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ENGLISH only

Delegation of Canada to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada auprès de l'OSCE

STATEMENT BY KATHRYN POWERS, CHARGÉE D'AFFAIRES UNDER AGENDA ITEM:

The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

1584th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

5 November 2026

Mr. Chair,

Russia's war of aggression is rooted in a refusal to accept Ukraine's sovereign right to shape a future for itself independently of Moscow.

The Russian Federation asks that Ukraine accept limits to its own sovereignty to satisfy Moscow's security requirements. In other words, Russia seeks to turn a right enshrined in international law into a privilege to be granted and revoked at Moscow's whim.

But a state's exercise of its sovereign rights is not a legitimate security grievance.

The Helsinki Final Act is clear on this: participating States will – quote - "refrain from any manifestation of force for the purpose of inducing another participating State to renounce the full exercise of its sovereign rights".

Russia's invasion of Ukraine violates international law. It was unprovoked and remains unjustifiable.

Mr. Chair,

Russia presents its war of choice as a response to threats to its security, but the observable consequences of its military campaign over the last four plus years have shattered Ukraine's security, and have had devastating consequences for civilians, from children to the elderly and everyone in between.

We recall many incidents examined by the Commission or others like the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which have reported findings that included an absence of apparent military presence at or near struck sites, failures to verify that targets were military objectives, and/or failures to take feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm.

Civilian suffering in Ukraine has gone far beyond what should ever be accepted as an ordinary consequence of war.

This past week alone, Russian forces struck a humanitarian aid distribution site and shelter in the Zaporizhzhia region, reportedly killing at least 40 civilians and leaving many missing under the rubble. Further strikes reportedly killed first responders who had come to rescue the victims. Russia has also launched massive waves of drones and missiles across Ukraine, damaging civilian infrastructure, including a strike on a hospital in Kharkiv that injured dozens of patients and medical staff.

Canada condemns these strikes, and we express our sincere condolences to Ukraine for this loss of innocent life.

These incidents form part of a pattern this Council has witnessed since 2022. The Russian Federation bears responsibility for its military actions and for ensuring that its forces comply with international humanitarian law.

Mr. Chair,

The way that this war is conducted matters, but the way in which it ends matters as well.

It matters first and foremost for Ukraine, but it also matters to Canada and the entire OSCE region.

Mr. Chair,

Last week, Canada released our National Security Strategy, a plan to strengthen the full range of our national capabilities, including in areas where we face shared challenges with Allies and partners.

An important part of this effort will involve intensifying our cooperation and support for Ukraine.

Canada has pledged to continue supporting Ukraine as a free, sovereign, and democratic country through military, economic, financial, and diplomatic assistance. We will continue working together to address shared challenges, including cyber defence, counter-drone and electronic warfare capabilities, and efforts to counter hybrid threats and foreign information manipulation.

Mr. Chair,

Canada does not seek confrontation. Our history is one of building security through diplomacy, cooperation, and strong partnerships. We will continue to engage constructively on that basis, but we will also be clear-eyed about the challenges we face. Lasting peace cannot be built on the denial of other nations' sovereignty. It must rest on respect for all states to determine their own future.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.