



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 1451st meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
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Mr. Chairperson, dear colleagues,

On November 11, it was one year since the city of Kherson was liberated.

Kherson stands alone as a symbol of resistance to russia's occupation and as a manifestation of moscow's failed plans.

Even a year after, russia still wants to take revenge on the people who met the russian invaders with Ukrainian flags and demands to leave the city.

Even a year later, russia rains these liberated territories with bombs, artillery shells, rockets and missiles.

Just a few examples.

Only on November 14, the Kherson region was shelled 81 times. Or 571 shells were fired from different types of weapons.

On November 12, the Honchar library in Kherson was seriously damaged by russia.

Burning books is the starkest reminder that the Ukrainian identity is among russia's key targets.

Being driven by this purpose, russia continues to destroy cultural and educational institutions across Ukraine.

On November 13, again the centre of Kherson was heavily shelled.

About 10 people were injured. At least two were killed.

During the attack, a hospital was hit. This is yet another reminder of the genocidal intentions of moscow towards Ukraine.

Furthermore, on that day russia's artillery hit a car on the road near Kherson. A two-month-old baby was injured.

Her grandfather was burnt alive in the car, while her mother was heavily wounded.

As we see, every day russia brings pain and suffering to Ukrainian families.

At the same time, abandoned villages in the occupied part of the Kherson region speak volumes that, in addition to pain, russia also brings destruction and despair.

In the meantime, russia does not give up its terrorist tactics.

It continues attacks against the Odesa and Kharkiv regions.

On Saturday Kyiv was attacked with a ballistic missile for the first time after 52 days pause.

Yesterday, at night, russian troops fired four rockets at residential areas in the city of Selydovo, Donetsk region.

A multi-story residential building was hit. A woman was killed.

Furthermore, russia continues to target energy facilities.

Yesterday the area of a thermal power station in the Donetsk region was shelled.

At the same time, as reported by the Ministry of Energy, due to russia's shelling some areas in the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson regions were without electricity supply.

Neither should one forget that russia's kinetic attacks are always combined with cyber offensive.

As Ukraine has come close to the new heating season, this is also characterized by active attempts by russian hackers to affect the operation of critical infrastructure facilities in the energy sector.

Cyber space also provides russia with a domain for malign disinformation operations.

As russia is failing to achieve any tangible results on the ground, one should expect the intensification of russia's attempts to split our solidarity, manipulate public opinions, and create artificial tensions in our societies.

We must be vigilant.

For the same purpose, russia continues to weaponize history, both to mobilize its people and to attack democracies.

They are trying to play a victim.

However, while russia is trying to cover its aggression with the protection of soviet monuments, it is high time for the memorialization of crimes of the last empire in Europe.

A day is coming for new monuments to fallen defenders, deported children, burnt villages, mass graves and so on.

These new monuments will stand side by side with those devoted to victims of the Second World War as well as of the Soviet regime.

Unfortunately, there is a long list of russia's crimes to remember about.

This list is a consequence of a criminal regime built by the kremlin in russia.

And some recent events tell a lot about russia's present and future.

As it turned out last week, vladimir putin pardoned Vladislav Kanius.

In 2020 Vladislav tortured to death 23-year-old Vera Pekhteleva.

The torture lasted for hours because she decided to end their relationship.

He inflicted over 100 wounds upon her.

Vladislav was sentenced to 17 years in prison. But after 6 months he volunteered to kill Ukrainians.

And now he is a free man and maybe even is decorated as a hero.

After that should one be surprised about tortures committed by russian soldiers in Ukraine?

About Mariupol, Bucha, Izum?

About torture chambers discovered in the liberated territories?

Unfortunately, this man is the true face of russia's army.

However, what is more interesting is how the kremlin justified this pardon.

putin's spokesperson cynically said that "There is a way – when those convicted, including on serious crimes, redeem themselves with blood.

They redeem their crimes with blood on the battlefield, in assault brigades, under bullets, under shells".

What a shame!

However, this story of pardoning has its continuation.

One of the killers of russian journalist Anna Politkovska has also been pardoned after fighting in Ukraine.

The russian "state no longer upholds the law; rather, it manipulates the law for its own twisted purposes. [The russian state] hands down 25 years [in prison] for one's beliefs and pardons murderers who are in demand by the government", this was the reaction of the children of Politkovska.

After all, I have a direct question for the russian envoys, how many Ukrainians should be killed to get a pardon from putin? Is there a price list?

As well as, I want to repeat my previous call – the OSCE needs a strategy and vision of how to deal with this russian crisis – crisis of humanity and crisis which undermines the OSCE from inside.

Dear colleagues,

As President Zelenskyy stated, "putin has a very cynical and specific political goal right now, and he is willing to kill as many of his people as he needs to because he wants to show at least some tactical results in the first half of December, when he plans to announce his electoral campaign".

The situation near Avdiivka is very illustrative in this regard.

russia is already losing soldiers and equipment there faster and on a larger scale than, for example, near Bakhmut.

Unfortunately, war has become the only tool vladimir putin has to consolidate and legitimize his regime.

And if this regime is not stopped, Europe is going to witness endless wars of different intensity.

In this regard, Petr Tolstoy, who unfortunately still remains a member of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, has been outspoken this week.

As he said, I quote, "[russians] still have a long "special operation" ahead of us.

It will not last a year or two, because the task is too serious. Nothing is going to end; everything is just to begin".

This clearly illustrates that russia is not interested in diplomacy. They just need a break to prepare for a new aggressive campaign.

And we have to learn from the recent past.

The occupation of Crimea in 2014 has become a launching pad for a larger offensive eight years later.

Likewise, none of the 200 rounds of talks or the 20 cease-fires between 2014 and 2022, have prevented putin from starting a disastrous invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

This proves that the only acceptable option for russia is Ukraine's subjugation, capitulation or destruction – either through talks or war.

For Ukrainians, all these options mean mass killings, deportation and re-education.

For Europe, this means much bigger challenges.

Today moscow is trying to undermine our confidence that freedom and democracy could be defended on the battlefield.

They want to convince us that the only way out is to “accept the reality on the ground”.

However, let me remind that the occupation of Kherson lasted 255 days.

This proves that russia never comes “forever”, no matter how many times russian diplomats repeat it here.

This proves that russia can be defeated or forced out.

There is no other option for russia but to leave the Ukrainian territory, as foreseen by Ukraine’s Peace Formula.

This would be a litmus test for russia about its readiness to open and follow the path of diplomacy.

The beginning of the 90s provided moscow with extensive experience of how its troops could be withdrawn in an organized manner.

While for vladimir putin this has become the biggest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century, however, for many participating States it opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe.

This time we have to defend this legacy by supporting Ukraine militarily, by strengthening sanctions against moscow and by ensuring russia’s accountability.

This is critical for democracy, freedom, and the rule of law to prevail globally.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.