



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1437<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**24 August 2023**

Mr. Chair, thank you for convening this Special PC meeting, in accordance with Article II(B)6 of the Rules of Procedure, which states that the PC may convene special meetings “to discuss matters of non-compliance with OSCE commitments”.

Mr. Chair,

On this day 32 years ago, the Verkhovna Rada resolved that Ukraine would be an independent democratic state, declaring that “the territory of Ukraine is indivisible and inviolable”.

Canada was one of the very first countries to recognize Ukraine’s independence, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1991. Today we send our heartfelt wishes to the Ukrainian people and to Ukrainian communities worldwide on the Independence Day of Ukraine.

We only wish the circumstances were different.

Sadly, today also marks exactly 18 months since Russia launched its war of aggression against Ukraine. On this day, therefore, we pay particular tribute to the Ukrainian armed forces; the brave women and men on the battlefield putting their lives at risk to defend their freedom and their country.

Mr. Chair,

Ukraine’s sovereignty is anchored in democracy and its right to self-determination. It is absolute, and not conditional.

Thirty-two years after its declaration of independence, Ukraine faces unrelenting violence and aggression due to President Putin’s imperialist ambitions.

While Ukraine has been working steadily towards a prosperous future, the Russian regime hankers for its imperialist past.

While Ukraine has chosen to live in peace with its neighbours, Putin started an illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked war that is felt in every corner of the world. A war he wrongly thought he would win in three days has debilitated Russia's economy, cost countless lives on both sides, and destroyed Russia's international reputation.

Russia's irresponsible military actions have already caused immense environmental and ecological damage resulting from the Kakohvka Dam's destruction. This same carelessness continues to risk nuclear disaster with potentially catastrophic consequences for Ukraine and the world. On top of this, Russia's deliberate targeting of civilian commercial infrastructure is starving the most vulnerable people in the world.

Global food prices rose again this summer due to Russia's unilateral termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its ongoing attacks on Ukrainian ports and other agricultural infrastructure in the Black Sea and Danube river. The World Food program is currently facing "impossible trade-offs". Almost half of its country operations are having to implement significant reductions in the size and scope of life-saving food, cash and nutrition assistance programs.

Russia's Potemkin-like attempt to portray its aggression as a justified war is laid bare by a multitude of credible reports documenting violations of international law, including but not limited to deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, abuse and torture of prisoners of war, sexual and gender-based violence, and illegal deportation, including children. Nobody is safe from the depraved attacks of the Russian military, not even pregnant women and children.

The world is watching. Evidence of these crimes is being collected, which may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Canada is providing support to different international accountability efforts, including the investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation gravely underestimates human desire for freedom, and specifically Ukrainians' desire for freedom. This war can only end one way.

Canada fully supports Ukraine's inherent right to defend its internationally recognized borders, its people and its culture against Russia's aggression, from Kyiv, to Lviv, to Sevastopol, to Donetsk and Luhansk.

Canada does not and never will recognize Russia's annexation of Crimea, or any territory part of Ukraine's internationally recognized borders.

In the face of Russia's brutal aggression, Canada and its partners – including so many around this table – are united in our support for Ukraine. Yesterday, during the Crimea Summit, Prime Minister Trudeau reiterated Canada's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, and announced new sanctions against four individuals and 23 entities in Russia's military industrial complex, financial and nuclear sectors. Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity is unequivocal and unshakeable.

We reiterate our call upon Russia to end this war of aggression, to withdraw all troops and military equipment from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, and to abide by its OSCE commitments and by international law.

Slava Ukraini.

Thank you.