



STATEMENT ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Ellen Svendsen at the Permanent Council,

Vienna, 25 June 2026

Mr Chair,

Norway aligns with the statement made by the European Union but allow me to make three remarks in my national capacity.

First, Norway strongly condemns last week's attack on Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, a UNESCO world heritage site and symbol of Ukraine's history and identity. Cultural properties are not legitimate targets in an armed conflict. They belong to all of humanity and must be protected. We deplore the many civilians killed in these recent attacks, and we urge Russia to stop their attacks on cultural property, civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine and to end the war.

Second, we deplore all loss of innocent life in this war –everywhere. But whereas Ukraine is legitimately defending its territories and population from an illegal war of aggression that Russia started, Russia continues its war of aggression, in complete disregard of human life, including of its own Russian soldiers' and civilians' lives. Moscow can choose diplomacy, but consistently chooses war, while falsely blaming NATO and Europe for escalatory behaviour. We continue to call upon Russia to take genuine steps towards peace.

Third, we often hear in this room from Russia that we ignore the apparent well-being of the people of Crimea, Luhansk, Donetsk, parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, which, following the illegal invasions in 2014 and 2022, have been forcibly annexed and occupied by the Russian Federation.

Numerous credible reports again and again show that the Russian occupation has been accompanied by grave and systematic abuses against Ukrainian civilians in these areas. That includes the suppression of political and civil liberties, silencing independent media, forcing the adoption of Russian passports, and the deportation, indoctrination and militarization of Ukrainian children.

As a result, the lives of civilians in Russian-occupied areas are defined by fear and repression, and the constant erosion of fundamental rights. Far from constituting isolated incidents or legal violations, such acts point to a deliberate and coordinated strategy of intimidation, suppression, and social control. These realities illuminate the true nature of life under Russian control.

The Russian Federation acts in breach of international law, international humanitarian law, the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. Every single day. The international community must act collectively to ensure that aggression is not rewarded, and that sovereignty cannot be overruled by force.

We call upon Russia to immediate release the three OSCE colleagues Vadym Golda, Maxim Pretrov and Dmytro Shabanov.

Thank you.