



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE

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

1576th special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

Agenda Item 1, "The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine"

(24 August 2026)

Mr Chairperson,

To begin, allow me to express Ukraine's gratitude to the Swiss OSCE Chairpersonship for convening this special meeting of the Permanent Council and its opening remarks.

Indeed, today is a special day for Ukraine, its Independence Day. Thirty-five years ago, the Ukrainians restored their statehood, regained their freedom, and reaffirmed their inherent right to decide their own future freely.

From the very beginning, Ukraine's statehood has been founded on the principles of respect for others states, respect for international law, and a commitment to democracy and reforms. These are the very principles that lie at the heart of the Helsinki Final Act, and to which all participating States have committed themselves.

All but one.

Russia has not only proved unable to accept Ukraine's independence and sovereignty, but has taken every possible measure to destroy them.

For more than 12 years now, the Russian Federation, driven by chauvinism, disregard for international law, and an obsession with neo-imperial ambitions, has continued to kill innocent people, and raze entire cities to rubble. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has now lasted for more than 4,500 days - longer than the two world wars combined.

The United Nations has verified that, since the start of the full-scale military invasion alone, almost 17,000 civilians have been killed, and more than 51,000 wounded. It is obvious that real number are higher. Yet, for the Kremlin, these terrible numbers are nothing more than a price tag, it is willing to pay for what it desires most: the destruction of Ukraine as an independent nation.

Nothing illustrates this more clearly than Russia's consistent refusal to stop the hostilities, end the bloodshed, and engage in genuine negotiations, based on international law.

Despite all diplomatic efforts by the international community, the Kremlin has repeatedly demonstrated that it has no genuine intention of stopping the war. Instead, it continues its unrestricted campaign of terror against civilians.

Esteemed colleagues,

Just last week, on 20 August, the aggressor state launched one of its most brutal attacks against Ukraine to date. Over the course of the day, Russian forces carried out three waves of missile and drone attacks, with Kyiv and the region as the main target. At least 16 people were killed in Kyiv, and 42 were wounded. A school, a children's hospital, residential buildings, numerous civilian infrastructure facilities, and warehouses were destroyed or severely damaged.

Already next day, on 21 August, Russia carried out yet another coward double tap strike against a shopping centre in Kryvyi Rih, killing at least 16 people and injuring more than 140 others, including 23 children.

The exceptional brutality of these attacks clearly demonstrates why, month after month, international community continues to record new highs in civilian casualties in Ukraine. According to the most recent update from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, in July 2026 alone, at least 437 civilians were killed and 2,610 injured. This is a 30 per cent increase compared with June 2026.

Let us not forget that such strikes are part of a wider pattern. What we are witnessing is not merely Russia's blind rage, but a genocidal, cold-blooded and calculated strategy aimed directly at the civilian population.

This strategy also includes premeditated strikes against first responders and humanitarian missions, a widespread campaign of terror against the population in the occupied territory, the deliberate targeting of cultural objects, and the systematic spread of war propaganda, including here, at the Permanent Council.

No less illustrative are Russia's ongoing attempts to tighten its grip on the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine. The Russian Federation is seeking to use the sham electoral process as yet another tool to legitimise its attempted illegal annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory. Ukraine commends the unequivocal position of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, expressed in their joint statement of 6 August 2026, condemning these so-called "elections". We reiterate that none of the Russian so-called "voting" organised in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine will have any legal effect.

Mr Chairperson,

The war continues unabated not because of a lack of dialogue or venues for negotiations, but because of a premeditated Russian calculation, coupled with the Moscow's inability to abandon its imperial course. The Kremlin's regime does not conceal their intentions. They state them openly: Ukraine must surrender, or it will be destroyed.

Driven by a belief in its own impunity, Russia continues to escalate tensions, and test the boundaries of international security, including by probing the borders of other states. The recent violations of Moldovan and Romanian airspace by drones, as well as the naval drone incident in the Black Sea, are just a few examples of this dangerous pattern.

Esteemed colleagues,

As Ukraine marks 35th anniversary of the restoration of its independence, once again under a missile barrage, we call on all States and international organisations to take decisive collective action to stop this war on terms of UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

As President Zelenskyy said in his today's address: "We must be united and push the Russians through to the end. Ukraine, Europe, America, the world".

We urge our partners to take concrete steps to strengthen Ukraine's air defence and increase the cost to Moscow of prolonging its war of aggression. Air defence systems should not remain in warehouses while Ukrainian cities are under daily attack. Every interceptor saves lives, and they are needed now. Every air-defence missile used to intercept a Russian weapon of destruction means a life saved.

We also urge our partners to increase sanctions pressure and cripple Russia's ability to manufacture its instruments of terror.

Concrete steps to intensify pressure on Russia, while further strengthening support for Ukraine, is the only possible way forward. Our collective response must be stronger than Russia's attempts to test our unity and resolve. The security and stability of the entire region are at stake. Safeguarding them is, without any doubt, a core responsibility of the OSCE. We still believe, it will rise up to the challenge.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.