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Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES MARIE-JOSÉE RHÉAUME
UNDER AGENDA ITEM:**

The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

1510th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

27 February 2025

Mr. Chair,

This past Monday, this Council, rightly, focused on the grim anniversary of Russia's illegal and unjustifiable full-scale invasion of Ukraine that has left hundreds of thousands dead, forced millions to flee, and undermined peace and security in our region.

But the Russian aggression did not begin in 2022, and, sadly, we must mark another painful anniversary this week – it has been 11 years since Russia began its illegal invasion and annexation of Crimea.

Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea has been marked by violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, politically motivated prosecutions, discrimination, harassment, intimidation, violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, arbitrary detentions and arrests, and torture and ill-treatment.

In its 2024 report the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine reported that the Russian Federation has unlawfully imposed its citizenship, laws, and institutions on Crimea's population across all spheres of life, suppressing opposition and dissent. Crimean Tatar leaders, perceived as opposing the occupation of Crimea or the Russian Federation policies, were among those particularly affected by measures taken by the Russian Federation to restrict the civic space and limit fundamental freedoms. Residents of occupied Crimea were convicted for sharing Ukrainian songs in social media, for calling the Russian offensive against Ukraine a war, and for posting pictures containing Ukrainian national symbols or colours.

The Crimean Human Rights Group – winners of the 2024 Democracy Defenders Award - recorded almost 1000 administrative proceedings initiated as a result of support of Ukraine in 2024.

ODIHR has documented similar abuses. ODIHR's Sixth Interim Monitoring Report documented that Crimean Tatars were subjected to political and religious persecution through home searches, interrogations, arrests and detention, as well as through the initiation of criminal cases against them on various grounds.

We all want peace and an end to this terrible war, but in striving for this goal we cannot ignore the plight of civilians in the territories temporarily occupied by Russia. There must be a solution for them. As well, in keeping with the Montreal Pledge, we must all work to ensure that Ukrainian prisoners of war and unlawfully detained civilians are released, and that deported children are returned to their homes and families.

Canada remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine and will continue to leverage sanctions to weaken Russia's ability to wage its illegal war. By targeting its military-industrial base, exposing those responsible for crimes and abuses in occupied Ukrainian territories, and disrupting the oligarchs' confidants and shadow fleet supporting the Russian regime, we are holding Russia accountable.

Supporting a just and lasting peace in Ukraine as well as Ukraine's reconstruction and economic recovery, will be priorities for Canada throughout our G7 Presidency this year.

Canada will continue to stand with Ukrainians as they fight for freedom, justice, and democracy. We will defend a future for Ukraine that is written by Ukrainians.