



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1487th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

5 September 2024

Monsieur le président,

Avant de commencer ma déclaration, je tiens à présenter mes condoléances et mes sympathies à la délégation de l'Ukraine pour les pertes dévastatrices en vies humaines, y compris des enfants, perpétrées par la Fédération de Russie contre le peuple ukrainien au cours des derniers jours.

Au nom des Canadiennes et Canadiens, mon premier ministre a exprimé ses condoléances directement au président Zelenskyy lors d'un appel téléphonique à la suite de l'horrible attaque contre Poltava.

Notre solidarité totale et notre soutien indéfectible vont aux Ukrainiennes et Ukrainiens.

Je vais maintenant continuer en anglais.

Mr. Chair,

As we mark the beginning of a new school year, many of us have had the familiar experience of dropping off our children at school this week, eager for another year of learning and growth.

However, in Ukraine, the first day of school this year was once again characterized not by the sound of school bells, but by the terrifying roar of bombs. In places like Kherson and Sumy, educational facilities were reportedly damaged by Russian shelling, including several schools, injuring six children mere days before the international day to protect education from attack on September 9th.

This is the harsh reality that Ukrainian parents have faced for several years, under relentless Russian bombardment of civilian infrastructure, including facilities meant for children such as children's hospitals, schools, and playgrounds. We recall the devastating Russian attack on Okhmatdyt hospital in Kyiv, in July 2024, that proved that children and the infrastructure necessary to their life and development are considered targets by Russia's government.

Russia's aggression continues to rob Ukrainian children of their childhoods and their human rights. According to UNICEF, more than 1,300 educational facilities have been destroyed since 2022, with the real numbers likely even higher.

This aggression comes on the heels of a global pandemic, meaning that children in Ukraine are now facing their fifth year of disrupted education. A recent study shows that this disruption has led to widespread learning loss, equivalent to two years in reading and one year in math.

The ongoing displacement as families seek safety, especially in frontline areas, causes children distress and puts them under threat, leading them to miss both in-person and online lessons. Additionally, constant air raids and relentless attacks on energy infrastructure, causing widespread and ongoing blackouts across the country, further disrupt their learning and lives.

The impact of Russia's aggression on the safety, education, and rights of Ukrainian children is devastating. We call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

It is with heavy hearts that we return from recess to the news of horrific attacks by the Russian Federation across Ukraine, damaging playgrounds, supermarkets, hospitals, and Recreational facilities.

As Ukraine was reeling from the attack on Poltava, Russian missiles killed a mother and her three daughters, along with two other children in the heart of Lviv just yesterday.

Russia's actions in Ukraine are a flagrant affront to international law and reveal a profound lack of respect for the fundamental rights and dignity of people everywhere.

Furthermore, they represent a profound betrayal of the commitments Russia has made in this organization. The lack of respect for its own promises and agreements highlights the current Russian leadership's unreliability as a global partner for peace.

Monsieur le Président

Nous condamnons sans équivoque les attaques dévastatrices de la Russie contre l'Ukraine, ses infrastructures civiles, son peuple et son identité nationale.

Nous réaffirmons que la Russie n'a aucun droit légitime sur l'Ukraine. Les Ukrainiennes et Ukrainiens sont les seuls à avoir le droit de déterminer leur avenir.

Nous savons que les condamnations ne suffisent pas. C'est pourquoi nous continuons d'apporter notre soutien militaire et diplomatique total à l'Ukraine et restons prêts à aider l'Ukraine dans sa légitime défense contre son agresseur, la Fédération de Russie.

Merci.