



Delegation of Canada
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Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1467th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 April 2024

Madam Chair,

We recently marked two years since Ukraine's liberation of Bucha, Irpin and other areas around Kyiv. And we recall somberly the trail of death and destruction, and streets lined with dead bodies of civilians, that came out as Russian troops withdrew.

These images left the world shocked at the realization of the extent of the brutality with which Russia is waging its aggression against Ukraine, at the seeming absence of any moral or legal constraints in the treatment of civilians, and at the absence of any scruples in pointing the finger at others.

This was also the time that we bore witness to the images of injured and heavily pregnant women being evacuated from a bombed maternity hospital in Mariupol, and the relentless bombardment of said city.

It is difficult to bear witness to the facts of Russia's aggression. It is nearly impossible to imagine what it must be like for those who have lived it for 777 days.

Russia has claimed – in this chamber and elsewhere – that both Bucha and the Mariupol maternity hospital bombing were staged. They would like to convince us that Ukraine entertaining the world whilst fighting an existential war is a plausible explanation for the atrocities committed there.

We have of course heard Russia blaming other parties for staging events elsewhere as well, in Syria for example.

Yet the common denominator is always Russia trying to absolve itself, or its allies, of wrongdoing.

We express our sincere condolences to the people of Ukraine, and the Ukrainian delegation, on the somber second anniversary of the liberation of Bucha. We renew our commitment to accountability for crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine and will continue supporting mechanisms and initiatives to this effect, as we have agreed to in the political declaration at the recent Restoring Justice for Ukraine conference which was held in The Hague earlier this month.

Madam Chair,

In late March, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released its latest report. OHCHR received reports of the apparent execution of at least 32 recently captured Ukrainian POWs in 12 separate incidents. OHCHR verified three of these incidents in which Russian servicemen executed seven Ukrainian servicemen hors de combat.

We firmly condemn the Russian Federation's treatment of Prisoners of War.

Prisoners of War are protected under international humanitarian law, and enjoy rights enshrined in the Third Geneva Convention. We call on Russia to treat all detainees in accordance with international humanitarian law, including to allow for regular access by the ICRC to detainees and to their places of detention, to facilitate communication with their families, and to provide medical assistance. These are basic minimum guarantees of protection under international humanitarian law.

Canada, together with Norway and Ukraine, continue to advance the work of Working Group Four of Ukraine's 10-point Peace Formula. The next meeting of the Working Group will take place tomorrow, where we will table Terms of Reference and Concept Note for this line of effort, and invite States to join the core group, which will be the Working Group's decision-making body.

Madam Chair,

Canada is concerned by the growing number of double-tap strikes in Ukraine. In the last Permanent Council meeting before the recess, we spoke about Russia's double-tap strike on Odesa on March 15, which killed at least 16 people including a paramedic and an emergency service worker. It injured over 50 other people.

On April 4th, Russia targeted a residential area in Kharkiv with another double-tap attack, killing five people, including three rescue workers who showed up at the scene after the first attack, only to be attacked themselves.

On April 5th yet another double-tap attack killed four people and injured over 20 in Zaporizhzhia. Residential and commercial buildings were damaged. When first responders and journalists arrived at the scene, another strike about 40 minutes later hit the same location, injuring two of the journalists.

These aren't isolated or new incidents. Double-tap strikes have been part of Russia's toolkit for some time, as we saw in Syria.

We call on Russia to cease targeting civilians and civilian infrastructures in Ukraine, including first responders.

Thank you, Madam Chair.