



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine
on the 85th Anniversary of the Babyn Yar Tragedy**

as delivered by Yurii Vitrenko, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1579th meeting of the Permanent Council,
01 October 2026

Mr. Chairperson,

Eighty-five years ago, on 29 and 30 September 1941, Nazi German SS and police units and their auxiliaries murdered 33,771 Jews at Babyn Yar in Kyiv in just two days. Men, women, children and elderly people were driven to the ravine, stripped, and shot.

The killing did not stop there. During the Nazi occupation, Babyn Yar became an execution site for tens of thousands more victims - Jews, Roma, Soviet prisoners of war, patients of the psychiatric hospital, Ukrainian civilians and others. Around 100,000 people are estimated to have been murdered there. Babyn Yar became one of the defining symbols of the Holocaust by bullets in Europe.

Independent Ukraine has made remembrance of Babyn Yar a matter of state responsibility - restoring names, preserving testimony and ensuring that historical truth is passed to future generations.

Mr. Chairperson,

This anniversary is marked while Ukraine is again defending its people and its capital from war. On 1 March 2022, during the first days of Russia's full-scale invasion, a Russian strike hit Kyiv's television tower next to Babyn Yar and killed five civilians. This year, organizers of the anniversary commemorations have had to designate nearby shelters in case of air-raid alerts. Eighty-five years after the massacre, those coming to Babyn Yar to honour victims of Nazi terror must again know where to seek shelter from an attack on Kyiv.

We do not collapse different historical crimes into one another. Yet memory matters only if it sharpens responsibility in the present. Babyn Yar warns where hatred, dehumanization, propaganda and impunity can lead.

This is why the OSCE's own commitments matter. In the 2004 Berlin Declaration, participating States undertook to promote Holocaust remembrance and education and to combat anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred and intolerance. These are not ceremonial commitments; they are part of the human dimension of our common security.

Ukraine is marking the 85th anniversary through a broad programme of remembrance, education and research. On 29 September, an interreligious prayer took place at the Menorah memorial with religious leaders, Jewish community representatives, state authorities and civil society. Next week, the programme will continue in Kyiv: on 5 October, the National Historical and Memorial Reserve "Babyn Yar" and Research Centre Ukraine / Max Weber Foundation will launch a pilot digital archive; on 6 October, solemn commemorative events will be held at the Menorah memorial and the "Living Memory" Exhibition Centre; and on 7 October, the volume "War and Occupation. Germany and Ukraine in 1939-1945" will be presented and discussed.

These are not simply commemoration events. They protect historical truth from oblivion, distortion and manipulation by preserving documents, restoring names and transmitting memory to the next generation.

We are grateful to all international partners, Jewish and Roma communities, religious leaders, scholars, educators and civil society representatives who contribute to this work of remembrance.

Let us honour the victims of Babyn Yar not only with silence, but with responsibility: to defend human dignity, resist anti-Semitism, racism and all forms of dehumanization, and ensure that mass crimes are neither forgotten nor met with impunity.

May the memory of the victims be eternal.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.