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**STATEMENT BY
THE HONOURABLE MÉLANIE JOLY, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF CANADA, AT THE TWENTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE
OSCE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL**

Łódź, 1 and 2 December 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

I should first of all like to thank Poland for its hospitality, for welcoming us here today, but also for the remarkable way in which you are hosting such a large number of Ukrainian women and children fleeing the war. I also wish to thank you for having stood at the helm of our Organization in such a spirited and courageous manner during this year, one of its most difficult.

The Russian President's ambition and craving for control have taken the place of his conscience. He has chosen to have the violence of his troops come crashing down on the civilian population of Ukraine. Rape, torture, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, the annihilation of culture, death – that president will stop at nothing in his expansionist designs. No one can remain indifferent to the contempt displayed by the Kremlin for the most elementary rules of international law.

Russia's destructive war against Ukraine is also an assault on the fundamental principles of the OSCE and its comprehensive approach to security.

Mr. Chairperson,

Contrary to the allegations by Foreign Minister Lavrov at his press conference this morning, which were repeated by Belarus earlier, it is Russia that has refused dialogue. Russia has not only shattered trust among the participating States of this Organization but also at the global level.

We are facing a critical choice. Either we all stand together and reaffirm our commitment to the rules that until recently had ensured our relative security: transparency in the politico-military field, respect for human rights, inclusive economic development, respect for the environment. These principles that have been guiding the OSCE for decades are now seriously threatened.

Or we again allow tyrants to impose their reign of terror with complete impunity: the nuclear threat, the weaponization of hunger, the contamination of territory with anti-personnel mines. No one accepts that our rules can be broken without there being consequences, that lies are to replace transparency and that it should be possible to perpetrate so much violence and injustice with utter impunity. Russia must be held accountable.

I will continue in English.

Mr. Chairperson,

Canada stands by its OSCE commitments. We value the work that the OSCE has been doing across the whole region in support of OSCE principles. I thank Secretary General Helga Schmid, her team and the dedicated OSCE staff, for their tireless work to this end. The OSCE must be able to continue playing an important role in managing conflicts and tensions in other parts of the region. We need to enable it to do so and no participating State should be able to unilaterally block the OSCE's budget, or the mandates of its field missions.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OSCE is going through an unprecedentedly challenging period. But the day will come when Ukrainian men and women – driven by the resolve of a proud people fighting for their homeland, for democracy and for freedom – will drive out the invaders and re-establish their full sovereignty and territorial integrity. It will happen and Canada will continue to provide Ukraine with financial, humanitarian, military, diplomatic and legal support. We stand firmly with Ukraine for as long as it takes. And when that day comes, we want the OSCE to continue to play the role that it has played many times in the past: supporting sustainable peace and stability in Ukraine and within the OSCE region.

We also support all international efforts to resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan without further bloodshed and in a way that respects the human rights, cultural heritage and safety and security of the people affected by this conflict.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.