



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 1386th special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for convening this special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council.

Today is a special day for Ukraine. 31 years ago, the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine was restored.

However, for long eight years and six months Ukrainian people have been forced to defend their freedom and sovereignty against russia's aggressive war. And these days they continue paying the highest price for their desire to live in a free, democratic, European state and to enjoy their freedoms and rights.

Today, I consider the words spoken by Boris Nemtsov in one of the last interviews of 2014 be more resonant than ever. Let me quote it.

“putin sees an enormous danger in the European choice of Ukraine. It is a danger to putinism, a danger to his power because the European choice is democracy, direct election, change of power, the rule of law and so on. Therefore, the success of Ukraine on the European path is a tragedy for putin and a chance for free russia to repeat this Ukrainian path”.

Wasn't he right?

Esteemed colleagues,

president putin openly declares that democratic and pro-European Ukraine constitutes a threat to HIS russia he has built over the last 20 years.

Since February 24, the russian leadership no longer hides its plans. After eight years of lies and denials, the masks have finally been taken off in moscow.

So, this attack has never been about NATO, language or minorities. This attack has always been about aggression, conquest and dismembering of the Ukrainian state.

We are grateful to all our partners, allies and friends for support, unity and solidarity with the Ukrainian people at these tragic times for the whole OSCE.

What russia planned as a several-day campaign on the eve of February 24 turned out to be the gravest catastrophe in Europe since Second World War.

The death toll of russia's aggressive war is devastating.

russia burns whole cities to ashes.

Civilians are deliberately killed with indiscriminate fire.

So far, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have launched an investigation into 29 184 war crimes and crimes of aggression committed since 24 February.

These cases are investigating the killing of 6896, including 362 children, and the wounding of 9149 civilians, among them 716 children.

These figures, growing daily, do not take into account the occupied territories, to which law enforcement officers do not have access.

As well, these figures do not include crimes committed before February 24.

Nevertheless, the russian troops continue shelling along the entire front line.

While russia's is concentrating its efforts in the Donetsk oblast, Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Marganets, Nikopol remain under constant intensive fire.

russia continues to terrorise the Ukrainian people with missile attacks.

In particular, on August 17, russian troops launched a missile attack on a dormitory in Kharkiv. According to the National Police, it was hit by the "Iskander" missile.

This russian strike alone claimed the lives of 19 people. Only one strike. Another attack on Voznesenk a few days later injured at least 14 people, including 3 children.

This is just one of many examples of russia's criminal behavior.

So far, the total number of various cruise missiles that russia has used against us is approaching 3500. 750 missiles of 3500 were fired from the occupied Crimea.

Only one of the 20 missiles hit military targets. The other 19 out of 20 missiles were fired at residential buildings, schools, hospitals, universities.

Meanwhile, the stockpiling by russia of a large number's missiles near Ukraine, particularly in Belarus, indicates that the kremlin plans to once again resort to massive missile terror against cities and civilian infrastructure.

It is pure terrorism, isn't it?

At the same time, russia's artillery fire remains as deadly as missile terror.

According to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the russian military carries out approximately 700-800 shelling of our positions per day, using from 40 to 60 thousand pieces of ammunition.

Can you just imagine the level of destruction this artillery fire brings to the Ukrainian soil? This fierce artillery fire just razes cities to the ground.

Moreover, russia has decided to raise the stakes.

Increasingly irresponsible actions, provocative shelling and nuclear blackmailing by russian military at Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Energodar are bringing the world to a verge of another nuclear disaster.

This demands our special and constant attention. Because the russian federation has set a dangerous precedent of nuclear terrorism. Because there is no instruction how to act when a terrorist state turns a nuclear power plant into a military target in violation of basic norms of international humanitarian law.

That's why, a team of inspectors led by the IAEA must be allowed into Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant as soon as possible in line with international law, while its permanent presence at the plant must be ensured until it is occupied.

We cannot allow moscow to downplay the scale of threats created by its military and to divert attention from the urgency of demilitarization and de-occupation of the plant.

It is high time to step up pressure on russia to force moscow to remove its forces and weapons from the largest nuclear complex in Europe, so Ukraine can regain its full civil control over the NPP.

As we see, russia's terrorism has become a multi-dimensional challenge. And it is time to recognize russia as a terrorist state.

Dear colleagues,

russia's terrorism has plenty of tools to target the feelings of Ukrainians and to inflict as much pain as possible.

On July 29, russia committed a cynical terrorist act, killing more than 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war by explosion on the territory of the former penal colony in the village of Olenivka. Many documentary evidences prove the planning of this crime. So far, independent experts have not got access to the site of the crime.

But this crime was not enough for russia.

In violation of its commitments, the preparation is ongoing for a show trial of Ukrainian defenders in the occupied Mariupol.

These trials should also be considered as a part of the dehumanization campaign, including through the blackening of the Azov regiment, aimed to stir up hatred in russian society against Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

This constitutes a gross and serious violation of the international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and amounts to a war crime under international law.

Those who remain in the occupied territories are also facing ill-treatment, tortures and so so-called "filtration procedures".

Families are separated, and those who are deemed "unreliable" disappear. The aggressor's administrations put local civilians in the occupied territories in a stalemate situation, when the possession of russian passports becomes a vital need for people.

By doing so, russia is trying to put pressure on the most vulnerable categories of the population while moscow is speeding up the preparation for sham referendums.

In addition, the forced adoption of Ukrainian children continues in violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As it was reported by the russian authorities, more than 1 000 children from the occupied Mariupol have been adopted by russian families in Tiumen, Irkutsk, Kemerovo and the Altai region. More than 300 children are temporarily kept in specialized institutions of the Krasnodar Territory.

Let me say it as clear as possible. russia must return all kidnapped children to their parents or legal guardians. As well as all other Ukrainians deported to russia.

All these crimes committed by russia in Ukraine are despicable. These crimes have returned to our lexicon such terms as filtration, mass deportation, extermination, genocide, re-education.

But was the recurrence of crimes of the past as something unexpected?

Haven't the russian leadership by its hands paved the way for the repetition of cruelty of the past on Ukraine's soil today?

As yesterday we paid tribute to victims of Stalinism and Nazism let me remind how this Black Ribbon Day was set up within the OSCE family.

Back in 2009 the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Vilnius adopted a resolution urging the participating States, among other things, to raise public awareness of the totalitarian legacy; to develop activities on totalitarian history, human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms, pluralism, democracy and tolerance; as well as to promote and support activities of NGOs which are engaged in areas of research and raising public awareness about crimes committed by totalitarian regimes.

But what was the reaction of official russia?

Right, moscow's delegation boycotted the vote and the russian foreign ministry characterised the resolution as not contributing to an atmosphere of trust and cooperation between the participating States.

And it was one of many warning calls. The absence of the political will to disassociate the country from the evil of the past and its further glorification has led to the repetition of this evil in the future.

And it is high time to break this vicious circle.

That's why, considering that russia's attack on Ukraine is the biggest aggression and caused the biggest war in Europe since the end of Second World War, Ukraine took the initiative to create a Special Tribunal, that will prosecute members of the Security Council of russia for committing the crime of aggression against our state.

Previously, the creation of such a tribunal was supported the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

Distinguished colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like to thank OSCE Secretary General, Ms. Helga Maria Schmid for her participation in the Second summit of International Crimea Platform, which took place yesterday. And I am grateful to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Minister Rau for his political leadership and joining the Declaration adopted at the Summit.

The Crimea Platform summit was timely as ever.

Last year, during the opening of the first Summit of the International Crimea Platform, the President of Ukraine noted that under the conditions of russian occupation, the Crimean Peninsula had turned into a "powder keg".

Unfortunately, on February 24 of this year, the full-scale military base, into which the occupiers transformed Crimea for eight years, become the base for a new invasion of Ukraine.

And here I would like to quote President Zelenskyy statement at this year summit. Quote and quote: "to overcome terror, to return predictability and security to our region, to Europe, and the world as a whole, we need to win the fight against the russian aggression. We need to liberate Crimea from the occupation. This aggression has to end where it has begun from. And this will be the most effective restoration of the international legal order".

Indeed, it is the only way to restore respect for the Helsinki Final act that is at the heart of the OSCE and is among the pillars of the European security order and prosperity.

We look forward to working with the Chairpersonship, national delegations and OSCE Secretary General to translate the adopted declaration into common actions.

The time for half-steps and empty compromises is over.

It is time to put an end to russia's ability to attack and re-occupy any other independent and sovereign country in the future.

It is the only guarantee for a lasting and durable peace in Europe.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.