



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine in response to the address by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Ms Mirjana Spoljaric

As delivered by Ms Viktoriya Kuvshynnykova, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna

1580th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

(8 October 2026)

Mr Chairperson,

The delegation of Ukraine would like to thank ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric for her participation at today's meeting and meaningful remarks.

The ICRC continues to play an important role in humanitarian response in Ukraine, for which we are grateful. It's a welcome fact that ICRC operation in Ukraine is among its largest operations in the world.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has caused one of the largest humanitarian and displacement crises on record.

Alarmingly, Russia's systematic and massive strikes against Ukraine's critical infrastructure, including energy generation facilities, have worsened the humanitarian situation. Russia continues its attempts to leave millions of people without heat, water and electricity during harsh winter season. As a result, Ukraine faces its most challenging winter since 2022 and we look forward to ICRC continued active humanitarian action, particularly winterization assistance, and support for recovery efforts. We believe that the most vulnerable internally displaced persons and affected communities, particularly in the frontline regions of Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk, should be the focus of response.

It is also important, Madam President, that you get first-hand knowledge of the difficult humanitarian situation in Ukraine and our efforts to respect and uphold IHL.

Our immediate concern is addressing urgent humanitarian needs of population living in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, particularly in areas where the humanitarian situation has become critical.

As we speak, thousands of civilians in the temporarily occupied part of the Kherson region – in Oleshky, Hola Prystan and neighbouring communities – remain trapped without sufficient food, medicine or a safe way out.

Ukraine is doing everything possible to provide humanitarian relief there by airlift. We also appreciate the ICRC's ongoing efforts to reach and evacuate affected persons. In this regard, we demand that Russia, as occupying power, comply with its

obligations under international humanitarian law and provide safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to the affected population.

Madam President,

Our pressing concern remains the fate of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians held by the Russian Federation. Those who return from Russian captivity consistently describe torture, ill-treatment and inhumane conditions of detention. Their accounts are consistent with the findings of independent international monitors, including the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and ODIHR. The UN has also documented summary executions of Ukrainian POWs.

Last month the ICRC confirmed that it has been denied access to Ukrainian prisoners of war in Russian detention since 2024. For two years, thousands of persons have remained in limbo, deprived of protections afforded by the Geneva Conventions. The responsibility for this rests with Russia, which is obliged under the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions to grant such access.

Ukraine, for its part, provides the ICRC with information on prisoners of war in its custody and access to places of internment. We urge Russia to implement its IHL obligations and do the same.

We also encourage the ICRC to continue its efforts towards ensuring full, regular and confidential access to all Ukrainian POWs and civilian detainees held by Russia.

Madam President,

Humanitarian operations in Ukraine are increasingly in the crosshairs. Russia troops have been regularly targeting transport, assets and aid warehouses of United Nations and Red Cross organizations. Attacks that deliberately threaten safety and security of humanitarian personnel must stop; perpetrators must be held accountable. A clear and timely ICRC voice in defence of humanitarian workers is crucial.

Ukraine welcomes ICRC role in strengthening respect for and adherence to international humanitarian law, including through the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to IHL. Ukraine contributed to achieving the goals of the Global Initiative on all its seven workstreams and looks forward to the High-Level Conference on Humanity in War and its outcome documents.

Madam President, thank you once again for your presence today and for the work of the ICRC.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.