



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

1060th FSC Plenary Meeting
(25 October 2023)

Agenda Item 2, General Statements

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine allow me to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

With more than 570 combat engagements recorded along the frontline over the past week, the situation in the combat zone remains extremely tense. Russian troops continue to seek to gain control of the entire Donbas, persistently storming the positions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and launching regular air and artillery strikes against civilians.

Yesterday, the Russian troops conducted 80 ground attacks and carried out 6 missile, 51 air and 66 MLRS strikes against the positions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the settlements in the territories adjacent to the frontline. Despite the significant numerical advantage of the Russian troops, Ukrainian forces repelled all attacks, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

Russian casualties continue to rise, pushing the overall casualty figure to over 295,000. On 19 October alone, Russian forces suffered a staggering loss of 1,380 killed and wounded, the highest daily loss since the start of the full-scale invasion.

It seems that the Kremlin is ready to pay such a price for its imperial ambitions and failed attempts to rewrite history and redraw the world map that it once agreed to respect.

Esteemed colleagues,

International humanitarian organisations continue to register new cases of violations of International Humanitarian Law by the Russian Federation. The recently updated report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine provided clear evidence of Russian responsibility for numerous violations of international law, including indiscriminate attacks on civilians by Russian troops, torture, sexual violence, persecutions and illegal deportation.

The economic and ecological consequences of Russian aggression are no less dire. The war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine led to numerous destructions of residential buildings, educational institutions and infrastructure.

According to the latest estimates prepared by experts of the Kyiv School of Economics in cooperation with relevant governmental agencies, the total documented damage to Ukraine caused by a full-scale invasion has already reached 151.2 billion US dollars (as of Autumn 2023).

The destruction of the Kakhovka dam alone, which wreaked economic and environmental havoc in many regions of Ukraine, caused damage estimated at 14 billion US dollars (according to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment prepared by the UN and the Government of Ukraine).

Another important issue is the mine threat. Today, more than 170,000 square km of Ukrainian territory are considered mine-contaminated. In total, more than 6 mln civilians continue to live under constant threat. Tragically, since the beginning of the full-scale war, more than 800 casualties have been recorded as a result of mine explosions, including more than 250 deaths.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war are preventing the resumption of everyday life in the affected areas. The sad experience of mine clearance in other countries, multiplied by large areas of conflict-affected territories in Ukraine, tells us that the issue of restoring normal life in these territories will remain acute for many years to come.

This dire situation is a direct consequence of Russia's continued disregard for the principles of International Humanitarian Law and the laws of war. Deliberate attacks against civilians, failure to respect the status of protected sites and the indiscriminate use of weapons with wide area effects only serve to exacerbate destruction and increase the number of casualties.

One of the recent cases that illustrates this disregard and its catastrophic consequences occurred on 21 October, when as a result of Russian missile attack that targeted the postal distribution centre in the city of Kharkiv 6 civilians were killed and 17 were wounded.

Russia's appalling actions and rhetoric are a deliberate strategy aimed at destroying Ukraine, which is systematically implemented by the Russian political and military leadership. Otherwise, it is hardly possible to explain why such significant efforts are being made by the Russian propaganda machine to whitewash all these atrocities.

Suffice it to recall how two weeks ago the Russian delegation tried to justify the tragedy in the village of Hroza, which claimed the lives of 59 people, arguing that even the potential presence of active military personnel among the civilian population makes them a "legitimate target". Hypocrisy and cynicism of these words are just off scale.

Madam Chairperson,

Yesterday, on 24 October, the world commemorated the anniversary of the day when the UN Charter entered into force in 1945. This document, which enshrines all the basic principles of international law, including the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the non-use of force, is without a doubt the core pillar of international order.

Today Russia distorted and misused provisions of the Charter to justify its war of aggression against the sovereign state. This war is a clear reminder that the rule of law should be backed by military force. Otherwise, the law may be neglected.

We are convinced that the only possible way to stop the aggressor is to defeat it on the battlefield and force it to return to the path of international law. Any other actions will not be able to restore a just and stable peace. Despite all the difficulties and challenges, the people of Ukraine, with their steadfast fighting spirit and determination, are committed to defending their country.

To conclude, I would like to quote President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who recently said that Russia "will not break the Ukrainian will to defend and protect own state, own independence by any means; the determination to fight so that there is never any real basis for Moscow to hope that Ukraine will ever break. It will not break. It will endure. It will hold up. And despite everything, it will drive out the Russian evil from own land".

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.