



United States Mission to the OSCE

Forum for Security Cooperation Closing Statement

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter
Vienna, December 13, 2023

Thank you, Madam Chair, Dear Jocelyn,

First of all, thanks to you and your team for the exceptional job of keeping the work of this Forum on track in spite of seemingly endless obstruction from one delegation. You deftly and diplomatically batted back Russia's personal and frankly nonsensical attacks. You did so in an elegant and respectful manner, even when Russia's delegates made unprofessional comments or attempted to usurp your authority as Chair.

Despite the Russian Federation's outrageous behavior, you successfully convened security dialogue discussions on issues that are important for all of us, such as Mine Action; International Humanitarian Law; Women, Peace, and Security; Mental Health; and Information Integrity. Unsurprisingly, Russia showed its disdain for International Humanitarian Law and Information Integrity by blocking both sessions, and more absurdly, the General Statements discussions as well. Undeterred, you and your team persevered so we could address these important topics. Unfortunately, it is a sad day indeed when one participating State publicly and even ostentatiously turns its back on International Humanitarian Law in the world's largest regional security organization.

As we saw in the lead up to the OSCE Ministerial Council in Skopje, Russia, with the help of Belarus, has attempted to dismantle European conventional arms control and undermine the effectiveness of the OSCE as a whole. Nevertheless, the other 55 participating States have found creative ways to keep this Organization functioning, and Canada has led the way at the FSC with a strong command of the rules of procedure and by holding side events to allow important matters to be discussed even when one participating State lodged baseless objections.

Most importantly, you have kept the focus of this Forum on the top security issue in the entire Euro-Atlantic region: Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Russia continues to double down on its disastrous war of choice, calling up recently yet another 170,000 men to be sacrificed for the imperialistic aims of an autocrat. The Kremlin continues to release dangerous criminals from prison to commit crimes in Ukraine, and then when they return from the battlefield, in Russia as well. As Chair, Canada has done an exceptional job ensuring that the FSC squarely addressed Russia's wanton disregard for human life, international law, and the international security order.

I would like to also commend both Bulgaria and Cyprus for their support for the Chair as members of the troika. We are pleased to welcome Croatia as the troika's newest member, and we look forward to Canada's continued leadership in keeping this forum focused on its core tasks.

###