



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY FIRST SECRETARY ANDRIJANA BESLIC
ON THE 90th ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLODOMOR GENOCIDE OF 1932 AND 1933
IN UKRAINE COMMITTED BY THE TOTALITARIAN STALIN'S REGIME
1452nd MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 November 2023

Madame Chair,

Holodomor Memorial Day is observed worldwide on the fourth Saturday in November. This year, it will fall on November 25 and mark ninety years since the Holodomor's end in 1933. Today, as the nearest opportunity to speak formally on this tragedy, we join Ukrainian communities around the world in remembering the millions of innocent victims who suffered or were killed during the Holodomor in 1932 and 1933.

Madam Chair,

Holodomor means death by hunger in Ukrainian. While it is impossible to determine the precise number of victims of the Ukrainian genocide, most estimates by scholars range from 3.5 to 10 million. It is estimated that approximately 28,000 people died per day at the height of the Holodomor in June of 1933. 31% of those who died were children under the age of 10. Those children, women, and men were killed because of the brutal policies and deliberate acts of the Soviet regime under Joseph Stalin. The Soviet regime starved millions of Ukrainians, stole their land and property, and seized their crops. The Soviet regime orchestrated this genocidal famine to impose total control over Ukraine, destroy the will of the people, and erase their identity as Ukrainians. In the face of such brutality, Ukrainians overcame the horror of the Holodomor and persevered. They demonstrated the resilience of their nation and ensured the survival of their culture, language, and identity. After almost 70 years of Soviet control and oppression, in 1991 Ukrainians won their independence and have been working tirelessly since then to create a free and democratic society.

Madam Chair,

Today, Ukraine's independence is under threat again as Russia tries to force its will onto its independent and sovereign neighbour. The Ukrainian people are again suffering from horrific actions dictated by decision-makers in the Kremlin. The Kremlin is once again trying to destroy the Ukrainian national identity and the Ukrainian people's aspirations for independence, just as it did under the Soviet regime in 1932 and 1933.

Russia's strategy in its war of aggression against Ukraine has tragic parallels with the policies of the Holodomor. Both campaigns relied on starvation and food insecurity as a weapon to attack Ukraine's very identity.

Madam Chair,

The Government of Ukraine recognized the Holodomor as an act of genocide in 2006. Thirty-three countries have so far formally recognized the Holodomor as a genocide. The Government of Canada recognized the Holodomor in May 2008 with an Act declaring the famine as “an act of genocide” and establishing a national Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day.

Madam Chair,

The world’s first monument to the victims of the Holodomor was erected in Edmonton, Canada, in 1983. On 19 October 2022, on the other side of the world, another Holodomor monument was dismantled by Russian forces in the illegally and temporarily occupied city of Mariupol. They claimed this was not a monument, but a symbol of “Ukrainian disinformation at the state level”. As we have seen in so many instances, the Russian Federation attempts to cover up the human suffering that it has inflicted, it attempts to suppress Ukraine’s lived history, and it attempts to deny extensively documented facts that don’t support its narrative. But no amount of cover ups, suppression or denial will exempt the Kremlin from its inhumane transgressions in Ukraine, past or present.

Thank you.