



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
AT THE ANNUAL SECURITY REVIEW CONFERENCE
SPECIAL SESSION: SECURITY SITUATION IN THE OSCE AREA**

29 June 2022

Mr. Chair,

Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

This year's Annual Security Review Conference has been exclusively dedicated to the security situation in Europe, which is undoubtedly in its deepest crisis in decades, following Russia's war of choice, which has instigated the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War.

With Russia's unjustifiable war against Ukraine now raging for over four months, the ASRC provides an important opportunity to reflect on how we got here. Following months of denial and outright lies about its intentions, in the early morning of the 24th of February, the Russian Federation launched a deliberate, premeditated attack, with the intent of destroying a neighbouring state, denying its right to exist.

This attack, enabled by Belarus and instigated on a pretext of lies, has resulted in unimaginable levels of violence, death, destruction and human suffering, the largest refugee crisis in Europe in over 80 years, a massive humanitarian crisis, and now a rapidly evolving global food security crisis.

The reality is that the deliberate planning and the large scale prepositioning of troops and equipment, under the guise of military exercises, started well before the 24th of February, and made a mockery of our shared CSBMs, with bold and blatantly false statements in this very room. In the same manner, Russia's aggression and continued military presence in Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, long before 2022, have long shown Russia's contempt for the Helsinki principles and its OSCE commitments. Canada stands in solidarity with all of these countries in defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Despite irreparable damage to its credibility both here and around the world, the Kremlin continues to pursue an aggressive propaganda campaign as a justification for its violent and illegal military action, a barrage of fabricated pretexts, fictional events and blatant disinformation designed to instill fear in its own population and sow doubt around the world. Russia's disinformation campaign includes false narratives on sanctions. It is the invasion that has caused the food crisis, not sanctions.

By imposing draconian measures in Russia, detaining thousands, and threatening any media that report anything not sanctioned by the Kremlin, Russia affirms its fear that its citizens will discover they have been sold a lie – that their soldiers are dying in a foreign land, not as liberators, but as invaders and oppressors; and that their sacrifice is unnecessary and in defence of nothing.

We must remember that it is Russia who started this war: a war that Ukraine and its people have done nothing to provoke or instigate. Ukraine is NOT the aggressor. Quite the contrary, Ukrainians are bravely defending their homes, their communities and their country from a war of aggression driven by Russia's repressive imperial ambition and fuelled by Russia's denial of Ukrainian identity and appropriation of its sovereignty.

Russia bears full responsibility for the widespread destruction and for its violent acts against the civilian population of Ukraine using primitive and ruthless tactics of indiscriminate artillery shelling and non-precision bombing. The brutal missile attack on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, which killed and injured defenceless civilians this week, is one of too many senseless acts of violence for which Russia must be held accountable. I join others in offering Canada's deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this attack, as of all other victims that Russia's aggression has claimed over the past four months.

As Russian troops withdraw from Ukraine towns and villages, we continue to see reports of atrocities including sexual and gender-based violence, committed by poorly disciplined Russian troops, and Russia shamefully continues to deny them. However, overwhelming evidence is being collected, including through the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, and the world can already see the truth behind the horrors of the Russian version of 'liberation'.

Russia's continuing actions have significantly affected global food security by maintaining a naval blockade of Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, targeting rail lines carrying grain, destroying grain silos and farming infrastructure, stealing grain and preventing the shipment of grain to countries around the world. This is no accident or collateral effect, but rather another deliberate act by a desperate and ruthless invading power. We need to ensure that culpability and accountability for this crisis falls exactly where it should: squarely on the Russian Federation.

Russia is the aggressor and can stop this war. Russia can make this choice, stop the violence and destruction, and end the suffering. We remain resolute in our call for Russia to stop this war of aggression, withdraw from the territory of Ukraine and return its soldiers to Russia, where they belong.

Canada reiterates its unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We will continue, along with our Allies and partners, to forcefully and collectively respond to these reckless and dangerous acts of aggression by the Russian Federation. We continue to step up our support for Ukraine and its people as they remain resolute in their desire to be a free and democratic country, in control of their own destiny.

Thank you.