



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 1004th FSC PLENARY MEETING
(16 March 2022)**

**Agenda item 1, General Statements,
on the subject of “Russian war of aggression against Ukraine”**

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine let me deliver a statement on the subject of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

Today is the 21st day of the heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people to Russia’s brutal, unprecedented and unprovoked military invasion of Ukraine. Today also marks the 8th anniversary of the so-called «referendum on the status of Crimea», which was nothing else but a political farce orchestrated by Russia – lacking in political legitimacy, conducted in a crying violation of fundamental international law. The sham «referendum» was staged in an attempt to legitimise the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. It was not and will not be recognised by Ukraine and the international community.

Following its 2014 playbook, the Russian Federation tries to repeat the notorious scenario of the formation of pseudo-republics, this time in the Kherson region. With a view to organising another sham «referendum» in the occupied Kherson, the Russian invaders have resorted to blackmailing local leaders, putting pressure on local deputies and bribing people into their accomplice.

At the emergency meeting of the Kherson Regional Council on 12 March, the local deputies unanimously rejected the idea of creating the so-called “Kherson People’s Republic” and adopted an appeal that the Kherson region is Ukraine.

More than 10 thousand residents of the city, now living under Russian control, took to the streets on 13 March to protest the armed occupation of Kherson. By the way, 13 March is a memorable day for Kherson: on that day in 1944 the city was liberated from

Nazi invaders. Therefore, the column of protesters proceeded from the Regional State Administration to the Eternal Flame Memorial. Russian occupiers expectedly opened fire on the peaceful protesters, causing casualties among civilians. This case speaks eloquently of the real nature of the so-called "Russian world".

Several cases of illegal forceful replacement of local authorities with Russia's puppets occurred in the city of Melitopol (Zaporizhzhia region). On 13 March, Russian soldiers kidnapped the head of Melitopol Regional Administration. Eight armed men in Russian military form are reported to break into his house, conduct searches, and confiscate his personal documents and all technical devices. After that, the head of Melitopol regional administration was taken in an unknown direction.

On 11 March, a group of Russian occupiers kidnapped the mayor of Melitopol. The invaders attempted to force him to declare his support for the Russian occupation of the city. Hundreds of residents of Melitopol took to the streets to express their resistance to the actions of the Russian Federation. The abducted mayor is reported to be currently in occupied Luhansk. The occupying administration of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic is incriminating him with a fake criminal charge of "terrorism."

Esteemed colleagues,

The occupying forces of the Russian Federation have not been successful in conducting an offensive operation in all directions. The main efforts of the Russian Army have been focused on regrouping the forces and retaining the previously taken positions.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, in cooperation with other components of the Defence Forces, are holding back the enemy, inflicting significant losses of manpower and military equipment, demoralizing its personnel both in combat areas and in reserve formation areas.

As of 16 March, the total estimated loss of the enemy amounts to:

- 430 tanks;
- 1375 armoured personnel vehicles;
- 190 artillery systems;
- 43 air defence systems;
- 70 MLRS;
- 819 vehicles;
- 84 aircraft;
- 108 helicopters;
- 3 boats/ships;
- 11 UAVs of operational and tactical level;
- 60 tanks with fuel and lubricants.

Within 21 days of war in Ukraine, the Russian Army lost in Ukraine more military personnel than in two years-long wars in Chechnya – more than 13,800 personnel.

President Zelenskyi said, I quote: "The enemy is confused. They did not expect such resistance. They believed in their propaganda, which has been lying about

Ukrainians for decades. They still cannot recover from that. But they have already begun to understand that they will not achieve anything by war.”

We know that there have been cases of mass refusals by Russian servicemen to "travel to Ukraine" to take part in hostilities, despite promises of "war veteran" status, additional daily allowances and higher salaries. We also know that mobilized residents from the temporarily occupied territory of Luhansk region were sent to replenish the losses of the active units of the Russian occupying forces in Ukraine.

Besides, detachments of mercenaries are being formed who are ready to carry out the criminal orders of Russian commanders for a reward. According to available information, mercenary recruitment centres have been opened in Syria, where more than a thousand people have been recruited in recent days, and about 400 people have reportedly arrived in Russia. Camps for their accommodation and training have been set up near the Ukrainian border in Rostov region (Russia) and Homel region (Belarus).

Mr Chairperson,

The Russian occupying forces are using methods that violate the rules of war. They attack civilian infrastructure, killing and injuring civilians, including children, and make actions that can have regional and international consequences.

The Russian aggressors continue to launch massive air and missile strikes against military and civilian targets across the entire territory of Ukraine using indiscriminate weapons such as air bombs, rockets, cluster munitions. They also use civilian infrastructure to equip firing positions, deploy weapons and military equipment.

In Lviv, a pre-trial investigation was launched into the 13 March missile strike by the Russian occupiers on the territory of the International Centre for Peacekeeping and Security (Yavoriv, Lviv region). The strike killed 35 people and injured more than 130. According to the preliminary information, the air strike was carried out from the Black and Azov Seas. The air force of the occupying power fired about 30 missiles on the Centre.

Another horrific crime perpetrated by the Kremlin regime was shelling of Donetsk on 14 March. We have a clear idea of why the Russians shelled Donetsk again, just as they had shelled this Ukrainian city before. It was done to justify the unspeakable war crimes the Russian occupiers are committing across Ukraine. We categorically reject the unfounded allegations by the Russian side that Ukraine used Tochka-U complex to shell Donetsk on 14 March. The Ukrainian Armed Forces did not carry out missile strikes on Donetsk. There is no doubt that the Tochka-U missile that hit Donetsk was launched by the Russian army. Similar missiles were previously used by the Russian Federation on targets in Ukraine in the Donetsk sector (Avdiivka on the outskirts of Donetsk, 11.03.2022, 13.03.2022; Mariupol, 01.03.2022).

The Russian Forces keep trying to seize the city of Mariupol (Donetsk region) but have been met with strong resistance of the Ukrainian Army. The most recent daily losses of the enemy amounted to about 150 people, 2 tanks, 7 infantry fighting vehicles and one armoured personnel carrier.

Against this background, the humanitarian catastrophe in the city of Mariupol becomes abysmally real. Even in the basic questions of humanity, the Russian invaders show cynicism and barbarism. Russian troops are preventing the evacuation of people and the delivery of humanitarian aid to them, shelling the humanitarian corridor and the entire city. For 4 days, our humanitarian cargo for the blockaded city was standing at a distance of 84 kilometres from Mariupol. This is the long-awaited water, food and medicine for people who die on the streets of Mariupol and in bombed-out apartments. The most disgusting example of real “russism” in Mariupol was shown by the invaders, when they gathered 400 residents from nearby houses and medical staff at a clinic and took them all hostage.

The shelling of civilians in Luhansk region does not stop. The destruction of infrastructure and of the housing sector is catastrophic. Residents of Luhansk region do not have the opportunity to buy water and food. Some of them do not have electricity and communication. Civilians have to hide in basements and cellars. Constant shelling of the streets by the Russian soldiers does not allow them to leave the shelter.

While Kremlin propagandists are cynically covering up their imperial ambitions with claims to “protect Orthodoxy”, aggressive attacks by Russian troops are destroying Orthodox churches and other shrines in Ukraine’s religious communities. At least 28 buildings of spiritual significance have so far been damaged in at least six regions of Ukraine and counting. The vast majority of them are Orthodox churches. On 12 March, the Russian Army attacked the Sviatohirsk Lavra in Donetsk region, one of the three major Orthodox monasteries in Ukraine. Approximately 520 civilians, including 200 children, were seeking shelter there at that time.

According to the Prosecutor’s General Office, as of 15 March, 97 children were killed and more than 100 wounded due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation. Most victims were in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zhytomyr regions. At least five children die under shelling every day. As a result of bombing and shelling, more than 400 educational institutions were damaged, 59 of them were completely destroyed. 11 medical institutions, 3 rehabilitation centres were shelled, including those for children with disabilities.

We strongly condemn the indiscriminate use of Russia’s military force against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals and residential buildings, protected under international humanitarian law.

We declare with all the determination that the responsibility of the Russian military for war crimes is inevitable. Also inevitable is their responsibility for the deliberate humanitarian catastrophe in Ukrainian cities.

In conclusion, we demand that the Russian Federation immediately ceases its war of aggression against Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We also urge the Russian

Federation to return all its troops and equipment amassed at the Ukrainian borders, including in Belarus, to their places of permanent deployment.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.