



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

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

The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

1571st MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

2 July 2026

Mister Chair,

Let me start by expressing our deep dismay at Russia's latest drone and missile strikes on Kyiv which reportedly damaged or destroyed over 20 residential and civilian buildings, injured dozens of civilians, and killed at least thirteen. We condemn this attack in the strongest possible terms and reaffirm our strong support to Ukraine and its legitimate self defense.

On June 26th we marked the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The prohibition of torture is a peremptory norm of international law. It is non-derogable and cannot be suspended in any situation – not in times of emergency, nor in conflict, nor during war. It is a rule enshrined in the Convention Against Torture, and the Geneva Conventions, but also part of customary law that binds all nations even if they have signed no treaties.

OSCE participating States have collectively committed to the prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and have repeatedly agreed commitments on treatment of persons in detention including in Vienna in 1989, at Copenhagen in 1990, Moscow in 1991, Brussels in 2006, Helsinki in 2008, Belgrade in 2015 and Tirana in 2020.

In this context, Canada continues to be deeply alarmed by continued credible reports of the the systematic use of torture and mistreatment by Russia against Ukrainian civilian detainees and prisoners of war. We have heard this from ODIHR, from Moscow Mechanism experts, from the OHCHR, from the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, and from civil society.

At this week's Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, we again heard extensive testimony from witnesses and survivors of terrible mistreatment at the hands of Russian authorities. Ukrainian POWs and civilian detainees alike have been deprived of adequate food and medical care and denied contact with family members for prolonged periods of time. They have been subjected to beatings, sexual violence, electric shocks, degrading treatment, and other forms of torture and mistreatment. And then they have been convicted in sham trials based on forced confessions. All of these are violations of international law.

Among those subject to this abhorrent treatment are our OSCE colleagues arbitrarily detained by the Russian Federation since 2022. Dmytro Shabanov and Maksym Petrov are reported to have been tortured by interrogators. Dmytro Shabanov is reported to have been beaten during interrogations until he lost consciousness.

We call on the Russian Federation to uphold its international humanitarian law and international human rights law obligations, as they committed to do in Helsinki in 1975. We recall that the torture or inhumane treatment of protected persons is a grave breach of the Geneva Convention and can constitute a war crime, and that torture - when it is committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population – can be a crime against humanity.

We therefore call upon the Russian Federation to end the mistreatment of POWs and detainees and to immediately and unconditionally release all unlawfully detained Ukrainian civilians, including Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov.

Mister Chair,

Canada condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression against Ukraine, which has been ongoing since 2014 and constitutes a violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, and runs counter to the Helsinki Final Act.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders

The Russian Federation is responsible for starting this war of aggression and for its devastating consequences. The immense human suffering and civilian casualties, including in Russia, are a direct result of this unilateral decision.

We call on the Russian Federation to ensure the safe return of thousands of Ukrainian children unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred from Ukraine or within its temporarily occupied territories. We reaffirm our commitment to leading international efforts to facilitate their return and reunification with their families and communities through the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children.

We remain committed to ensuring accountability for the crime of aggression and other violations of international law committed by the Russian Federation, and to supporting relevant international investigative and judicial mechanisms in doing so.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

We call upon the Russian Federation to cease its aggression immediately, to withdraw all its armed forces, proxies and military equipment from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, and to engage in good-faith diplomatic efforts consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the Helsinki Final Act.