Russian authorities on the freedoms of peaceful assembly, expression, and information during their occupation of territories in Ukraine.

It is a sweeping condemnation of the Russian Federation's treatment of civilians and POWs.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian delegation has spent countless hours in this Council this year telling a radically different story. They have sought to justify their violations of international law by pointing fingers at others. As Oleksandra Matviichuk observed in her Nobel lecture: “Russia is trying to convince the whole world that the rule of law, human rights and democracy are fake values.”

But they are not. International law – as enshrined in the UN Charter, the Geneva Conventions, the human rights treaties and indeed in customary international law – are the rules that constrain and guide nations. They are not “western”; they are not “relative” – they are binding commitments agreed upon by states so as to avoid conflict, to avoid the trampling of human dignity, and to avoid this “might makes right” chaos which the Russian Federation has unleashed upon Ukraine, and indeed upon us all.

Oleksandra Matviichuk gave us words of wisdom when she recalled the linkage between peace and human rights:

“People of Ukraine want peace more than anyone else in the world. But peace cannot be reached by country under attack laying down its arms. This would not be peace, but occupation. After the liberation of Bucha, we found a lot of civilians murdered in the streets and courtyards of their homes. These people were unarmed.

“We must stop pretending deferred military threats are “political compromises”. The democratic world has grown accustomed to making concessions to dictatorships. And that is why the willingness of the Ukrainian people to resist Russian imperialism is so important. We will not leave people in the occupied territories to be killed and tortured. People’s lives cannot be a “political compromise”. Fighting for peace does not mean yielding to pressure of the aggressor, it means protecting people from its cruelty.”

I will also repeat something we heard today from Mr. Lukashuk, and indeed from President Zelenskyy as shared with us by our Ukrainian colleague. If I may paraphrase: “They may deprive us of electricity, but they cannot deprive us of the light that shines inside every Ukrainian.” You say “Glory to Ukraine”, and we say “Geroyam slava”.

As we end this year, with the Ukrainian carol Shchedryk ringing in all of our ears, we hope the next year will bring us back closer to humanity, will bring us back closer to respect for human dignity, rule of law, democracy and peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.