



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

## **Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1381<sup>st</sup> meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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**Mr. Chairperson,**

I would like to thank you once again for convening a special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council earlier this week. We have to keep a special focus on Russia's missile or terrorist attacks.

On the night of the very same day, after the PC special meeting was adjourned, an air alert was announced over almost the entire territory of Ukraine, including Kyiv.

There is no military logic in such attacks. However, these actions have terrorist logic aimed to intimidate the population through indiscriminate and mass killing of civilians – in violation of the norms of international humanitarian law and normal human morality.

Over the last two days, Khmelnytskyi region, Sumy region, the Dnipropetrovsk region, Mykolaiv and the region were hit by the Russians.

Just yesterday Russian missiles wiped out the Palace of Culture in Mykolaiv which was home to numerous cultural events.

At the same time, the Russian invaders use helicopters, tanks, mortars, tube and rocket artillery to terrorize the population of the Kharkiv region. Likewise, in the Zaporizhzhia region shelling from mortars, tube and rocket artillery continues along the contact line.

Indiscriminate shelling of Sloviansk and Bakhmut continues as the Russian command is switching to the preparation of an offensive in the Donetsk region, or to be more precise, for razing yet another city to the ground.

Yesterday the fighting was still ongoing nearby the Bilohorivka and Verkhokamianske settlements, in the Luhansk region. It is despite what was reported by Russian Minister Shoigu earlier to his leader and what then was declared by the Russian president as the occupation of the Luhansk region.

These hasty announcements by Moscow show clearly how the Russian leadership is anxious to declare any tactical advance as their victory.

Especially, after the Russian army lost Zmiinyi Island to Ukraine, the Kremlin needs this kind of quote-unquote "successes" to maintain anti-Ukrainian hysteria in the Russian society and, therefore, to maintain a level of wide support for the continuation of the war, as was proudly stated by the Russian delegation at the last meeting.

Let me now turn to the newly occupied territories where the Russian side is trying to consolidate its control.

This week, Moscow has installed a puppet administration in the Kherson region, or as they call it, the so-called "government". The interesting fact is that this structure

is headed by Sergei Yeliseyev, an FSB official and until recent past the deputy head of government in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

He is supported by two Russian citizens - Vladimir Bespalov, also from the Kaliningrad region, and Mykhail Rodikov, from the Moscow region.

I think, it is not so wise for Russia to deprive the Kaliningrad and Moscow regions of such valuable assets.

But again, such a composition and engaging Russian citizens clearly display how weak is Russia in the region having no support from the local population.

At the same time, placing the FSB agent at the top of the occupation administration means that Russia is preparing for the intensification of repression in the region, including filtration practices.

As it was recently stated by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, the so-called "filtration" process of civilians involves arbitrary determinations, intimidation and humiliation, which may amount to ill-treatment, as well as reported instances of family separation and threats to the right to private life.

As a local community public figure in Kherson said to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission, "the occupiers consider everyone who has a Diia application in their smartphones as saboteurs". Actually, any suspicion could turn into illegal detention and tortures. This is a grim reality under the occupation.

Active or former public officials of local authorities, human rights defenders and civil society activists, journalists, religious workers, and retired servicemen of the Ukrainian armed forces are facing incalculable risks to be illegally detained and even tortured to the death.

And what does it mean to be apprehended by the Russian troops? The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine describes one emblematic case about a member of a village council in Kherson region who was detained twice, in mid-March and early April.

The victim was tortured and faced threats of killing and sexual violence against himself and his family members. The perpetrators tried to extract information regarding pro-Ukrainian activists, current and former members of the Ukrainian armed forces and their families who remained in the village. He was also pressured to cooperate with the Russian armed forces while continuing his public official activities.

During the second incident, the perpetrators tied the victim's hands, put a noose on his neck while he stood on the floor and kicked at his legs and genitals.

The national staff of the OSCE SMM is facing the same destiny.

This is how the invaders behave in the occupied territories.

Furthermore, as confirmed by the OHCHR, the occupation of large parts of Kherson oblast by the Russian armed forces since early March 2022 has had an adverse effect on human rights defenders who were based in Kherson but worked on human rights issues in Crimea.

In this regard, an interesting fact was highlighted in a new report published by the UN Secretary General on human rights violations in occupied Crimea.

It was established that in the run up to the all-out war against Ukraine, there was more than a 10-fold increase in arbitrary arrests on the occupied peninsula. Indeed, massive detention in the occupied Crimea, which was by the way discussed in this room last autumn, was a clear indicator for early warning actions.

In this regard, we call upon the OSCE and its autonomous institutions to spare no efforts but to intensify the documentation, including by elaborating additional instruments for a remote monitoring, of human rights and IHL violations in the occupied areas, including Crimea.

The issue of forced deportation of the Ukrainian citizens from the occupied territories to Russia should be also a part of these efforts. It is important to trace those deported people in Russia to simplify their return to Ukraine.

We also welcome the adoption by the OSCE PA of the resolution "The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and its people, and its threat to security across the OSCE region". And I would like to draw attention to its recommendations, especially to the call to amend the Assembly's Rules of Procedure so that in the case of a violation of territorial integrity, the credentials of the national parliamentary delegation of the State committing the violation shall be challenged. The issue of suspension deserves to be addressed also at the inter-governmental track.

**Distinguished colleagues,**

The Russian leadership and diplomats continue to repeat that the war is going "according to the plan".

The reality proves the opposite. The aggressive policy of Vladimir Putin has already started to bring problems to Russia itself. This week the State Duma has made the first step to passing laws allowing to place the Russian economy on war footing.

Would the Russian diplomats be happy to see at home a militarized country where their fellow citizens are compelled to work overtime for the military? Not a promising future, but rather a looming Soviet past with a shortage of goods and isolation.

And it is just a result of the wish of their leader to conquer a neighbouring country.

It clearly means that Moscow is running out of resources. And it is a good argument for us to further enhance sanctions. This would effectively arrest the Kremlin's capacities to feed its war machine in Ukraine.

And these developments display that Russia's weapons do not make its people great. But Russian leadership's focus on war makes its people poorer.

The Kremlin has forgotten that the key duty of those in power is not conducting aggressive wars but ensuring people's welfare and respecting human rights.

However, the wide-spread looting of Ukrainian houses during the Russian invasion shows not only a low morality but also abject poverty in the Russian regions, while Russia's propaganda is claiming to be a "big power".

Here I cannot but quote Peter Tolstoy, a head of the Russian delegation to the OSCE PA. And I quote. "Those who believe in the future of the 5G, you must understand that a third of the population [in Russia] has their toilets outside. Let's do this first. And then 5G". But I would like to rephrase him. First, you need to stop the war and start to focus on solving your internal problems.

And I am wondering. What is the cost of every missile fired at Ukraine? How many schools can be built in Russia's depressed regions? Or hospitals? Or kilometres of roads?

To conclude, I would like to repeat that there is only one path for the Russian people to stop paying for geopolitical aberrations of the Kremlin.

To that end, Russia has to withdraw its troops, restore Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and other neighbouring countries, and, of course, assume the responsibility for all crimes committed against the Ukrainian people as well as to provide assurance of non-repetition of the aggression and reparation to the victims and return to the tenets of international law.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.**