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Delegation of Canada

**STATEMENT BY
MR. ROBERT OLIPHANT, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AT THE 1462nd (REINFORCED) MEETING
OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 February 2023

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Colleagues,

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the countless victims of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

My thoughts and those of all Canadians are with Ukraine today and every day, as we express our full solidarity with them as they continue fighting for their freedom and our freedom.

Russia's aggression is unprovoked. Unjustifiable. Illegal.

Russia's aggression is a choice. Their choice.

Russia has consistently and maliciously demonstrated utter disregard for the principles of the UN Charter.

It has broken with the commitments made in the Helsinki Final Act.

It has brought immeasurable loss to Ukrainians.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has stated that Russia's illegal, unjustifiable war, has inflicted "immense suffering on millions of civilians".

It bears repeating that there are credible allegations that Russia committed war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are of a systematic nature.

The ramifications of 14 million Ukrainians forcibly displaced by Russia's illegal war of aggression will not be fully understood for generations.

23,000 people are reported missing by the ICRC, many of whom are Ukrainian civilians, arbitrarily detained by Russia.

What's more, many of these Ukrainian civilians are held incommunicado and without formal charges.

Finally, many among these Ukrainian civilians have been mistreated and denied medical care, including three members of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission. Vadym Golda. Maxim Petrov. Dmytro Shabanov. We call – again – for their release.

At home, Russia suppresses and harshly punishes those who oppose the war and the Putin regime. This has become all too clear following Alexei Navalny's tragic death in prison. We must not allow his voice or those of his colleagues and supporters ever to be silenced.

Russia refuses to allow freedom of expression or of the media.

Russia cares little for the thousands of young people it knowingly sends to the front lines untrained and unequipped – countless who will have met their deaths or will meet them soon.

The Kremlin's disregard for human life is on display publicly daily in Ukraine and even in Russia.

The whole world feels the insecurity caused by Russia's belligerence.

Russia's actions threaten the foundation of peace in Europe and the neighbouring regions and the world. Russia is no longer a credible nor trustworthy partner.

I will continue in French.

Mr. Chairperson,

Canada is deeply concerned about the fate of thousands of Ukrainian children illegally transferred and deported from Ukraine to Russia or to the temporarily occupied territories.

The illegal transfer and deportation of people, especially children, against their will, may constitute war crimes. Moreover, in deporting these children, Russia has committed a significant number of violations of children's rights.

This is why Canada and Ukraine have decided to take action. We jointly launched the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children to step up the search for these children.

The aim is to bring them home. To help them reintegrate into Ukrainian society. And, above all, to prevent such atrocities from continuing or recurring in the future.

To date, over thirty countries have joined the Coalition. I invite the participating States and OSCE partners who are not members to join today.

The OSCE can contribute to the Coalition's work, and Canada and Ukraine will be working together.

In closing, I reiterate Canada's unbreakable support for Ukraine. We will be there.

Canada and Canadians will support Ukraine until there is peace on Ukraine's terms. And thereafter. As long as it takes.

Glory to Ukraine, Slava Ukraïni!