



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by Ukraine
at the opening session of the OSCE Annual Security Review Conference**

As delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine H.E. Dmytro Kuleba
28 June 2022

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished participants,**

I am grateful to the Polish OSCE Chairmanship for steering the Organization in the times of existential challenges and for guarding OSCE principles and commitments.

One question hangs in the air: what does the Russian representative still do at this table?

What is the added value of Russia's participation in OSCE after it has violated all ten fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act? How does Russia contribute to the security and cooperation in Europe, except ruining it? Why is it allowed to abuse the OSCE platform to disseminate false narratives and disinformation?

It is common sense that after all Russia has done, it should not be present at this table. People say OSCE lacks appropriate suspension mechanisms. Well, then there needs to be a precedent. Set up a procedure and get them out. We are at a point when the choice is between setting a precedent or allowing Russia to ruin OSCE.

Some international organizations, for instance the Council of Europe, have already taken action to protect their integrity and expelled Russia.

Russia's damage to OSCE has been consistent, and is part of a deliberate strategy. Here are just a few examples. In two days, the mandate of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine will expire. Only because Russia unilaterally prevented its extension. Russia regularly blackmails the Organization when it comes to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms in the OSCE area.

In the run-up to the current full-scale war, Ukraine has tried to make use of the OSCE toolkit to reduce risks in Europe. Faced with an unprecedented Russian buildup at our borders, two weeks before the invasion we had officially triggered the risk reduction mechanism in accordance with the Vienna Document. Russia ignored it and continued the build-up which culminated in a full-scale invasion.

For months before the first Russian missiles hit Kyiv on February 24th Russia had been pretending that it wanted to negotiate. In fact, they had been preparing for a war and they had known they would launch it. I want to remind everyone that at the OSCE ministerial in Stockholm on December 1st last year Russian Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov openly threatened that Russia will repeat the Georgian scenario in Ukraine.

In fact, Russia has been preparing for a big war in Europe for years. It has militarized Crimea and adjacent waters, forced passportization and conscription in the occupied territories of Ukraine, and consistently squeezed the OSCE presence out of the region.

Russia has been appeased for too long and now we have to deal with a monster destroying everything in its way. Putin has openly stated his aggressive plans to rebuild the Soviet empire by basically conquering neighboring sovereign states. Members of the Russian political establishment routinely threaten other countries with nuclear strikes. I remind everyone that we are talking about one of the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council, tasked by the global community with preserving international peace and security, not destroying it.

Instead, the Kremlin seeks to destroy the Ukrainian state, the Ukrainian political independence and sovereignty, and the Ukrainian nation as such.

In pursuing this goal, Moscow's cruelty knows no limits and goes as far as mass atrocity crimes against civilians, rapes, lootings, deportations, and destruction of infrastructure and cultural heritage. Entire towns are being razed to the ground by Russian artillery. Russia terrorizes peaceful Ukrainian cities with long-range missile strikes. Recent hits at a residential house in Kyiv and a crowded shopping mall in Kremenchuk are the latest horrifying war crimes that took dozens of innocent Ukrainian lives.

My message is clear: no more impunity for Russia. In this regard, I welcome the OSCE's efforts to document war crimes, including through the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism. We will use every available mechanism to bring all perpetrators of Russian war crimes to account, no matter how long it takes.

Last but not least. Ukraine has never wanted this war and we are striving for peace more than anyone else in this world. But as Putin remains squarely focused on achieving his imperialist goals by force, his path to the negotiating table lies solely through battleground defeats.

I am sure that Ukraine will win and defeat Russian barbarism. In fact, Ukrainian victory is in everyone's interest, including OSCE, because it will restore peace, justice and security in Europe. The question is the price that Ukraine and the whole of Europe will have to pay for it.

The OSCE needs to make a tough choice. Leave things as they are and allow Russia to ruin the Organization or take action and find a way to suspend Russia. Formalism will not help. In times when the future of the security order in Europe is at stake, resolute actions need to be taken. If they require setting a precedent, as I mentioned before, then set one. Otherwise, we will have to admit that our meetings and discussions have no value at all.

I still hope that our collective commitment to the ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act will prevail over the brutal force that seeks to destroy them.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.