



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

## **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE**

As delivered by Ms Viktoriya Kuvshynnykova, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna

### **1556<sup>th</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

Agenda Item 1, “The Russian Federation’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine”

(5 March 2026)

#### **Mr Chairperson,**

With the arrival of spring, we can state with confidence that yet another attempt by Russia to weaponise winter in Ukraine through unrestricted missile and drone warfare has failed.

Moscow sought to leave millions of Ukrainians without heating, electricity, and water during the coldest months. It began this winter with a massive strike on 6 December, one of the largest since the start of the full-scale invasion, involving more than 700 aerial assets, including over 50 missiles in a single attack. Since then, hardly a single day has passed without new, deliberate strikes against Ukraine’s energy infrastructure.

Throughout the heating season, Russian strikes targeted all segments of Ukraine’s energy system across most regions of Ukraine. The intensity of these attacks exceeded that of previous mass strike campaigns combined. Only in strikes on energy infrastructure, 11 civilians were killed and 68 injured.

Today, with the arrival of spring, many people in Ukraine are waiting for some relief. However, this relief is not only about the change of season. It is also about the hope that yet another failed attempt to freeze people and break their resilience will force Moscow to recognise the futility of its strategy of energocide.

Regrettably, despite the intensification of peace efforts led by the US, Moscow continues its war effort. Russian propaganda and disinformation campaigns persist in undermining international trust. Its military industry continues to produce new instruments of destruction. And on the front line, the Russian military command repeatedly launches new waves of attacks in an attempt to seize more Ukrainian territory.

**Mr Chairperson,**

In February, Ukraine's Defence Forces carried out a number of successful counter-offensive actions, liberating more territory than Russian forces were able to capture during the same period. Last month alone, the aggressor state lost more than 25,000 soldiers in Ukraine. At present, every occupied kilometre of Ukrainian territory costs Russia, on average, 167 soldiers.

As casualties continue to mount, Russian criminal regime is struggling to find the thousands of troops needed to replenish units suffering ever heavier losses. Recruitment in prisons and economically disadvantaged regions, as well as the deployment of additional personnel from the DPRK, have already proven insufficient.

Against this backdrop, the Kremlin has been compelled to search for new sources of manpower. Particularly illustrative in this regard are recent media reports concerning conscription campaigns conducted in institutions of higher education. Independent investigations have uncovered evidence that military recruiters are targeting students at 57 universities and 13 colleges across Russia and the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Students are being pressured to attend recruitment meetings and threatened with punishment should they refuse.

These developments are taking place against the backdrop of an intensifying domestic crackdown. Regime authorities have significantly expanded their campaign of repression. Law-enforcement agencies are systematically silencing dissent, while social media platforms and online messengers are being blocked and replaced with state-controlled alternatives. Through these measures, the Kremlin is further consolidating its police-state model.

As underlined in a recent statement by UN Human Rights Council experts, the Russian authorities have deliberately transformed national security and public safety legislation into tools of repression. These laws are applied arbitrarily as part of a broader strategy to silence opposition and eliminate any challenge to the war agenda.

Notably alarming is the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. According to available information, in the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea alone, Russia is persecuting 1,684 individuals, subjecting them to arrests, administrative penalties, unlawful fines and other forms of pressure. Criminal proceedings are currently underway against 284 individuals.

However, even the construction of a tightly controlled police state has failed to resolve Russia's acute manpower shortages. Moscow continues to expand its recruitment efforts beyond its borders, mobilising mercenaries from around the world.

Of particular concern are Russia's activities in Africa, which are generating growing alarm across the continent. As Minister Andrii Sybiha emphasised during a recent joint press conference in Kyiv with Ghana's Foreign Minister Samuel Ablakwa, more than 1,700 individuals from 36 African countries have already been recruited to fight for Russia. Numerous reports from across the continent corroborate this trend.

Further evidence is emerging from several countries, including Kenya, where police have recently charged a man accused of luring young men to Russia with promises of employment, only for them to end up fighting in Ukraine. According to information released by Kenya's National Intelligence Service, approximately 1,000 Kenyans have been recruited to fight for Russia's war against Ukraine using this scheme.

Taken together, these developments clearly illustrate Russia's neo-colonial practices and demonstrate that the threat posed by its imperial ambitions extends far beyond Europe.

**Mr Chairperson,**

The global dimension of Russia's war of aggression threatens the very foundations of global security and demonstrates that, if a just peace is not achieved, the future of the entire international order will be placed in jeopardy.

Russia has already inflicted serious damage on the international security architecture. By attempting to legitimise the use of force, selectively approaching its own international obligations, and promoting a model of total disregard for human rights and the rule of law, Russia has provided other like-minded pariah regimes with a dangerous example.

The alarming rise in military conflicts worldwide, as well as the increasingly reckless behaviour of dictators across the globe, are direct consequences of Russia's actions. The very crisis it has created and continues to fuel.

It is now high time to recognise that dictatorships such as the Kremlin's will be stopped neither by moral arguments nor by rational calculation. But they can be compelled to stop. Current global developments demonstrate this clearly.

It now depends on the international community whether Russia will set a precedent that undermines the entire rules-based international order, or whether it will instead be an example proving that the illegal use of force leads only to disaster for the aggressor.

**Thank you, Mr Chairperson.**