

1535th Meeting of the Permanent Council
25 September 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chair

Allow me first to emphasise that I am taking the floor in national capacity.

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Nordic Baltic states; Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country Denmark.

1. I want to begin this statement by thanking our three Moscow Mechanism experts, Prof. Dr. Veronika Bílková, Professor Hervé Ascensio, and Professor Mark Klamberg, for providing us with another important – although grim - chapter in the continuing documentation of the harsh realities of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, more specifically violations and abuses of human rights and violations of International Humanitarian Law related to the treatment of Ukrainian Prisoners Of War by the Russian Federation.
2. The report establishes how more than 13,000 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces have been detained by the Russian Federation under conditions that frequently fall below international standards with denial of fair trial guarantees, effective legal representation and severely restricted communication with families and access of the ICRC.
3. Further, the report crucially points to a systematic approach by the Russian Federation of denying members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces the status of Prisoner of War. Instead designating them as "*persons detained for countering the special military operation*", thereby distorting their legal rights and combatant immunity and paving the way for criminal charges for their mere participation in hostilities, *de facto* depriving them of protection granted by the Geneva Convention III and Additional Protocol I.

4. The report also documents a high number of arbitrary killings and executions attributable to the Russian Federation – occurring both on the battlefield and in detention. For those detained, the report details widespread and systematic torture and ill-treatment, including beatings, electric shocks, mock executions and sexual violence.
5. Mr. Chair, the mission finds that the Russian Federation has engaged in widespread and systematic violations of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law in its treatment of Ukrainian Prisoners of War and that these violations may constitute war crimes and, in some cases, arguably, crimes against humanity. We strongly condemn these violations and, in line with the recommendations of the report, we call on the Russian Federation to immediately recognise that members of the Ukrainian armed forces detained qualify as Prisoners of War, cease arbitrary executions and all forms of torture or ill-treatment against Ukrainian Prisoners of War, ensure humane detention conditions and grant the ICRC full and unfettered access to all detention facilities.
6. Further, the mission underscores the urgent need for accountability, stressing that it must also encompass remedies and reparations for victims as guaranteed under international law – including compensation, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition.
7. This is the fifth Moscow Mechanism Report to document violations and abuses of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law, including what may constitute war crimes and in some cases crimes against Humanity, committed by the Russian Federation during its war of aggression against Ukraine. Each of these reports point to a systematic and widespread nature of these crimes.

8. The Russian response to these findings has also been consistent – to deny and deflect rather than engaging with the substance. These reports are the product of a procedure established and agreed by all OSCE participating States, with independent experts chosen for their expertise and professional integrity. Their work will remain relevant for as long as the documented violations continue to take place and it is instrumental to end impunity.
9. The OSCE is built on shared principles and commitments that we have committed to not only uphold but also defend. With this comes a responsibility to continue to speak out against those who violate our shared commitments. We will remain steadfast and united, fighting injustice wherever it may take root, and we will continue to make use of all tools at our disposal to do so.