



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE MOSCOW MECHANISM
INVOKED BY 38 OSCE PARTICIPATING STATES
IN RELATION TO PARTICULARLY SERIOUS THREATS TO
THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION
BY THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
1390th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

22 September 2022

Canada fully aligns with the statement made by Ireland on behalf of the 38 participating States that invoked the Moscow Mechanism. Please allow me to add the following in my national capacity.

In 1990, OSCE participating States gathered in Paris to usher in “A New Era of Democracy, Peace and Unity”. They affirmed the following: “Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of government. Respect for them is an essential safeguard against an over-mighty State. Their observance and full exercise are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.”

Regrettably, at this moment, it has become abundantly clear how the failure of a government to fulfill its “first responsibility” undermines human dignity and threatens the peace and security of the OSCE region.

The report of the rapporteur, Professor Nußberger, on the situation in Russia is a shocking and extensive catalogue of human rights violations. It demonstrates clear disdain by the Putin regime for the OSCE human dimension commitments and international human rights law. The conclusion is clear: the Russian Federation is failing to fulfill its obligations to promote and protect the human rights of its citizens and in doing so is undermining the foundations of freedom, justice and peace on which this organization is based.

Further, as the rapporteur has so succinctly stated: “Repression on the inside and war on the outside are connected to each other as if in a communicating tube.” Despite all efforts of falsification and disinformation, we can clearly see how internal repression in the Russian Federation has fostered and facilitated its unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine. And, I would underline that the Rapporteur is not alone in coming to this conclusion, but that her findings and conclusions are echoed and buttressed by those of other independent institutions including the OSCE Representative on the Freedom of the Media.

In this respect, I would like to comment on the Rapporteur's findings on violations of freedom of expression, limitations on media freedom and the abhorrent treatment of civil society.

As the Rapporteur has chronicled, there has been a long build up of Russian legislation and practice that has served to undermine and isolate civil society, stifle critical attitudes towards the authorities, silence the media and suppress political opposition. An "over-mighty State" has re-emerged in the Russian Federation with a concentration of control under the President. Numerous new laws restrict freedom of expression unduly, and there has been increased state influence over traditional mass media, and the extreme suppression of independent mass media through content-related restrictions. This situation leads not only to the infringement of the rights and freedoms of the people in the Russian, but also to an environment where open, accurate and factual coverage of the war against Ukraine has become impossible.

Indeed, yesterday has brought us yet another example of repression by the Putin regime with the arrest of many hundreds at anti-mobilisation protests. Apparently, the people of Russia cannot even voice their opinion about sending their sons, brothers, father and friends to die in an unjust and unjustified war.

We urge the Russian Federation to give due and serious consideration to the Report of the Rapporteur, and to take all measures to abide by its international commitments, including those in the Helsinki Act, and its international legal obligations under the ICCPR to guarantee freedom of expression, assembly and association for all those within its territory. Perhaps if freedom of expression within Russia's borders can be restored, then we can also, once again, have hope for peace and security in the OSCE region.