



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Courtney Austrian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
May 4, 2023

Since we met last week, Russian Federation attacks on Ukraine have been unrelenting. Early in the morning last Friday, Russia's forces fired over 20 cruise missiles and two drones into Ukraine, killing 25 people. Russia turned the city of Uman into yet another site of tragedy. While people slept, one Russian Federation cruise missile slammed into a nine-story apartment building in Uman, killing 21, including two ten-year-old children and a toddler. On Monday, Russia's forces fired an additional 18 missiles into Ukraine. These missiles damaged nineteen high-rise apartment blocks, six schools and kindergartens, and five shops, killing one and injuring 25. Separately, shelling around Kherson in the last couple of days has killed 16 civilians and injured another 22. We are appalled but not surprised by Russia's conduct. While others are focused on pursuing a way to end this war, Russia is sending missiles and drones into its neighbor's towns and cities, hitting apartment buildings and killing and injuring scores of civilians.

We've also recently witnessed Russia's own air force bombing its own city. A Russian Su-34 dropped a bomb on Belgorod City, causing an explosion that injured three civilians and left a 20-meter crater. Another Russian bomb was discovered nearby in Belgorod, which led to the evacuation of 3,000 people from the area. It's unclear why Russia flew an armed bomber over one of its own cities. This is yet another example of the danger Russia's illegal war represents to all, including its own citizens.

At the same time, Russia's occupation authorities continue to oppress the people of Ukraine. In occupied Crimea, 22-year-old Crimean Tatar Appaz Kurtamet was recently sentenced to seven years in prison for the alleged "financing of an illegal armed formation." What did Kurtamet do? He transferred 500 Ukrainian hryvnias via his cell phone to a friend. That's about thirteen U.S. dollars and fifty cents, or a little over 12 euros. In occupied Crimea, a Tatar is sentenced to seven years in prison over just enough money for a few cups of coffee.

Separately, I want to articulate strong U.S. support for the Black Sea Grain Initiative brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye. Since it began last August, the initiative has moved over 29 million metric tons of grain and related foodstuffs. Russia's obstruction of the initiative's operations threatens to push up prices and reduce food accessibility for vulnerable populations around the world. The world needs the Black Sea Grain Initiative. But what the world needs even more is for Russia to end its illegal war against Ukraine, which would allow for a return to normal agricultural production and trade and an immediate and significant improvement in global food security. Russia's consistent actions to undermine the deal – by imposing unilateral deadlines, threatening to withdraw, and obstructing ship movements – are further evidence that Russia is weaponizing food in its war against Ukraine, at the expense of the world's hungry people.

Mr. Chair, despite the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression and its oppression of people in the territories it temporarily occupies, we will continue to work with international partners on the right side of history to support Ukraine. The United States has provided more than \$35.8 billion dollars in security assistance to Ukraine since Russia launched its premeditated invasion last year. We've also provided approximately \$18 billion dollars in budget support to Ukraine through the World Bank. An additional \$4.9 billion dollars will be provided through September. This additional assistance represents our continued commitment to assisting the Government of Ukraine in maintaining its operational capacity as it defends itself against the Russian Federation. In the face of the Russian Federation's ongoing attacks like those in Uman last week, and Dnipro earlier this year, the United States remains resolute in our support for Ukraine. We will continue to back Ukraine as it liberates its sovereign territory from Russia's brutal occupation.

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