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

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

As delivered by HE Mr Yuriy Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the  
International Organizations in Vienna

### **1561st meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council**

Agenda Item 1, “The Russian Federation’s ongoing aggression against Ukraine”  
(23 April 2026)

#### **Mr Chairperson,**

More than 1,500 days have passed since the launch of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Yet security and humanitarian situation remains dire, as Russia continues to intensify its brutal campaign against Ukraine and its people.

According to the most recent report of the United Nations on the protection of civilians in Ukraine, in March of this year alone at least 211 civilians were killed and 1,206 injured. This represents a 49% increase compared with February 2026, and a 29% increase compared with March of the previous year.

As highlighted in the report, attacks employing long-range weapons remain the principal cause of civilian casualties, accounting for 36% of the total. Short-range drones constitute the second leading cause, and are responsible for the highest number of civilian deaths, while also remaining the primary driver of casualties in areas close to the frontline.

These figures illustrate quite well the grim reality on the ground. The scale of resources that Moscow continues to devote to sustaining its aggression is staggering. During the first three weeks of April alone, Russia launched nearly 6,000 strike UAVs, dropped more than 2,600 guided aerial bombs, and fired over 100 missiles at Ukrainian territory, causing further civilian casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Just this night, as a result of Russian strike on Dnipro, seven people were killed, and at least ten injured. In the Zaporizhzhia region, a 77-year-old woman has died from Russian guided bomb.

Particularly alarming is the disproportionate impact of these attacks on the most vulnerable members of society - children. Living under the constant threat of Russian strikes, deprived of stable access to education, in particular due to constant strikes, and, in some cases, even basic necessities, Ukrainian children are forced to endure immense psychological and physical hardship. According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion almost 700 children have been killed and 2,457 injured.

We must also recall the thousands of Ukrainian children who have been illegally abducted by Russia and forcibly transferred to its territory. Available estimates indicate that more than 20,000 children have been taken from their homes and families.

**Mr Chairperson,**

Despite persistent calls from the international community for de-escalation, the Russian Federation continues to pursue policies that expand and prolong this war.

In our previous statements, we have already drawn attention to Russia's unlawful campaign to recruit foreign mercenaries in support of its war of aggression. Regrettably, this practice continues unabated. The Russian Federation persistently recruits foreign nationals and deploys them to the frontline, effectively treating them as expendable manpower. As of today, more than 300 foreign fighters who participated in hostilities on Russia's side are currently in Ukrainian custody – and, of course, this is just a tiny portion of the 27,000 mercenaries, we are aware of.

Another deeply troubling development is the ongoing effort to draw Belarus more directly into the war against Ukraine. We are closely monitoring developments along the Ukrainian-Belarusian state border, including construction of infrastructure leading towards Ukrainian territory, as well as the establishment of artillery positions in Belarusian border areas.

Ukraine's bitter experience of 2022, when Belarusian territory was openly used as a staging ground for the launch of aggression, leaves us no room for complacency in assessing these developments.

We regard such actions as a deliberate escalation orchestrated by Moscow. Let us be clear: a state that genuinely seeks peace does resort to such tactics, spread unfounded accusations, or make open threats. Such behaviour must cease. It is high time to put an end to the bloodshed, and allow diplomacy to prevail.

For its part, Ukraine remains firmly committed to achieving a comprehensive politico-diplomatic settlement based on the principles of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

We remain in close coordination with our partners, and continue to seek pathways that could make the Russian Federation to bring this war to an end.

As the leadership of Ukraine has repeatedly emphasised, and allow me to reiterate it today, that Ukraine stands ready to pursue a peaceful resolution, and remains open to negotiations at the highest political level.

Our objective is a comprehensive, lasting and just peace, that can only be achieved through responsible decisions at the level of leaders.

Yet, Russia continues to reject such an approach. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that sustained and united international pressure – a peace through strength approach, on the aggressor can alter this course. As Andrii Sybiha, Ukraine's Foreign Minister, recently underscored at the Antalya Diplomatic Forum, accelerating efforts towards peace requires increased pressure on Moscow, and making costs of its aggression unbearable. It finally must come to understand that Russia will never achieve its objectives on the battlefield.

**Thank you, Mr Chairperson.**