



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

Norway Right of Reply
Delivered by Military Advisor Arne H. Knapskog at the 1011th Forum for
Security Cooperation, Vienna, 25 May 2022

Mr. Chairperson,

In response to the intervention by the Russian delegation let me make use of my right to reply and state the following on behalf of Norway.

The war in Ukraine has been ongoing for more than 8 years now. Today, it is the 91st day of Russia's invasion and intensified premeditated, unprovoked, unjustified and barbaric war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn this war in the strongest possible terms.

Belarus remains a complicit in this conflict, having allowed not only the staging of Russian combat forces but also the conduct of combat operations from its territory.

Chair,

Norway has chosen to be present here in the Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) this trimester in deep respect of our shared OSCE principles and commitments and international law. The last three months has been dominated by a blatant act of aggression by the Russian Federation against its sovereign neighbor, a fellow OSCE participating state. This has sent shivers through our organization, forcing us to leave business behind to concentrate fully and in all three OSCE dimensions on the serious, and devastating situation in Ukraine.

We must protect the principles of open and honest dialogue which remain fundamental to the value of the FSC.

Mr. Chairperson,

We will not allow the FSC to be an unfettered tool for the spreading of Russian propaganda.

Today, we were again exposed to distortion of truth, disinformation, and propaganda by the Russian delegation. But there is no doubt: The Russian Federation is the aggressor; Ukraine is the victim. There is no justification for this war. Russia bears full responsibility for unspeakable human suffering and tragedies, the loss of so many lives, massive displacement, and destruction across Ukraine.

While listening to the extremely serious allegations of violations of the Biological Weapons Convention in earlier meetings, and as a firm supporter of the Biological Weapons Convention, we ask our self: If Russia is serious about their accusations, why don't they use the proper procedure under the BWC and provide fact-based evidence? Unsubstantiated claims and mere insinuations are waste of our time.

This week we heard that more than 1850 schools and educational institutions have been destroyed in Ukraine. This is only one example of the atrocities that are ongoing but will influence the people of Ukraine for generations. We also know from UN figures that more than 6 million people have fled Ukraine to neighboring countries because of the war, most of them women and children. Another 8 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine.

Those responsible for all these atrocities, including war crimes or crimes against humanity must be held to account.

We will continue to stand in full solidarity with the victims and actively support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We do this supported by international law, pursuant to Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, giving Ukraine the right to defend itself as it is under armed attack from the Russian Federation. Ukraine is exercising its inherent right to self-defense, and all States have the right to assist them in this effort.

Mr. Chairperson,

The war in Ukraine has influenced the work of this forum in the past, is currently doing so and will also be predominant in the future. Within our mandate and experience, we can all play a part. The commitments in the Vienna Document, topics of SALW and SCA, including mines, and the principles in the OSCE Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security all enshrines the idea of security cooperation. We call on all States to remember, to value and to commit to these commitments, topics and principles. In letter and in the spirit.

In light of the ongoing war, Norway looks forward to discussing the implementation of the Code of Conduct in the autumn under Belgian FSC chairpersonship.

To sum up Mr Chairperson,

Norway reiterates our full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the right to choose its own alliances and future.

We will never recognize any illegal entities nor annexation of Ukraine's territory.

Thank you,