



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by H.E. Mariana BETSA, Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine,
to the 1519th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

08 May 2025

Mr Chairperson, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for inviting me.

I am grateful to the Chairpersonship of Finland for keeping Russia's war against Ukraine in the OSCE's focus.

I would also like to convey the sincerest words of gratitude from all the Ukrainian people to you - our partners, allies and friends for your unwavering support.

It helps us to resist and to stand firmly in this war.

This meeting is also a moment of my personal emotional flashback.

I am glad to meet my colleagues and old friends. Some of them are sitting at this table with whom we worked to promote and strengthen human dimension commitments during the OSCE Chairpersonship of Ukraine in 2013.

Since then, dramatic events have taken place in the OSCE area.

They have once again proved that the respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, human rights and freedoms is at the heart of European security.

As enshrined in the Helsinki Accords. As provided for in the UN Charter.

On the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII in Europe, it's worth remembering that.

After decades of repeating "Never Again", today we AGAIN are talking about:

the largest land war in Europe waged by the Russian Federation;

the largest missile campaign of terror against peaceful cities waged by the Russian Federation;

the largest state-led child deportation carried out by the Russian Federation;

the largest state-led civilian abduction operation conducted by the Russian Federation;

the largest execution of the POWs on the battlefield implemented by the Russian Federation.

The Russian army has committed and continues to commit atrocities, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine on a scale not seen in Europe since the Second World War.

The sickening facts about the brutal murder of Ukrainian journalist Viktoria Roshchyna and her mutilated body leave me with only one question.

Is there any difference between those who wear ribbons today and those who wore armbands eighty years ago?

Does it matter how many people the regime kills every day? Ten or ten thousand? Don't they share the same nature?

What really matters is the devaluation of human beings and their dignity, isn't it?

Modern Ruscism mirrors the darkest features of 20th century – from the cult of leader to genocide and militarized propaganda.

A Russian version of nonsense about “historical lands” and “one brotherly nation” brings deaths and suffering to Ukraine every day. By killing the innocent, Moscow cultivates an aberrated ideology of “great victory” to mobilize more people for the war of aggression.

As Moscow prepares for a sham parade, Sumy is in mourning again today.

Two days ago, Russia's ballistic strike killed three persons including a six-year child, and wounded four more children.

As Moscow prepares for a sham parade, Kyiv is also in mourning. Yesterday was another difficult night for Kyiv. Russia again killed two persons, and, at least, injured four children.

They did this despite the fact that Ukraine's unconditional proposal for a 30-day or longer ceasefire remains on the table.

Russia responds to every offer to end the war against Ukraine, which Russia itself started in an illegal, unprovoked and unjustified manner, by escalating the violence.

Russia does not want peace. It wants war.

It needs war to promote its neo-imperial goals.

We want to give peace a chance. Russia wants us to surrender.

By stepping up its missile terror, Russia is trying to break our will to resist.

And the figures are staggering. From 1 to 24 April 2025, the UN Mission (HRMMU) has verified 848 civilian casualties – 151 killed and 697 injured.

This represents a 46 percent increase compared to the same period last year.

April, which was supposed to be a month of peace, was turned by Russia into another bloody month.

And how many lives from this list were claimed by missiles from North Korea? As it happened in Kyiv on 24 of April, when 13 people were killed.

Moreover, after outright denials, both Moscow and Pyongyang have finally acknowledged the participation of North Korean personnel in the war against Ukraine.

Their partnership is fuelled by a shared desire to challenge the existing world order, whether in Europe or the Far East, and common disregard for human life.

So, isn't the deepening of ties between revanchists and pariahs, like Russia, North Korea and Iran, yet another wake-up call for the international community?

Russia also engages Chinese mercenaries in its war of aggression.

Dear colleagues,

Before today's meeting, I took a quick look at the map of Europe.

It is striking to remind how small a stronghold of freedom and democracy was in Europe until 1991.

But, it is also a stark reminder that the end of WWII didn't bring freedom to many European nations. One totalitarian rule simply replaced another.

The collapse of the USSR for many became a chance to build their own futures.

It was not a blank cheque.

This freedom was paid for with personal freedom and even the lives of many.

Then CSCE contributed to this, as well, by giving impetus to the establishment of human defenders' groups. The Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union is still operational in Ukraine. This is a true Helsinki spirit.

In 2014, with the attempted annexation of Crimea, Putin wanted to reverse the course of history, to show that the brutal force can redraw borders, and to legitimize a war of conquest. Something what was completely banned after the end of the WWII.

And let's imagine for a moment. Russia gets what it wants. The UN Charter is dead. The Helsinki Decalogue becomes a fiction. Power dictates its rules. Is that the world we want?

That's why, I will never tire of repeating. This is an existential war. For Ukraine. For the Free World. For our principles.

That "Crimea is Ukraine" is more than just words. It is about the rule of law. And it is about ours and your freedom and future. It is about the UN Charter.

And on Europe's Day, it's worth remembering that thanks to Ukraine's resistance and unwavering international solidarity, the aggressor has gained nothing. Like 80 years ago.

That's why maintaining this unity, solidarity and faith in our shared values is the path to peace.

We must not be afraid of confronting Russia. The aggressor must not be rewarded. The aggressor must not be appeased.

Ukraine is committed to the peace efforts led by the United States and firmly supported by the European partners and allies.

As President Zelenskyy said, "we are ready to move toward a ceasefire as soon as possible – even starting today – if Russia is ready to take reciprocal steps – to establish complete silence, a lasting ceasefire of at least 30 days. This is a fair timeframe to prepare the next steps."

And despite Russia's ongoing atrocities, there are many ways to support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine and entire Europe.

By increasing sanctions pressure on the aggressor state. By speeding up the delivery of air defense systems to protect Ukrainian civilians, cities and towns.

By ensuring that sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders is respected.

By strengthening the Ukrainian Defense Forces and providing Ukraine with credible security guarantees.

By ensuring that an inherent right of Ukraine to choose its future, including to be a member of alliances, is respected. This is a fundamental principle of our security architecture.

And by reviving the spirit of Helsinki with a spirit of Nuremberg. All perpetrators must be brought to justice. Including through the establishment of a Special Tribunal.

Kidnapping children and killing kids in the playgrounds; torture and execution of prisoners of war, mass graves and erasing peaceful cities to the ground; capturing civilians and indiscriminate strikes on densely populated residential areas must never become the new normal for our world.

This is how we must honour the sacrifice of millions of people in the WWII.

The contribution of every nation who fought against Nazism has to be acknowledged. Ukraine's role in defeating Nazism is undeniable. At least 8 million Ukrainians died, including 5 million civilians and 3 million soldiers. That is why we categorically reject the cynicism of Moscow, who today is trying to appropriate this feat.

It is the top of hypocrisy for a state actively waging a war of aggression to invoke the memory of World War II in pursuit of its current neo-imperial aims. By weaponizing the language of anti-Nazism, Russia seeks to justify its own war crimes and crimes against humanity.

And we must prevent Russia from stealing our memory, appropriating our collective victory, and manipulating history to justify aggression and crimes against Ukraine and its people.

On this day of remembrance, we call on the OSCE participating States to redouble our joint efforts to defend the fundamental principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and ensure that justice, accountability, and lasting peace prevail in Ukraine and beyond.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.