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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING
AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1374 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
19 MAY 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mayor Kuzmenko: Thank you for being here today. Thank you for sharing with us, day by day, the horrors that the people of Okhtyrka have lived through since Russia's invasion began on February 24th. Thank you for bearing witness here today to Russia's destruction of critical infrastructure in Okhtyrka, in contravention of UN Security Council Resolution 2573, and how this has compounded these horrors. And of how Russia's destruction of grain storage siloes and agricultural equipment creates further barriers as the people of Okhtyrka work to rebuild their city. Thank you for trying to describe to us the indescribable emotions that these attacks have forced on the people of Okhtyrka. That you are becoming used to death, as you say, is a truly profound tragedy.

You have made your people's experience palpable to us, and I'm sure most of my colleagues here today agree when I say that your testimony of the people of Okhtyrka has moved us deeply. We stand with you and with the people of Okhtyrka, as we do with all Ukrainians, as you work to rebuild your city and your lives.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's war on Ukraine continues to cause immense pain, destruction, and a humanitarian crisis of multiple dimensions. Life for Ukrainian citizens on the front lines and in areas occupied by the Russian forces is extremely difficult - with access to medicine, humanitarian aid, potable water, and gas a daily struggle.

We continue to hear daily reports of Russian forces launching attacks on civilian areas. This week alone, a Russian attack on a hospital in Sievierodonetsk rendered 200 of the hospital's 300 beds unusable; Russian missiles struck residential areas in Sumy and Mykolaiv, damaging houses and injuring civilians; and the village of Desna, in the Chernihiv region, suffered Russian missile attacks that left civilians dead and many wounded. And we've heard today from Mayor Kuzmenko of the renewed attacks that the people of Ohtyrka have also had to endure this week. OHCHR confirms that over 3,500 civilians have been killed since the start of the war, including 241 children. And they note, as always, that the actual deaths are likely considerably higher than those that have been confirmed.

Mr. Chair,

We are equally concerned about reports of forced deportations carried out by the Russian authorities. The Geneva Conventions and international Human Rights treaties are clear that the forced deportation of civilians in a situation of conflict is illegal. The reports of Ukrainian citizens, including children, being deported to Russia, and the predicament of captured individuals in filtration camps, are very concerning. Ukrainian citizens are reportedly being interrogated and subjected to physical searches. Their right to privacy is violated and their safety put in jeopardy when their phones, contacts, and social media accounts are analysed. Family members are being separated and people's documents confiscated. All these reports are alarming, particularly given the Kremlin's history of using forced displacement, including to forced labour camps, as a brutal, repressive tactic to subjugate entire groups of people and purge any voices dissenting from the official line. Canada is worried that Russia may be using filtration camps to suppress evidence of alleged atrocities and to punish witnesses. We are horrified to learn that violence is inflicted on "filtered" individuals who are sent to Donetsk. In the words of one witness who passed through a filtration camp: "Any small doubt, and small resistance – and they could take you to the basements for interrogation or murder. Everybody was afraid to be taken to Donetsk."

We call on Russia to respect international humanitarian law and human rights law in the territories under their occupation, to cease its illegal and unjustifiable actions and to refrain from committing further crimes and human rights violations.

In a related vein, Russian authorities must abide by all international humanitarian law provisions in the transfer, treatment, and evacuation of all prisoners taken from Azovstal who have been taken to the Russian occupied Donetsk territory.

Mr. Chair,

The situation in the areas of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Forces is grim – we understand some residents are forcibly conscripted and sent to the front lines, without training, and with little or no information provided to their families.

Ongoing unilateral actions by the Russian authorities aiming to absorb these occupied territories into Russia continue to be deeply concerning: "passportisation" of the population, conversion to the ruble currency, renaming streets, forced removal and detention of legitimate authorities are all alarming and unacceptable. Suppression of the Ukrainian language, introduction of the Russian school curriculum, and regulation and censoring of the internet in the occupied territories are equally worrisome.

Canada will never recognise illegal annexations of Ukraine's territory and we condemn Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty.

We are appalled by the continuing detention, harassment, and intimidation of SMM national staff members. Four members of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission, who were arbitrarily detained in April, are still waiting to be released. The protection and integrity of all mission members must be a top priority for all participating States sitting in this Council. We demand the detained members' immediate and unconditional release and call urgently on the Russian authorities to do their part in facilitating their immediate release. We also continue to support the important work of the OSCE Program Coordinator in Ukraine during these very challenging times.

I repeat Canada's call on Russia to cease its hostilities, withdraw troops from Ukraine, and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Canada stands with Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.