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United Kingdom
Delegation to the
OSCE

United Kingdom statement

by the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

29th OSCE Ministerial Council

1st December 2022

AS DELIVERED

1. Thank you, Foreign Minister Rau.
2. The tragic events of this year have shown the enduring value of the OSCE as a forum for dialogue, transparency, and confidence-building. Everything the OSCE does is based on the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the non-use of force. These are the foundation stones of peace in our continent.
3. Last year in Stockholm, the UK and many other countries warned Russia that any attack on Ukraine would be a 'strategic mistake'. And yet, on 24 February, Russia – with the support of Belarus – invaded Ukraine.

4. Our Ukrainian friends fought back with courage and tenacity, defeating Russian forces at the gates of Kyiv, repelling them from Kharkiv, and now expelling the aggressor from Kherson. Is there anyone anywhere – even in the abodes of the guilty – who would still doubt that Russia’s aggression was a strategic mistake as well as a crime?

5. The reports of the Moscow Mechanism have detailed the atrocities of Russia’s armed forces in Ukraine, including torture, executing civilians, unlawful detention and enforced disappearances, and countless other breaches of international humanitarian law.

6. No wonder that Russia tried to conceal these outrages, including by blocking the mandate renewal of the OSCE’s Border Observer Mission and the Special Monitoring Mission, by frustrating the work of OSCE human rights institutions, and stopping civil society meetings with all 57 states. The UK supports the continued OSCE presence in Ukraine and welcomes the efforts to ensure this continues. We commend the work of OSCE staff throughout the whole OSCE region who have been working in challenging circumstances this past year.

7. This disaster will only end when Russia halts its barbaric war and withdraws its forces fully and unconditionally from the territory of Ukraine. Until that day comes, the UK will stand with Ukraine and provide humanitarian, economic, diplomatic and military support until our friends prevail – as they inevitably will - and their brave country is free once more.