



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yuri Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, to the 1518th special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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Mr Chairperson,

Thank you for convening today's special PC meeting - as Russia continues its war of aggression and terror against civilians in Ukraine.

But I would like to begin by addressing our distinguished colleagues from the delegation of the Holy See.

It is with deep sadness that we learned of the passing of His Holiness, Pope Francis.

Ukrainians join millions of people around the world in mourning, as Pope Francis "returned to the house of the Father".

As President Zelenskyy said, Pope Francis's life was devoted to God, people, and the Church. Pope Francis's prayers for peace for Ukraine, will always be remembered in our hearts.

That said, let me quote from Pope Francis final public appearance on Easter Sunday in the Vatican's St Peter's Square, I quote - "May the risen Christ grant Ukraine, devastated by war, his Easter gift of peace, and encourage all parties involved to pursue efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace". End of quote.

And there was no better time to give peace efforts a chance than Easter, when we remembered Christ's sacrifice for humanity.

It was expected that Holy Week would be observed with particular restraint.

Yet for Ukrainians, Russia has once again turned it into a week of terror and pain.

It is appalling that Russia continued to use missiles against densely populated areas, as happened in Sumy on April 13, on Palm Sunday. 34 people were killed and more than 119 were wounded, including 15 children.

It was a deliberate choice by Moscow to attack Ukraine, when thousands of Ukrainians were attending the Divine Liturgy in churches.

This stands in the same line as the attack carried out by Russia on the morning of 25 of December 2024 during the celebration of Christmas.

Russia also did not pause on Good Friday. Six ballistic and cruise missiles, and 37 drones were fired.

Same stupid pattern.

The city of Kharkiv was hit. One person was killed and 113 people were wounded, including nine children. The youngest was a two-year-old girl.

At least one missile exploded in the air to cause as much damage as possible.

In fact, Kharkiv was attacked six times last week.

On Good Friday, the Russians also attacked an ordinary bakery in Sumy. As a result, one person, who came to buy traditional Easter cakes, was killed.

Was it a military facility?

On the same day, in Konstantynivka, Donetsk region, two people were killed, and three others were wounded.

The day before, on April 17, Sumy and Donetsk regions, as well as Mykolaiv, Kherson, Dnipro and other cities, were attacked. In particular, in Dnipro, 30 people were wounded, including five children.

Over the past week, Russia has significantly intensified its shelling of settlements in the Kherson region. The situation is no better in Odesa and the region.

On 22 April, in Zaporizhzhia, Russia's glide bombs hit ordinary residential buildings, killing a woman and injuring more than 40 others, including five children.

During the day, there were also strikes on Sumy, Kharkiv, Donetsk, and our southern regions.

Yesterday, on 23 April, Russia attacked a bus full of people in Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk region. Nine civilians were killed, and 38 others were wounded. Russia continues its "human safari" with FPV-drones.

And just few hours ago, Russia carried out yet another massive missile and drone attack targeting mainly Kyiv and nine other regions.

Russia fired 11 ballistic missiles (Iskander/KN-23), 37 cruise missiles (Kh-101), 6 cruise missiles (Iskander-K), 12 cruise missiles (Kalibr), 4 air-guided missiles (Kh-59/Kh69) and 145 drones. In four waves.

As of now, reportedly, nine civilians have been killed in Kyiv and over 70 injured, including six children. As we speak, the phones are still ringing from under the rubble.

Would a true Christian, pretending to be a defender of the Orthodoxy, behave like that during Ester week, in particular on Light Thursday?

Or doesn't this brutal and sickening attack prove once again that Russia is the main and only obstacle to peace?

And isn't Putin demonstrating through his actions, not his words, that he will not stop his terror until he faces real consequences for his crimes?

Sadly, the list of Russian attacks is far from being exhausted.

In fact, since the last meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, Russia has continued its nightly terror unabated.

On the night of 11 of April, Russia used one ballistic missile and 39 drones; on 12 April – 88 drones; on 13 April – 55 drones; on 14 April – 62 drones; on 15 April – one ballistic missile and 52 drones; and on 16 April – 97 drones; on 17 April – five missiles and 75 drones; on 18 April – six missiles and 37 drones; on 19 April – eight missiles and 87 drones; on 21 April – three missiles; and 96 drones; on 22 April – 54 drones.

I would also like to draw attention to the comment by the Kremlin spokesman on the so-called "energy ceasefire", who said that "the month has indeed expired. No further instructions from [Vladimir Putin] have been received so far".

This came shortly after Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations, said that "a ceasefire in Ukraine is unrealistic at the moment".

These comments raise additional concerns about a possible intensification of Russian attacks on Ukraine, including on its critical energy infrastructure, especially

given that Russia has already violated this “energy ceasefire” more than 30 times in the last month.

And just yesterday, Russia destroyed an energy facility in the Kherson region.

Dear colleagues,

As President Zelenskyy commented on the so-called Russia-declared Easter “ceasefire” - “30 hours is enough to make headlines, but not enough for real confidence-building measures. Thirty days can give peace a chance”.

According to the report by Ukraine’s Commander-in-Chief, the total number of violations by Russia of the Easter “ceasefire” reached 2,935.

There were 96 Russian assaults, 1,882 instances of shelling on our positions, including 812 with heavy weapons, and over 950 of cases of the use of FPV drones.

The highest number of violations occurred in the Pokrovsk direction.

In addition, Russia used the Easter “ceasefire” to accumulate reserves, regroup troops, and clear routes for future assault operations.

Russian well-known tactics from the past.

Russia’s failure to support Ukraine’s initiative to extend the ceasefire beyond Easter also speaks volumes.

Like, its rejection of the U.S. proposal for a full and unconditional ceasefire for the second month in a row.

Nevertheless, the Easter “ceasefire”, despite all its flaws, has shown once again that Moscow holds the keys to peace.

Orders from the Kremlin can effectively stop the killing and destruction.

And one person’s decision can end this war in one day.

As simple as that. The absence of drones and missiles in Ukrainian skies on Easter night proves that it is possible, and that a just peace is achievable.

That’s why Ukraine keeps calling on Russia to end the missile and drone strikes against the civilian infrastructure. As clearly stipulated by international humanitarian law.

As a first meaningful step towards ending the war.

Excellencies,

In two days, world leaders will attend the funeral of Pope Francis.

The crimes of recent days make his words even more relevant today.

And let me quote.

“Deceit is in the mind of those who plan evil, but those who counsel peace have joy” (Prov 12:20).

Yet there are those who seek solutions in war, frequently fuelled by a breakdown in relations, hegemonic ambitions, abuses of power, fear of others and a tendency to see diversity as an obstacle.

War is not a ghost from the past, but a constant threat.

Our world is encountering growing difficulties on the slow path to peace upon which it had embarked, and which had already begun to bear good fruit” [Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti].

And today is a time for new Good Samaritans to strengthen our commitment to protecting peace.

Ukraine is for sure one of such places.

For a peace that does not legitimize war and the use of force to redraw borders and challenge the principle of territorial integrity.

For a peace that does not normalize terror against civilians.

And for a peace that ensures accountability and protects human dignity from future attacks.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Ukraine will continue to work constructively with its American partners, with Europe, with all our partners from Ottawa to London, to Tokyo, to Canberra, to achieve a just and lasting peace based on the principles and norms of international law, in particular the principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The recent meetings in Paris and London testify to that.

Coordinated actions between our capitals are essential for achieving this goal.

A full and unconditional ceasefire should be an important first step on this path.

The return of deported children, POWs and civilian hostages should be a crucial humanitarian confidence building measure that will bring us to the start of a peace process.

And increased pressure on Russia would make this process our joint success.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.