



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

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE  
ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

**1137<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**

(20<sup>th</sup> May 2026)

Agenda Item 2, General Statements

**Mr. Chairperson,**

I would like to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine.

After a temporary reduction in the intensity of air attacks on 9–11 May, Russia resumed massive strikes against civilian infrastructure and residential areas of Ukrainian cities. What followed was not de-escalation, but one of the heaviest aerial assaults of the war. An entire section of a nine-storey residential building in the capital of Ukraine was destroyed from the first to the ninth floor. The strike claimed the lives of 24 civilians, including three children.

This escalation is particularly telling because Ukraine had demonstrated goodwill. At the agreement with the United States, my country agreed to observe a ceasefire from 9 to 11 May and then proposed to extend it further. Russia rejected that proposal. These are not the actions of a state seeking peace. They are the actions of a state that uses every pause to prepare the next wave of terror.

Russia's attack on that residential building in Kyiv was therefore not an accident of war, but a political message. It demonstrated direct escalation, complete disregard for

civilian life, and open contempt for the diplomatic efforts of Ukraine's partners, first and foremost the United States. As Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha rightly stressed, this attack showed that Russia wanted to continue fighting despite Washington's peace push. Moscow speaks of negotiations while bombing apartment buildings. It speaks of restraint while murdering children in their sleep.

**Esteemed colleagues,**

There is also a grim historical continuity here. Apartment buildings have been associated with the darkest chapters of Putin's political rise since 1999, when bombings destroyed residential blocks in Russian cities and killed hundreds of people. Today, once again, shattered apartment houses and terror against civilians stand as one of the clearest signatures of Putin's rule. This is not the language of diplomacy. It is the language of fear, coercion and state terror.

Today, Ukraine is marking the fourth anniversary of the Azovstal garrison's exit into captivity. For 82 days in full encirclement — the defenders of Mariupol, with the Azov unit at the core of the garrison, held the line and bought critical time for Ukraine to mobilize and organize the wider defence of the country in the first months of the full-scale invasion. Their stand became one of the defining acts of resistance in modern European history.

The central condition of that exit was Russia's commitment, made before international organisations, to preserve the lives and health of Ukrainian defenders in captivity. That commitment was cynically violated. Russia chose instead a policy of abuse, humiliation and persecution. It designated Azov a so-called "terrorist organisation" and has handed down long prison sentences to captured Azov fighters in sham "terrorism" trials as characterised by the OSCE and Amnesty International. Such practices are incompatible with the most basic principles of international humanitarian law, including the Third Geneva Convention.

The fate of Azov defenders in captivity is part of a much broader pattern. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported that almost all released Ukrainian prisoners of war interviewed — 95 per cent — provided accounts of torture or ill-treatment in Russian captivity. The mass killing in Olenivka in July 2022, where dozens of Ukrainian prisoners of war were killed after being transferred there from Azovstal, remains one of the gravest Russian war crimes committed against Ukrainian POWs.

Torture, sham trials, denial of status and deliberate physical destruction are not isolated excesses. They amount to a deliberate Russian policy.

Ukraine remembers every one of its citizens held in Russian captivity and continues to make maximum efforts to bring them home. But this issue is not only about Ukraine. It is about whether the Geneva Conventions still mean what they say. It is about whether a state can publicly guarantee the safety of prisoners of war and then torture, prosecute and kill them without consequence.

**Esteemed colleagues,**

On 18 May 2026, the Russian Federation and Belarus launched joint nuclear exercises on Belarusian territory.

While every state has the right to conduct military drills, we cannot ignore the serious implications of these particular exercises. The involvement of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus represents a dangerous escalation and a direct challenge to the established international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Ukraine strongly condemns this provocative action, which further destabilizes the security situation in Europe and undermines the fundamental principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

We urge all responsible members of the international community to respond firmly and in a united manner to such destabilizing activities.

**Mr. Chairperson,**

Russia's conduct over the past days has again made the reality unmistakably clear: Ukraine accepted a ceasefire; Russia answered with missiles and drones. Ukraine seeks the return of its prisoners; Russia answers with torture and sham trials. Ukraine acts in defence of life; Russia wages war on residential buildings.

Ukraine remains committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. However, until such peace is achieved, Ukraine will continue to defend its citizens, its sovereignty and its internationally recognized borders in full exercise of its inherent right of self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter and in line with the fundamental principles of the Helsinki Final Act.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**