



**STATEMENT BY CHARGÉE D'AFFAIRES ESTHER VAN NES  
UNDER AGENDA ITEM:**

**The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine**

**1567<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**4 June 2026**

Mr. Chair,

Regrettably, we are starting yet another meeting of this Council with news of further attacks by Russia against Ukraine, damaging cultural sites and other civilian objects.

Canada condemns Russia's latest deadly attacks on Ukraine, which killed at least 10 civilians, including children, and injured many more. These Russian strikes are another reminder of Russia's continued campaign of terror against the Ukrainian people and its blatant disregard for international law.

Mister Chair,

According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission [AB1.1], more people were killed and injured in Ukraine during the first four months of 2026 than during the same period in any of the previous three years. This reflects a broader pattern of intensified Russian strikes impacting civilians and civilian infrastructure across the country.

Russia's methods of warfare are having a disproportionate impact on civilians throughout Ukraine, yet they have yielded no discernible tactical or operational military gains. It is therefore difficult to understand why the Russian Federation continues to punish civilians with drones and missiles, while also striking humanitarian workers delivering food, medicine, and other life-saving supplies to war-affected populations.

Mister Chair,

International humanitarian law sets out clear rules related to humanitarian assistance, [KM2.1] including requiring parties to allow and facilitate access, subject to their consent and right of control so that humanitarian personnel can reach civilians in need, and prohibiting attacks that deliberately threaten the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

In this context, we condemn the increase in Russian strikes against infrastructure of a clearly humanitarian character in Ukraine.

On 25 May 2026[AB3.1], a World Food Programme warehouse in Dnipro was struck by a precision-guided ballistic missile, destroying food supplies intended for people living in frontline areas. This was the second strike on the same humanitarian facility in six months. The World Food Programme has recorded more than 80 incidents affecting its humanitarian assets in Ukraine.

Just days earlier, on 20 May 2026, a UNHCR warehouse, also in Dnipro, was directly hit by a missile during a Russian airstrike [AB4.1] on the city, destroying around 900 pallets of essential humanitarian assistance.

On 12 May[AB5.1], a first person-view drone struck a clearly marked World Food Programme truck delivering food to civilians near the frontline. After the vehicle was immobilized, it was struck multiple times by additional drones.

We pay tribute to the dedication of humanitarian workers and volunteers who continue to deliver assistance to war-affected populations despite the real risks to their own lives. We reiterate our call on Russia to end military operations that threaten humanitarian personnel and assets.

Mister Chair,

We reject the persistent attempts by Russian authorities to reframe coercive or unlawful practices as “humanitarian measures.”

This includes, inter alia, the justification of the forcible transfer or deportation of Ukrainian children as evacuations undertaken for their safety. Established international mechanisms exist to protect children in armed conflict, including the obligation to register and trace them through the ICRC Central Tracing Agency. These mechanisms do not include changing children’s identities, withholding information regarding their whereabouts, denying international monitors access to occupied territory, obstructing family reunification, or entrusting their well-being to an individual sought by the ICC for alleged war crimes.

This instrumentalization of humanitarian language also extends to measures portrayed as “protective,” such as “precautionary” calls urging diplomats and foreign nationals to leave Kyiv. In this context, The Russian Federation attempts to obscure its threats behind humanitarianism language.

We ask the Russian Federation to spare us this empty theater and instead demonstrate, through concrete actions, genuine respect for IHL and the humanitarian workers who seek to protect civilians from the worst impacts of conflict. No one loses from compliance with international humanitarian law.

Finally, Mister Chair,

We would also like to, again, draw the Council's attention to the continued arbitrary detention of Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov; three OSCE officials who were arbitrarily detained by the Russian Federation and convicted on trumped-up charges in so-called legal proceedings.[AB6.1]

We call on the Russian Federation to release them immediately and unconditionally. Their release must remain a top priority for this Organization and for every Chairpersonship, until they are free.

Thank you, Mister Chair.