



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, to the 1375th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's war of aggression has already been lasting for three months.

The war that was planned by the Russian president as a three-day campaign. The outcomes of this war have already left Russian officials and diplomats in frustration.

And President Zelenskyy summed it up as clear as possible that "after three months of searching for an explanation why they failed to break Ukraine in three days, Russians came up with nothing better than to claim that they had allegedly planned to do so".

Furthermore, the Russian minister of defence claimed that they slowed down the attacks in order to save lives of civilians.

It is just cynical.

As of May 24, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 8 628 civilian casualties in the country: 3 974 killed and 4 654 injured.

And these numbers are far from being final. This concerns, especially, situation in Mariupol (Donetsk region), Iziium (Kharkiv region), and Popasna (Luhansk region).

After more than a month of heavy fighting, Russian military has made just a minor tactical advance in Donbas around Severodonetsk, Popasna and Svitlodarsk. Was it worth of so many deaths?

But even such a minor tactical advance means erasing whole towns and cities from the earth. As it happened with Mariupol, Rubizhne, Volnovakha.

These days, Severodonetsk remains under constant and heavy shelling.

Civilians are paying heavy price for this given that Russian military observes no rules and norms.

Only on 19 of May, as a result of the indiscriminate shelling of this city by Russians, 12 people were killed and 40 more were wounded

Russia continues targeting residential areas in Kramatorsk, the Donetsk region.

The humanitarian situation in Donbas is getting worse.

The pipeline supplying gas to the Luhansk region was damaged by Russia's military.

There is also no electricity and water.

Russia continues launching missiles, a number of which amounts to 2275 as of 23rd of May, on civilian and military infrastructure throughout Ukraine.

Yesterday they launched four cruise missiles at Zaporizhzhia. A shopping mall in the downtown was hit. This attack left, at least, one person killed and three wounded. 62 private houses were damaged.

On its part, Minsk continues providing logistical support to Russia and increase military pressure on Ukraine's northern border. At the same time, yesterday the prime-minister of Belarus even confessed that his country was supplying weapons to Russia.

Is it how Minsk support peace as was stated by its diplomats on numerous occasions? Do you support peace by supporting aggressor?

Russian military also targets humanitarian corridors and evacuation transport.

Earlier this week, the Russians reportedly blocked the passage in the Zaporizhzhia region. More than a thousand cars were lined up in front of a Russian checkpoint in Vasylivka, Zaporizhzhia region.

In order to consolidate the control over Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions about 20 occupation administrations have been reportedly established therein.

Furthermore, yesterday Vladimir Putin signed a decree which simplifies granting Russia's passports to the Ukrainian citizens residing in these regions.

This means forced passportization we saw before in Donbas.

This step is taken against the background of Russia's intentions to annex these territories. Would the Russian diplomats continue claiming that Russia has no intention to occupy Ukraine as it was stated by their leader? Or maybe they have received new instructions from Moscow? Or maybe they have no idea about real plans of the Kremlin and they are just a propaganda instrument in hands of Vladimir Putin?

But all these steps they are planning for Kherson and Zaporizhzhia are in vain. It is another manifestation of Russia's weak position and strong pro-Ukrainian sentiments in the region.

By continuing with internationally wrongful acts, Russia only further compromises itself. It shows to what extent Moscow is a revanchist country with territorial ambitions, the resurgence of aggressive nationalism, the perpetuation of spheres of influence, intolerance or totalitarian ideologies.

We know where all these aberrations lead to.

At the end Russia would pay off for all damaged caused to Ukraine and for all crime committed.

Russia will compensate every burned house. Every destroyed business and infrastructure facility. Every ruined school and hospital.

According to OCHA, over 80% of verified attacks on health facilities globally this year – 223 attacks have occurred in Ukraine. I want to underline for Russia's emissaries once again that hospitals are not a military target.

In view of this, the president of Ukraine has suggested to develop an international mechanism allowing to receive compensation from the Russian Federation.

Esteemed colleagues,

Early in 2014 Ukraine contributed a warship for the Atalanta operation in order to help partners and the government of Somalia to secure maritime routes in the region.

However, eight years later Ukraine is forced to ask international support in order to address Russia's piracy in the Black Sea region.

Russia blocks export of about 22 million tons of grain and threatens the freedom of navigation in the region.

Russia now blackmails the world by demanding to lift sanctions in exchange for them unblocking Ukraine's ports and food exports.

But Russia is reluctant to speak about other aspects of the food security crisis it provokes, including about looting Ukraine's grain, blocking a sowing campaign by destroying agricultural machinery and launching missile strikes across the country.

That's why we cannot accept this game. As we cannot accept demands of terrorists. Otherwise, terrorists will demand more.

However, Russia's maritime blockage additionally proves why Crimea must remain high on our agenda in order to accelerate its de-occupation. Crimea cannot remain a human rights ghetto and military base for Russia any more. We have to rectify the mistake of 2014.

Two days ago, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy convened a meeting on this matter. The issues of protection of Ukrainian citizens in Crimea and the development of the Crimea Platform were discussed.

So, I would like to repeat my call to participating States, that have not signed the Crimea Platform Declaration yet, to join the document as well as to the OSCE to contribute to the implementation of its goals.

In the light of all-out war and especially of attempts to annex Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, developments in Crimea demands our special attention.

Distinguished colleagues,

The appearance of Petr Tolstoy on Russia's TV earlier this week was quite illustrative.

And let me quote what he said. "Ukraine, they are helping, will no longer exist [...] We will exist in an even better state than before February 24 [...] We are going to be drinking coffee in Kyiv".

After all, this gentleman is chairing Russia's delegation to the PA OSCE.

However, this is not about Mr Tolstoy's conformity with a position he holds, although I believe this should be addressed within a respective format.

It is rather about Russia's real intentions and it is about maximalist goals the Kremlin propaganda is cultivating within the Russian society leaving no space for a compromise and peace.

After three months of fighting, the Kremlin has not given up its plans to destroy Ukraine.

After all crimes committed in Bucha, Mariupol, Chernihiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Sumy and other regions, Russian president and his military still feel their impunity.

Over the weekend, we have seen news reports that Russia has been employing neo-Nazi armed formations in the war against Ukraine.

It is only half of truth. Actually, Russia's leadership has been cultivating hatred and dehumanization towards Ukrainians for years. This has become a state policy.

Being poisoned by the propaganda, Russian military just shoots us because we are Ukrainians. Russia just wants to dismantle our statehood because their leader denies Ukraine of a right to exist.

To that end, they continue targeting Ukrainian's identity with the establishment of filtration camps, carrying out deportation, simplification of the adoption of children, elaborating re-education programs for the newly occupied territories.

And this especially underlines a humanitarian aspect of the Russian war. Thousands of people are waiting their return to Ukraine after the evacuation from Azovstal in Mariupol and deportation from other regions, especially from Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Esteemed colleagues,

And after three months of these outrageous and heinous crimes committed by Russia, only one diplomat has decided to break with the Kremlin regime.

As he rightly pointed out, “those who conceived this war want only one thing – to remain in power forever, live in pompous tasteless palaces, sail on yachts comparable in tonnage and cost to the entire Russian Navy, enjoying unlimited power and complete impunity [...]. Today the [Russian] foreign ministry is not about diplomacy. It is all about warmongering, lies and hatred”.

And I wonder if any other Russian diplomat would be ready to stand in defence of morality, peace and his or her own professional honour.

To conclude, we have to finally acknowledge, especially after the 24th of February, that there can be no compromise that would ever satisfy Putin's growing appetite.

The only way to stop this war is to help Ukraine to win this war.

Therefore, the supply of heavy weapons to Ukraine and tightening of sanctions, including the introduction of oil embargo, is the best investment in maintaining stability in the world and preventing many severe crises that Russia is still planning, including hunger, poverty and chaos.

Russia has to withdraw its troops, restore Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and, of course, to assume the responsibility for all crimes committed against the Ukrainian people as well as to provide assurance of non-repetition of the aggression and reparation to the victims and return to the tenets of international law.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.