

The OSCE Secretariat bears no responsibility for the content of this document and circulates it without altering its content. The distribution by OSCE Conference Services of this document is without prejudice to OSCE decisions, as set out in documents agreed by OSCE participating States.

PC.DEL/223/26
5 March 2026

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT IN EXERCISE OF THE RIGHT OF REPLY BY
MR. DMITRY POLYANSKIY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1556th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 March 2026

On Ukraine

Mr. Chairperson,

I should like to exercise my right of reply.

The statements we have just heard in this room have a somewhat stale and formulaic ring to them – it is as if they were not concerned with the fate and lives of human beings, but were merely some kind of propaganda exercise disconnected from reality. Listening to you, ladies and gentlemen, leaves one with the impression that your countries do not actually want a sustainable and long-term peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian crisis and that you continue to be stuck in a fantasy world of pipe dreams about defeating Russia on the battlefield and bringing back the Ukrainian borders of 1991 or, at the very least, 2014.

It is not quite clear what you are seeking to prove to us in this room – that everything is going marvellously for Ukraine on the battlefield? This is precisely the kind of argument that the supporters of the authorities in Kyiv have been trying to advance of late – that Ukraine should not agree to a “bad” peace (“bad” as the principal cheerleaders of the Ukrainian authorities would have it), because Russia is allegedly not getting anywhere in military terms and we are supposedly suffering huge losses.

There is no need even to comment on this. A quick glance at some figures will suffice. Thus, as part of a recent humanitarian operation, Russia handed over to Ukraine the bodies of 1,000 Ukrainian soldiers who had been killed in action, while Ukraine returned to Russia the bodies of 35 of our soldiers. You will see exactly the same proportion in all recent similar exchanges. Is this not the best demonstration of the true ratio of the losses sustained by each side?

Or perhaps you are trying to prove to us that Ukrainian society is prepared to continue fighting? But what are we to make, then, of the endless video footage showing scenes related to the forced mobilization, which is contrary to Ukrainian law (footage that has aroused universal opprobrium in Ukraine), and of the numerous cases of Ukrainian men being killed or maimed by the jackbooted draft officers before they even reach the front lines?

As for those Ukrainian men who are dropped off at the front, they prefer to either desert or surrender into captivity, rather than dying in a pointless meat grinder. According to official statistics, the number of deserters is already in the hundreds of thousands, while the number of captives is in the thousands – there would be many more of these if Ukrainian nationalists acting as anti-retreat forces did not shoot surrendering soldiers in the back.

Another balloon of lies into which hot air keeps being blown by those in this room consists of claims about the infallibility of the current Ukrainian authorities and their adherence to democratic standards and norms, including when it comes to respect for human rights and freedoms. We can see that this is not a misconception caused by a lack of information (there is plenty of information out there), but a conscious decision to ignore everything that led first to the internal Ukrainian conflict in 2014 and then also triggered the launching of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine in 2022. In other words, we are dealing with a deliberate and selective deafness and blindness that come over the collective West as soon as the subject of Ukraine is raised.

As a result, all these outrageous violations of the rights of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and acts of persecution against opponents of the current authorities of that country are not only not letting up, but are sprouting ever new shoots, as it were. And so we have the notorious Ukrainian Nazi Yevhen Karas admitting to Ukrainian journalists that he finds it “cool to wage war and kill” while “fulfilling the West's objectives”.

By indulging such “queer fish”¹, of whom there are quite a few in Ukraine and who do not even try to lie low or hide their Russophobic beliefs, Zelenskyy's Western sponsors, who continue to supply him with weapons, are becoming increasingly mired in complicity in the crimes committed by the Ukrainian military against the civilian population. In just one week, from 23 February to 1 March, the Ukrainian formations' artillery, missile and drone attacks resulted in 153 civilian casualties, of whom 22 people were killed and 131 people were left with injuries of varying degrees of severity. Among the casualties was one minor. Those whose calling it is to save lives are again being targeted. Thus, the Ukrainian “fighters” also inflicted casualties among the groups of volunteers and the Emergencies Ministry staff who arrived on scene to deal with the aftermath of the attacks last week.

The highest casualty numbers were reported in the Belgorod, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. The attacks targeted residential buildings and surrounding areas, energy facilities, hospitals and schools, civilian plants and civilian vehicles.

Drones continue to be the Ukrainian armed forces' main tool for killing. Attacks using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) accounted for approximately 92 per cent of all incidents, claiming 141 casualties. Drones are used not only for direct strikes, but also for remote mining. For example, in the Kherson region and the Donetsk People's Republic, civilian cars have been blown up by mines dropped from UAVs.

In a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, the Ukrainians launched strikes on medical facilities and educational institutions: the building of the central district hospital in the city of Dneprorudnoye in the Zaporozhye region was damaged, while over in the Bryansk region a first-aid and obstetric unit in the village of Kurkovichi was destroyed and a school building in the village of Novaya Pogoshch was damaged.

1 Translator's note: The surname Karas comes from the word *karas'*, which is how the crucian carp (*Carassius carassius*) is known in several Slavic languages.

In the early hours of 2 March, Russian air defence systems repelled a barrage attack by Ukrainian drones in the Krasnodarsky krai. The city of Novorossiysk came under fire, with 66 drones shot down in the skies overhead.

For our Western colleagues, it is as if none of this were actually happening. We have long cottoned on to the fact that, as a matter of “principle”, they do not care about crimes committed against Russian people. And they are also trying to ignore our warnings that, through their blind support for the current Ukrainian authorities, they are not only undermining their own values, but also literally bringing disaster upon their heads. More’s the pity.

For example, how many times have we warned them that the weapons shipped to Ukraine are being stolen with the direct connivance of the current authorities and that they will soon start being used to fire on the Europeans themselves? The European Commission is finally concerning itself with this problem. In a recently published Commission staff working document related to a new directive on combating firearms trafficking, EU experts warn that millions of illicit firearms may end up flowing from Ukraine to Europe. According to their data, the number of crimes in Ukraine involving the use of firearms has increased by 5,000 per cent since 2022! Do the Europeans, whose taxes are being used to procure weapons for the Kyiv regime, really want to be paying good money to land themselves with such a future?

Our European colleagues would do well to reflect on this and support the efforts of the Russian and US negotiators seeking to bring about a long-term and sustainable resolution to the Ukrainian crisis.

Thank you for your attention.