



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1465th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
14 March 2024

Madam Chairperson,

As vladimir putin is preparing to re-occupy the seat of the president of the russian federation next Sunday, russia continues to attack Ukrainian peaceful cities.

Only on Tuesday russia attacked Myrnohrad, Sumy and Kryvyi Rih.

At least 6 people were killed, and more than 50, including children were injured.

And if one translates the name of "Myrnohrad" in English, it will be "the city of peace". russia has brought the war to this and other cities of Ukraine.

Just in the course of the last week Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Chernihiv, Odesa, Zaporizhzhia regions were under russia's fire.

Every strike resulted into civilian casualties.

These attacks on Ukraine testify to conclusions made by PACE in its resolution 2519 (2023), I quote, "the growing brutality of repression against internal opponents and the war of aggression against Ukraine show that the cost of the lack of checks and balances in the russian federation is indeed becoming ever higher".

This cost already includes thousands of killed; millions of displaced; hundreds of destroyed cities and communities; deported children and detained civilians, including the OSCE officials.

And this cost continues to grow.

PACE goes even further by concluding that "the overwhelming power of the president [...] has turned the russian federation into a de facto dictatorship".

For years the kremlin authorities have systematically prepared russia for this by securing its unlimited powers and impunity.

And today the kremlin freely uses a repressive law to silence any dissenting voice.

While killing of opposition leaders was never a taboo for moscow.

Furthermore, vladimir putin has turned the russian constitution into his obedient instrument.

He turns to it every time he wants to consolidate his regime and redraw borders in Europe by force.

As it happened with russia's previous attempts to annex Ukraine's territories.

And ongoing illegal presidential campaign especially in the occupied territories is another wake-up call for the international community, including the OSCE.

Let's be honest, this electoral farce will be presented as an endorsement of the war and occupation.

This will follow with new crimes. We cannot allow this to happen.

That's why this new violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty must not be left unaddressed.

Given the OSCE's mandate to work for democracy and human rights in our region, we call upon the Organization to condemn these illegitimate elections.

Dear colleagues,

Let me also address a few aspects of russia's ongoing disinformation campaign.

Last time the kremlin's envoys blamed all of us for the "lack of true courage" to seek a diplomatic solution on the European continent.

But it was the russian president who intentionally lied to European leaders that he had no plans to attack Ukraine just days before the invasion.

And it was russian diplomats who rejected an initiative to start a renewed dialogue on European security kindly suggested by the Polish CIO and strongly supported by other OSCE participating States.

russia did so, as they were confident that Kyiv would be seized in three days and russian tanks would be met with flowers in Ukraine. Nothing came true.

And, after facing Ukraine's resistance and resolve of the pro-Ukrainian coalition, it is clear why russia would be happy to shift responsibility and get diplomatically what they failed to achieve militarily.

It is up to russia to demonstrate true courage and recognize its responsibility for ongoing war.

The kremlin's envoys also underlined that wars end with talks.

However, they missed one point. Some wars end with special tribunals as well. This one would not be an exception for the russian leadership.

At the same time, Ukraine as no one else wants peace.

That's why Ukraine together with partners is preparing for a Global Peace Summit to develop concrete plans on how to restore a just peace.

And if the kremlin is sincerely interested in peace, it can just order its troops to withdraw from Ukraine, beyond our internationally recognized borders.

By one decision. To be made by one man. As simple as it is.

But what we can expect from the kremlin's envoys later today would be new accusations and manipulations.

To save us from that, I would like to bring to the attention of the esteemed colleagues one quote.

While making a smoking screen about russia's commitment to talks, yesterday in his interview vladimir putin said the following: "It would be ridiculous for us to start negotiating with Ukraine just because it is running out of ammunition".

This is all we should remember about russia's attitude to diplomacy and peace.

This testifies that russia keeps its watch for an opportunity to attack Ukraine.

This proves time and again that russia has not changed its goals - to destroy Ukraine's statehood and subjugate Ukrainians. Full stop.

And as the voices of "invincible russia" are heard again, it is important to remember lessons of the past.

Dunkirk of May-June of 1940 is one of such examples.

It was really the darkest hour for a country standing against a brutal aggressor. With no immediate prospect for help. With Nazi and Soviet regimes dividing Europe.

And can one oppose that all possible calculations of realists of that time were indicating the need to raise the white flag and seek for a compromise with the aggressor?

Instead of that, we remember those days for one of the bravest decisions to continue the fight.

We remember it for these words: “[...] we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender...” End of quote.

Not least because of that belief in a right cause, tyranny was defeated and freedom prevailed in the end.

Likewise, today the russian dictatorship can be still stopped along the frontline running from the Kharkiv region to the Kherson region and forced to retreat beyond Ukraine’s borders.

This depends on a number of artillery shells and missiles available for Ukraine.

As simple as it is.

This would be the best investment to European future, security and prosperity.

Today is a time for strong decisions and responsible leadership.

As Minister Kuleba said, and I quote, “Weak decisions – more war. Strong decisions – end of war [...] When Ukraine has everything it needs, we shoot down russian planes, we liberate our territories, we sink russian ships, we prevail. It is not a matter of “invincible russia”. It is only a matter of availability of everything that Ukraine needs to Ukrainian soldiers.”

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.