



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
1466th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 March 2024

Madam Chair,

Last week, on March 15, UN Undersecretary General Rosemary DiCarlo said in her speech to the Security Council: “The principle of respect for territorial integrity and the political independence of States is the cornerstone of our collective security”.

Canada condemns the conduct of voting for the Russian presidential elections in occupied territories of Ukraine, which is a blatant breach of international law.

The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has consistently reported over the last decade that Russian authorities have coerced the local population living in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to vote, including by showing up on doorsteps with armed soldiers.

The election results in the occupied territories do not show support for the occupation. They show the Kremlin's wishful thinking. We do not recognize these results, as they are nothing more than violent attempts to legitimize the occupation.

Neither do we recognize any of Russia's bogus and imperialistic claims over the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is unwavering.

Madam Chair,

The situation on the ground in Ukraine is very difficult.

Russia continues to indiscriminately shell civilian objects and infrastructure. The sheer number and scale of attacks since the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022 on civilians and civilian infrastructure strongly indicate they are not mere accidents, but calculated, intentional attacks.

There are daily reports of civilian casualties. Russia has targeted the port city of Odesa almost every day this month.

On March 15, according to Ukrainian officials and media reports, a Russian ballistic missile killed at least 20 people and injured more than 75 in Odesa. When medics rushed to the scene, they were targeted by a second missile. This double-tap approach to target first responders is very familiar to the Russian military, as they routinely used it in Syria. First responders and medical personnel must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The Russian Federation chose this war. The consequences of that choice are entirely and without exception Russia's responsibility.

Madam Chair,

Please allow me to update the Council on the work of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children.

As of this week, 33 countries have become active members of the Coalition. We welcome our latest member, the United States of America.

Since its launch, Canada has engaged with many international partners to raise awareness of this issue and work towards its resolution.

A group of Canadian consular and emergency response officials recently visited Kyiv, to better understand the complexities and recommend concrete actions that can be taken to advance the goals of the Coalition.

Canada and Ukraine continue, along with the members of the Coalition, to coordinate our efforts to return and protect Ukrainian children, including here at the OSCE.

Finally, Madam Chair,

We recall that an unknown number of detainees, including three members of this organization – Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov – remain in Russian detention. We call once again for their immediate release.

We are alarmed by reported detention conditions and the lack of respect for international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation in relation to detainees. In its most recent report, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine documented victims' accounts of relentless, brutal treatment inflicting severe pain and suffering during prolonged detention, with blatant disregard for human dignity. At the OSCE, we have heard similar accounts from former PoWs.

We call on Russia to treat detainees – whether civilians or Prisoners of War – in accordance with international humanitarian law, to allow for regular access to detainees to their places of detention, to facilitate communication with their families, and to provide medical assistance. These are basic minimum guarantees of protection under international humanitarian law.

Thank you, Madam Chair.