



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY ESTHER VAN NES, CHARGÉE D'AFFAIRES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM:**

The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

1526th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

3 July 2025

Madame Chair,

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is intensifying, and Ukrainian civilians are paying the price.

On June 16th and 17th, a wave of missiles and drones struck Kyiv. At least 28 people were killed. Over 130 were injured. Thirty-five homes were destroyed. Families were buried under the rubble. Just days later, on 22 June in Dnipro, a Russian drone hit civilian infrastructure and a passenger train, killing 21 people, and injuring about 300 others.

These incidents are part of a broader and deeply troubling pattern of violence that has become all too familiar.

In the reporting period from December 2024 to May 2025, the UN OHCHR said 1,000 civilians have been killed and over 4,800 injured. Russia is using short-range drones that allow operators to see their targets in real time. That means they see who they're hitting, and they hit anyway. As the UN has stated, the use of short-range drones "strongly suggests a failure to distinguish between civilian and military targets, and to take all feasible precautions to verify the military nature of those targets — or worse, an intentional decision not to."

The consequences of this disregard for civilian life extend far beyond the battlefield.

Hospitals have been struck repeatedly. Five confirmed attacks during this reporting period alone. Thousands of healthcare facilities have been damaged since the beginning of Russia's aggression. These are not battlefield errors. They are potential war crimes.

And for those who are captured by Russian forces, the suffering continues.

The UN interviewed 117 Ukrainian prisoners of war. Almost all reported the same horrific treatment: beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, dog attacks, humiliation. This is not a breakdown in discipline. It is a system of abuse; one that has been thoroughly documented and continues to this day.

Even children have not been spared.

The UN has reported that Russia is recruiting Ukrainian children through social media to carry out sabotage missions against their own country. Some of these children were killed. Others are now facing prosecution. This practice is illegal and morally indefensible.

Madame Chair,

Ukraine has made clear its desire for peace through diplomacy.

Russia has made its position just as clear for all those willing to see. It has escalated attacks during negotiations, continued to kill civilians and destroy civilian objects, and rejected every credible effort to end this war. These are not the actions of a state seeking peace. They are deliberate choices of a government committed to conquest, regardless of the human cost.

Canada sees this for what it is. We consider Russia responsible for this war of aggression against Ukraine. We will continue to support Ukraine; not out of sentiment, but because the alternative is less security in our region. We will back credible efforts to hold perpetrators accountable, and we will continue to provide the support Ukraine needs to defend itself.

To Ukrainians: we respect your determination. And we will continue to provide you with all forms of support now and into the future.

Finally, Madame Chair,

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately free all unlawfully detained civilians, including the three arbitrarily detained OSCE officials - Maksym Petrov, Vadym Golda and Dmytro Shabanov. Russia is holding these men illegally and must release them.

Thank you.