



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY COUNSELLOR ESTHER VAN NES
ON RUSSIA'S INTENSIFIED MISSILE ATTACKS AGAINST CRITICAL CIVILIAN
INFRASTRUCTURE OF UKRAINE AMIDST ONGOING RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION
1466th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

21 March 2024

Madam Chair,

We open our statement today with the unequivocal condemnation of Russia's continued, deliberate and illegal targeting of civilian infrastructure across Ukraine.

Overnight, Russian forces targeted Ukraine's energy system in what Ukraine's Minister of Energy calls one of the most massive attacks on the Ukrainian energy system in recent times. We condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms.

These attacks come just a day after a major attack on Ukraine's capital Kyiv, and other regions across Ukraine beyond front lines.

Among other objects, the attacks targeted the country's largest hydroelectric plant, causing widespread outages and a fire at the Dnipro Hydroelectric Station and dam, which supplies electricity to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. The main power line to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was cut off, said the Director General of the IAEA. This is after he warned, earlier this week, that the power situation at the nuclear power plant continues to be fragile and vulnerable.

We recall the flooding that occurred last year when the Kakhovka dam collapsed and the danger this caused to the ZNPP.

This is not the first time Russian forces target Ukraine's energy infrastructure thereby increasing the suffering of the civilian population.

Attacks on civilian infrastructure are reprehensible.

Russia respects neither its political commitments nor international law. Russia is not a trustworthy nor credible international partner. We often talk about accountability in this forum, and it is for acts such as these that perpetrators must be held accountable.

Canada supports Ukraine's legitimate right to defend itself and continues to stand with Ukraine. Thank you.