

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 19 May 2022

Thank you,

Norway aligns herself with the statement made by the European Union and stands fully behind its content, but allow me some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

Like others, I want to thank Mayor Kuzmenko for his first-hand account of the devastation that the Russian illegal war of aggression has brought to his city and to its people. Mayor Kuzmenko, we stand with you and the Ukrainian people. We share your pain, and we condemn the brutal and senseless Russian aggression waged against your people. Slava Ukraini!

Mr. Chairman,

I feel compelled to again turn our attention to the SMM and its local staff. Although one participating state opposed the extension of the SMM's mandate and the Mission is winding down, it does not mean that we, as participating States and as an organization are relieved of all responsibilities as regards the Mission, its assets and staff.

Not having a mandate is not an invitation to detain, persecute and harass national SMM staff currently residing in non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk.

All national Mission members remain OSCE officials and should be afforded functional immunity, including also during this period when the Mission is winding down. We call for the immediate release of national SMM employees still in detention.

Mr. Chairman,

The Permanent Council should not be used as a platform for the blatant disinformation and smoke-screening tactics of the Russian Federation.

In this respect, the allegations of violations of the Biological Weapons Convention, as seems to be raised later in today's meeting, are extremely serious and merit scrutiny. Norway is a firm supporter of the Biological Weapons Convention, and we are determined to uphold a total ban against biological weapons.

If Russia is serious about their accusations, they should use the proper procedure under the BWC and provide fact-based evidence. Unsubstantiated claims and mere insinuations are just another waste of our time.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I feel compelled to remind Russia that its brutal war against Ukraine is in violation of the UN Charter and undermines the fundamental principles of the European security architecture as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris.

Norway condemns Russia's war against Ukraine. We demand that Russia stops its aggression, withdraws its troops immediately, and stops causing further death, suffering and destruction.