



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
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Mr. Chairperson,

Every new day leaves us shocked over the brutality of russian missile terror.

As we sat in this room a week ago, the peaceful Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia witnessed a horrific russian missile strike. That attack claimed the lives of about 25 people, including 4-year-old Lisa and two boys aged 7 and 8.

russians knew exactly where to strike. They wanted to spread fear. This is pure terror. And this is their goal.

The city of Mykolaiv has also been witnessing massive missile attacks throughout the week. Over the past days, russia hit Nikopol and other settlements of the Dnipropetrovsk region. Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Toretsk and other cities of Donbas are also shelled.

The Kharkiv region is under constant fire. The invaders continue shelling the border areas of the Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

russia also does not forget about nuclear terrorism. By terrorizing and kidnapping employees of the captured Zaporizhzhia NPP, russia violates and undermines the basic principles of nuclear safety.

On Saturday, minister shoigu ordered russian troops to intensify the fighting in all directions in Ukraine. This order was echoed by the russian foreign minister, who by confessing dreams to grab more Ukrainian land, has proved that russia rejects diplomacy and focuses on war and terror. In practice, this means more killing, more terror and more destruction.

Figures speak for themselves. According to the Ministry of Interior, since 24 February, russia committed more than 17300 attacks against civilian targets and only nearly 300 against military ones.

As a result of these attacks, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies registered damage or destruction of more than 27 600 civilian infrastructure facilities, including about 22 000 residential buildings and houses, roads and bridges, more than 1 400 educational and 230 medical institutions, 2 400 water and electricity networks, more than 300 cultural and religious sites.

In addition, based on its monitoring and as stated in yesterday's report, ODIHR has identified credible evidence to assess that the conduct of hostilities by russian forces may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Testimonies collected by the ODIHR are terrifying. Just a few of them. "The [russian] soldiers killed four of those women [...] The soldiers ordered us to load them onto one of the trucks and then they set this truck on fire, together with the four

bodies”, “we presumed the women were raped [...] I remember something like “our senior command allows us to do whatever we want”. Can we imagine how low their morals must be to do that?

And we can only imagine the level of barbarism being practiced by the russian army in the still occupied territories as moscow tries to consolidate its control.

Likewise in the Kherson region, they established a so-called “government” in the Zaporizhzhia region. This structure is also headed by the russian citizen – a certain Mr Anton Koltsov. He is a former government official of russia’s Vologda region. Koltsov is assisted by another russian citizen – Mr Anton Titsky.

But again, engaging russian citizens, as it was done in the Kherson region, clearly displays how strong is pro-Ukrainian resistance in the newly occupied territories.

While russia is allegedly preparing for sham “referendums”, no doubt that russia and its occupation administration will step up repressions against the locals, including filtration, forced displacement, illegal detentions, tortures and so on.

We are well aware of russia’s traditional playbook. Here, a witness provided to the ODIHR quite a clear picture of the challenging situation in the occupied territories and I quote “when the representatives of the Federal security services came to the city (...) the city began to change. When they appeared, people began to disappear, some people were kidnapped, and the mayor was kidnapped, he is probably the most famous person who was kidnapped but also the organizers of the rallies, former military, and some NGO activists. There were cases when they kidnapped Protestant priests”.

Also, the situation in occupied Crimea is more than illustrative. russia continues to abuse its so-called anti-terrorism legislation for the repressions.

A few days ago, russia's Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don made another decision on a fabricated case regarding the organization of so called “terrorist cell” in Crimea. Azamat Eyupov, 59-year-old, a father of four, who has heart disease, was sentenced to 17 years in prison. This equals the death penalty against him.

russia must stop mock trials and release all political prisoners.

Dear colleagues,

Some time ago, I mentioned the appalling attitude of putin’s regime towards national minorities in russia itself.

moscow is engaging in the covert partial mobilization of the male population from its depressed and poorest regions with the compact residence of national minorities, particularly from russia’s Far East, North Caucasus, Buryatia, Khakassia, Yakutia.

This week, new facts about russia’s attitude towards the national minorities were made public.

Soldiers from Buryatia claim that they are imprisoned in a pre-trial detention center near Luhansk for refusing to fight in Ukraine. They are also threatened and psychologically pressed by their command. This is how russia treats its people.

If we look closely at this situation, actually, while russia is engaging its minorities in genocidal practices against the Ukrainian people, at the same time moscow is dealing with ethnic cleansing at home.

I would like to repeat my call for the HCNM to look closely at this outrageous practice of the russian authorities. Respective national minorities and indigenous people in russia deserve protection from the OSCE and its institutions.

This example clearly displays the link between internal human rights abuses and external aggression. This is something we have to focus on further.

Russia is not a reliable international partner either. It directed all its resources to wage war and achieve its narrow geopolitical interests. By cutting energy supplies to Europe and creating the prospect of a global food crisis, Russia is humiliating the whole world.

According to the Kyiv School of Economy, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine caused losses to the country's agricultural sector in the total amount of \$4.29 billion.

Russia's aggression affects not only the ability to freely export our agricultural products and feed about 400 million people a year around the globe. Damage to land, infrastructure, and agricultural machinery directly affects the future production of agricultural products in Ukraine.

Russia also humiliates the OSCE by launching attacks against SMM local staff in Ukraine. We are grateful to the OSCE Chairpersonship and Secretary General for their new joint statement. However, the illegal persecution of the SMM local personnel is nothing else but yet another act of terrorism by Russia.

At the same time, the tendency, which was identified by the Moscow Mechanism mission, to bypass by the Russian Federation its international obligations by handing detained persons over to the illegal structures in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and letting them engage in problematic practices, including the imposition of the death penalty, is alarming. The death of Paul Urey, a humanitarian worker, is especially concerning.

These structures are fully under Russia's control and Moscow is responsible for their conduct as also reiterated in yesterday's ODIHR report.

Russia must stop these practices and be held accountable for them, including by reconsidering Moscow's role and position in our Organization.

Dear colleagues,

Russia chose the path of war and challenged the European order. And it is not about some ephemeral political considerations, but about human lives and rights.

I would like to quote the words of the grandma of 4-year-old Lisa, a child who was killed a week ago in Vinnytsia.

"Lisa had a difficult heart surgery when she was six months old, but she survived. But because of these Russians, who are destroying the whole of Ukraine with impunity, they killed a child. However, she is not the only one. And why can't they be punished?"

And I was staggered by this question, as the primary task of diplomacy and politics is to save generations from the scourge of wars. This is what we diplomats were taught from the very first day. And, perhaps, sometimes this task is too often overlooked in the net of political considerations and calculations.

But this question also reminded me about a long path Russia has passed towards today's impunity and the language of ultimatums.

After the Chechen wars and after the aggression against Georgia, Russia did not pay its price for crimes but was rather rewarded with new policies of engagement and new promises of cooperation.

Now it is more than obvious that while there were attempts to engage Russia, Moscow was considering it as a weakness and was further implementing its aggressive plans. Confrontation, instead of cooperation and dialogue, was Russia's choice. Today we are witnessing the culmination of this choice.

We have to learn this lesson if we want to build more just European order, including for the sake of the russian people.

Today the time has come for the democratic world to bring the kremlin regime to account. By recognizing russia as a terrorist state. By establishing the special tribunal on russian aggression. By elaborating on the special compensation mechanism. By cutting dependencies on russia. By introducing new sanctions. And by providing sufficient and timely assistance, that Ukraine can win this war in the coming months not years.

As President Zelenskyy said earlier this week, "terror is a virus. And if one of the terrorists goes unpunished, it only encourages others".

And the time has come to vaccinate the world against this virus.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.