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THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Knut Are Okstad
at the Special Permanent Council,
Vienna, 6 October 2023

Thank you, Mr Chair,

This morning, Tymofiy, a 10-year-old boy was killed in Kharkiv, in what seems to be an attack with two Iskander ballistic missiles. The attack comes less than 24 hours after one of the deadliest strikes in months that left more than 50 civilians dead (also in Kharkiv).

Let me extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wishes for a swift recovery to those injured.

Chair,

Since withdrawing from the grain agreement in July, which aided in the alleviation of a worldwide food crisis, Russia has escalated its military attacks on Ukraine's southern territories, which encompass the Ukrainian Black Sea and river ports.

Deliberate or indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population are prohibited under international humanitarian law and must stop immediately. From the onset of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine, more than 10 000 civilians have been killed and twice that number have been injured, according to the United Nations.

Colleagues,

As former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, once reminded us; the very idea that only one nation embodies the absolute truth, that there is only one remedy to global issues, or only one unique solution to the needs of humanity has caused immeasurable harm throughout history.

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Precisely for this reason, adherence to the OSCE Helsinki Principles is imperative. It is crucial to address and rectify the actions of those who misuse the spirit of consensus, ensuring that these principles are upheld in a manner that genuinely fosters international peace and security.

Colleagues,

This morning we have witnessed Tymofiy's father shocked and at lost for words.

By defending their children, Ukrainians are defending what is most precious: their families, their future, and OUR freedom.

Norway will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Thank you.