



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

1038th FSC Plenary Meeting
(1 March 2023)

Agenda Item 1, General Statements

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine allow me to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

As before, we cannot emphasise enough the importance of using all available diplomatic instruments to counter Russia's aggressive revisionist foreign policy. On 23 February 2023, 141 states of the world clearly demonstrated their commitment to do so as they supported the UN General Assembly resolution «Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine».

This resolution shows that countries from all regions of the world do not accept Russia's aggression as a legitimate tool of foreign policy. The resolution not only reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders but also emphasised the need to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine through independent investigations and prosecutions to ensure justice for all victims and the prevention of future crimes.

While the number of war crimes committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine continues to grow on a daily basis, justice remains among our top priorities. The Government of Ukraine in close cooperation with its international partners will continue to take all possible measures in order to ensure that all perpetrators, including the involved military commanders, will be held accountable for their war crimes.

The UN General Assembly resolution demonstrated the meaninglessness of Russia's continued aggression that was unequivocally condemned by the international community. The Russian Federation, being in international isolation, has no other way than to stop its criminal

war and return to the implementation of the principles and norms of international law based on the UN Charter.

Ukraine and the world want peace as soon as possible. However, not just “any peace”, but peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Esteemed colleagues,

As the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine entered its second year, the Russian forces continue to concentrate their offensive efforts in order to seize Ukraine and destroy it as an independent country.

Ukraine`s Defence Forces continue to fight the aggressor inflicting significant losses of manpower and military equipment. Basically, every day the Russian Federation loses an average of 700 servicemen, and the total number of Russian combat casualties has already reached 149,890 people.

While the most difficult situation is observed in Donbas, in particular in the area of Bakhmut, the enemy does not give up its efforts to improve its positions in the south, persistently shelling the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. During offensives, the Russians use the tactics of exhaustion and complete destruction.

The Russian military leadership continues to rely on their numerical superiority sending their troops, including newly mobilised recruits and convicts from the Wagner Group, like cannon fodder, ignoring the high number of combat casualties. Every day, Ukrainian forces have to fight off up to 100 attacks along the entire frontline. Despite regular attacks and heavy fighting, the frontline has not changed significantly.

To replenish its losses, the Russian Federation continues to mobilise and recruit new people for this senseless war against Ukraine. Available reports indicate that the mobilisation is very often carried out by force, with disregard for the state of people`s health. It is noteworthy that even Russian human rights activists regularly report about massive violations of human rights during mobilisation.

The results of such mobilisation are obvious: we see that the morale of the Russian troops remains low. Despite large-scale propaganda campaigns and high social benefits offered by the Russian government, many refuse to participate in the hostilities. Hundreds of thousands of Russian men have fled abroad to avoid mobilisation, which proves that militaristic sentiments in Russian society are very often strong only as long as the war does not touch people personally.

The continued mobilisation and acquisition of weapons and ammunition by the Kremlin, due to increased domestic production and partnerships with authoritarian states such as Iran and North Korea, indicate its preparedness for a war of attrition that includes further attacks against the civilian population and critical infrastructure in Ukraine.

The Russian Federation does not abandon its terroristic tactics and continues to carry out indiscriminate massive air and missile strikes against military and civilian targets across the entire territory of Ukraine. Within the past week alone, the Russian Federation launched more than 50 missiles and conducted more than 150 air strikes as well as more than 400 multiple rocket launcher attacks that caused human deaths and substantial damage.

Regular air and missile attacks by the Russian forces are nothing but an attempt to sow fear and horror among Ukrainians in order to undermine our willingness to fight against the aggressor state. The Kremlin is reluctant to recognise such tactics as useless and continues with new bloody attacks that claim the lives of innocent civilians.

Against this backdrop, there is no other way to stop it but to defeat the aggressor state on the battlefield. We are grateful to all participating States who share this approach and continue to provide their military assistance, in particular air defence systems that help us to repel these horrendous attacks and protect the civilian population of Ukraine.

It is hardly possible to overestimate the importance of this assistance. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Dmytro Kuleba stated clearly: «Ukraine indeed needs weapons, just as a firefighter needs water to extinguish a fire. The fire that is destroying your home and killing innocent people. The sooner and the more we get, the sooner the fire will be extinguished».

The fate of Ukrainian prisoners of war continues to cause great concern. The Russian side is holding thousands of Ukrainian prisoners of war in appalling conditions. In violation of the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law, Ukrainian prisoners of war are widely subjected to ill-treatment and torture, they lack food and water and do not receive proper medical care. To hide their violations, the Russian occupation authorities do not allow UN officials to see Ukrainian prisoners of war.

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine remains no less tense. The Russian Federation continues to persecute local activists, conduct forced relocation of Ukrainian citizens to Russia-occupied parts of Ukraine and Russia (57 Russian regions, including those in the Far East and Siberia), and encourages the adoption of Ukrainian children by Russian citizens. Like in the occupied Crimea and Donbas after 2014, such actions by the Russian Federation represent a deliberate ethnic cleansing campaign in violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Russian occupiers pay special attention to carrying out activities aimed at undermining and destroying Ukrainian identity, especially among children. To this end, they destroy Ukrainian cultural sites, replace the Ukrainian curricula with Russian ones in schools, organise so-called patriotic lessons (which are mere propaganda lessons) and ban the Ukrainian language. Ukrainian history textbooks and popular history literature are recognised as «extremist literature» and destroyed by the Russian occupation authorities.

As highlighted in a recently released joint statement of the Special Rapporteurs under the UN Human Rights Special Procedures: «Cultural resources – such as repositories of Ukrainian

literature, museums, and historical archives – are being destroyed, and there is a widespread narrative of demonisation and denigration of Ukrainian culture and identity promoted by Russian officials, along with calls for ideological repression and strict censorship in the political, cultural and educational spheres.»

Mr Chairperson,

Contrary to the empty claims of the Russian propaganda that the majority of the world community supports Russia, we clearly see that the opposite is true. This was confirmed again on 26 February, when the Day of Resistance to the Occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol was marked in Ukraine.

On this day, a Joint Statement was adopted by the International Crimea Platform, in which 46 states and international organisations made it very clear that they «will never recognize the Russian Federation’s attempted illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol, as well as the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, which blatantly violates international law, including the UN Charter and constitutes a direct threat to international security with grave implications for the international rules-based order.»

In conclusion let me reiterate that no matter how long it takes, Ukraine will continue to do its best to counter Russian aggression till the full restoration of its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including the territories that the Russian side attempted to annex in Crimea, Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.