



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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

1045th FSC Plenary Meeting
(17 May 2023)

Agenda Item 2, General Statements

Madam 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.

At about 3:30 a.m. on 16 May 2023, peaceful citizens of Ukrainian capital were awakened by the Russian missile attack. It was the largest air attack on Kyiv and the eighth one since the beginning of May.

The Russian forces attacked Ukraine from different directions, using the most difficult-to-intercept missiles. This attack was exceptional in its density: the maximum number of attacking missiles were deployed in the shortest amount of time.

But air defence systems provided by our partners saved many lives. 25 Russian missiles launched that day on Ukraine were shot down by the air defence forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in particular 6 Kinzhal aeroballistic missiles, 9 Kalibr cruise missiles, and 10 land-based missiles (S-400 and «Iskander-M»). In addition, all Shahed-136/131 type combat drones, and three operational-tactical drones («Orlan-10», «SuperCam»), which conducted aerial reconnaissance, were destroyed.

Thus, another attempt by the Russian occupiers to sow panic and create chaos failed. However, the probability of further missile and air strikes on the entire territory of Ukraine remains high, for the aggressor country does not stop its terror tactics.

Being unable to break through the defence line of Ukrainian forces, the Russian Federation cowardly continues to target the civilian population throughout Ukraine.

With every day that passes, Russia's war claims the lives of the civilian population. According to the regular updates provided by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, only during the first two weeks of this month, 93 civilian persons were killed and 311 were wounded as a result of the ongoing hostilities.

The targets chosen for Russian strikes demonstrate a clear intent to damage Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and spread panic among the Ukrainian population. Russian rockets, missiles and bombs have been hitting a range of civilian targets, including homes, shopping malls, schools and hospitals. None of these targets have any military value.

On 13 May, in Kostiantynivka (Donetsk region), a Russian rocket that was launched against the residential area killed 2 local residents, including a 15-year-old girl and wounded 10 people. A number of residential buildings and objects of civilian infrastructure were totally destroyed or severely damaged.

On 14 May, in Kurachove (Donetsk region), as a result of a Russian attack with the use of a multiple-launch rocket system, 3 people including one child were wounded.

Two days ago, on 15 May, the Russian troops conducted yet another missile strike against Avdiivka (Donetsk region). A Russian missile hit the building of a local hospital that was closed due to hostilities but used as a shelter. As a result of the strike, 4 civilians were killed.

Madam Chairperson,

The Donetsk region remains an epicentre of the ongoing battle for Ukraine. The situation in the region remains extremely tense. Using their numerical superiority in weapons, the Russian forces do not give up their efforts to advance in the area of Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Mariinka.

However, in recent days Ukrainian troops succeeded not only to stop the advance of the Russian troops but also to regain some territories previously seized by the Russian forces. In total, the Ukrainian defence forces were able to liberate approximately 20 square km of the territories in the area of Bakhmut.

The Russian occupying forces continue to suffer severe casualties including among the senior officers in the area of Bakhmut. Only during one day of hostilities on 13 May, the Russian forces lost two of its senior officers – the commander of the 4th motorised rifle brigade and the deputy commander of the army corps.

This morning, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported that the overall number of Russian military personnel eliminated since the beginning of the full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has already reached 200,000.

This is the price the Kremlin is ready to pay for President Putin's imperial ambitions and attempts to reverse history and restore the empire, be it the Soviet Union or Tsarist Russia. This is the price the Russian Federation will continue to pay for the decision to launch its unprovoked and unjustified war in an illegal attempt to conquer Ukraine and wipe it out as a sovereign and independent nation.

And it is already clear that revanchist ambitions of the aggressor country may go well beyond Ukraine if it is not stopped by Ukraine now.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy rightly mentioned in his speech during this year's International Charlemagne Prize ceremony in the German city of Aachen: «Today's Russia has been waging aggression not only against us as a free, independent country, not only against Europe as a global symbol of peace and prosperity. It is Russia's war for the past. Overcoming kilometres of Ukrainian territory, Russia was trying to overcome years of European history».

Indeed, Russia's war is the war for the past, in which they deprived tens of thousands of peaceful people of their lives and their future.

However, the Ukrainian people, in a fierce struggle against the aggressor, proved that we do not want to return to the suffocating «brotherly» embrace of the empire, which we know first-hand.

As we approach the tragic 79th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from their native Crimean soil on 18 May, we express our condemnation for the return to the worst methods of the Soviet totalitarian regime, which the Russian occupying authorities use in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian Crimea.

Hundreds of Ukrainian citizens in Crimea became victims of political repressions on fabricated charges. Dozens remain detained either in Crimea or in Russia for politically motivated reasons or on trumped-up charges. According to the information of the Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, at least 180 citizens of Ukraine who were arrested in Crimea continue to be detained by the Russian Federation as political prisoners. 116 of them are Crimean Tatars.

We strongly believe that after the inevitable de-occupation of Crimea, political, economic, cultural, educational, and the human rights of Crimean Tatars will be fully restored under the jurisdiction of Ukraine.

As will be restored sovereignty and territorial integrity of entire Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders after its full liberation from the Russian occupiers.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.