



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1389th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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Mr. Chairperson,

A few days ago, we crossed another threshold. 200 days have passed since the cold February night when the russian president, finally took off his mask after eight years of lies and denials.

I am grateful to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, to all those brave women and men who defend Ukraine and our freedom on many frontlines.

Thanks to them, thanks to their sacrifice and strength of will, I can be here today and represent the country they are defending it as we speak.

I am proud of the resilience of the Ukrainian people. Thanks to them, the Helsinki Final Act is still relevant.

I am grateful to our partners for their support. Together, we prove that freedom and democracy can be effectively defended against reckless attacks.

Excellencies,

Ukraine strives to live up to high democratic standards of an open and vibrant society. This is what russia wants to destroy in Ukraine. This is what russia is afraid of.

president putin is really straight forward when he speaks about Ukraine as 'anti-russia'. He is quite frank, but the only difference is that he speaks about his russia.

The European choice of Ukraine is a personal threat to his regime. He doesn't want to see democratic reforms, fair elections, the rule of law and respect for human rights at the border of the country that he has been building for years.

Therefore, today we pay a very high price for the right to freely choose our future.

As of September 14, russia has killed 384 Ukrainian children and seriously injured 749 kids. And this is not to mention the victims since 2014.

About 14 million of Ukrainians were forced to flee homes.

So far, the Prosecutor's General Office has registered 32900 war crimes, committed by russia.

However, the list is complemented by new crimes registered in the recently liberated areas in the Kharkiv region. Bodies of civilians with traces of tortures have already been discovered.

Furthermore, we are concerned about the violation by russia of the rights of the prisoners of war.

We took note the recent statement of the head of the UN monitoring mission that Russia denies access to prisoners of war, documented facts of torture and ill-treatment, lack of adequate food, water, healthcare and sanitation.

Of particular concern is information about a dire health situation in the facilities in Olenivka, where many Ukrainian POWs are reported to be suffering from infectious diseases and where Russia committed a mass murder more than a month ago.

At the same time, Moscow is trying to strengthen its control over the occupied territories, including in Crimea.

September 4 marked a year since the detention of Nariman Dzhelyal, First Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and Aziz and Asan Akhtemov. They have gone through the physical and psychological pressure, including torture, intimidation and threats.

Nariman Dzhelyal and Akhtemov brothers face 15 years in prison on a fabricated charge and the "court" is expected to announce its "verdict" on 21 September 2022, in six days from today.

We continue to observe a significant deterioration of the situation on the peninsula, while Crimea has received less attention in recent months.

Since March, the UN mission has documented the prosecution of 89 individuals in Crimea for "public actions directed at discrediting the armed forces of the Russian Federation". Crimean Tatars remain one of the main targets for Russia's repressive agencies.

Teachers in Crimea also face sanctions for refusing to participate in the military indoctrination campaign designed by the Kremlin for children.

Even the so-called head of Russia's occupation administration in Crimea admitted a few days ago that pro-Ukrainian sentiments are growing on the occupied peninsula. People are waiting for Ukraine. Instead of accepting reality, he only threatens with criminal responsibility for it.

Therefore, it is extremely important to keep the situation in Crimea on the radar of the OSCE, especially its autonomous institutions.

And let me say that again. A timely and public response can save someone's life.

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the past 200 days, the Russian war has claimed the lives of 5767 civilians. This is according to a very conservative and cautious estimation of the UN monitoring mission in Ukraine.

As of August, about 9 thousand Ukrainian defenders gave their lives in the name of our freedom, democracy and independence.

Colleagues, just imagine how many people in Ukraine have lost their dearest forever. How many children will never see their dad or mom. How many parents will never see their kids. And we cannot change this reality for them.

But what we can do is to ensure that freedom and justice prevail. That principles and norms are respected. That all those responsible for the crime of aggression will be brought to justice. In the name of sacrifice of all fallen defenders and in the name of future generations.

Today, we are more confident than ever that we can do it.

The liberation of Kharkiv region clearly proves that the military aid of partners does make a change and Ukraine is able to further liberate all its territories.

And how our defenders are greeted in the Kharkiv region has once again confirmed – Ukrainians are waiting for the return of the Ukrainian state after six months of russian occupation and barbarism.

As of now, stabilization measures in the Kharkiv region have been completed in a total area of more than 4,000 square kilometers.

Stabilization continues on the liberated territory of approximately the same size. This is more than russian troops have managed to capture since April.

Just imagine. Ukrainian forces covered 75 km towards Kupyansk in three days.

This explains why russian diplomats are trying their best to challenge providing support to Ukraine. Because the kremlin understands that it will lose this war. The only question is when and at what price.

As Minister Kuleba said earlier this week, “we are turning the tide and we need more heavy weapons and ammunition from our allies to build upon the momentum, save more people, and liberate more of Ukraine’s territories faster. The more military support we receive now, the faster this war will end”.

Distinguished colleagues,

However, it is time to admit that even with the end of the war and russian troops pushed back to the borders, we will still face a russian crisis within the OSCE.

For years russia has been building a belt of instability and conflicts around its borders. For years, russia has been trading in the fear of controlled escalation at our borders. For years russia has been demanding compromises on principles just because it is russia’s demand.

Nor better is situation inside of russia. There is a wide accepted wisdom, that the crackdown on human rights and democratic institutions proceeds into external aggression. However, this rule also works the other way around. A lost war of aggression gives hope for internal changes.

And it is telling what we are seeing now in russia, where deputies at the local level start to ask questions saying that putin’s actions harm the future of russia.

The real issue is how the OSCE is prepared to deal with the unfolding russia’s crisis.

And we need to figure out a long-term solution to this russian crisis. This is the key for long-lasting peace in Europe.

In this regard to address the issue of russia’s impunity is of utmost importance.

putin committed the crime of aggression, the most serious of all crimes against international peace. This crime cannot and should not go unpunished.

Therefore, we call on our international partners to support the establishment of the Special Tribunal on the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine

Dear colleagues,

Having lost the Kharkiv region, a few days ago russia resorted to its traditional methods of terror against the civilians. The attack on critical energy infrastructure caused a blackout for several hours in a number of regions of Ukraine.

This attack confirms a clear pattern of russia’s behaviour. Terrorist behaviour.

This confirms russia’s expectations for the coming winter. russia still believes its energy terrorism will work. The kremlin still believes that they can get Ukraine for cheap gas and oil.

The Russian president still believes he can get some preferences by holding developing countries hostage. Therefore, he instructed his foreign minister to reanimate Russia's hunger games.

As well, by occupying ZNPP and keeping provocative shelling of the power plant, in violation of the IAEA recommendations outlined in its recent report, the Russian president still believes that his nuclear terrorism will be successful.

And for almost six months, Russia has been terrorizing our Organization by illegally detaining three local OSCE staff members. The FSB officers, involved in this illegal activity, are well informed about the lists of OSCE staff members and their home addresses. I think there is no need to explain how they got access to this information.

All these months we have been sitting at the same table with a representative of an aggressive state, that is solely responsible for using terrorist methods against the OSCE and its participating States.

And just yesterday in the evening Russia carried out yet another terrorist attack, this time on the dam of the Karachunivske Reservoir, near Kryvyi Rih. This attack had no military value at all, but created an existential threat for hundreds of thousands of ordinary civilians.

With such an attack Russia repeated attempts of the Nazis in 1944. At that time, when retreating from Kryvyi Rih, the Nazis forces tried to explode similar hydraulic structures.

Well, do we still have anything to discuss with Russia within the OSCE second dimension? Is not it time to ask them to leave the room? Or should we wait when Russia finally manages to create a technogenic catastrophe?

And from time to time, we even hear how Russian diplomats call on participating States to enhance cooperation on countering terrorism in the OSCE region. Strange, isn't it? To hear such calls from de-facto state sponsoring terrorism.

And Russia still believes that blackmail works because there are so many dependencies built up over decades and so many stereotypes about Russian might.

I would like to conclude my statement with words said by President Zelenskyy.

"When a state turns energy or hunger into a weapon, it harms everyone. When a state tries to conquer another state it's a threat to all who value independence. When people are killed for being who they are it's a threat to humanity".

And further, following Russia's recent terrorist attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, President Zelenskyy clearly summed up a choice before us while dealing with Russia.

"Without gas or without you? Without you.

Without light or without you? Without you.

Without water or without you? Without you.

Without food or without you? Without you.

Winter and hunger, darkness and thirst are not as terrible as your "friendship and brotherhood". End of quote.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.