



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by the Ukrainian delegation
to the 1490th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
03 October 2024

Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to thank the CIO and ODIHR for convening the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, which is taking place these days.

At a time when the rules-based international order is under the attack and Russia is generating more and more violence, such events are extremely important.

In view of this, the situation in Russia should remain in the focus of the OSCE.

When thoroughly analysed, it can provide an understanding of the roots of Russia's aggressive policy, what needs to be done to counter it and why Ukraine's victory is so essential for Russia to return to international rules-based order.

I would like to draw your attention to the most recent report presented to the UN Human Rights Council by Mariana Katarova, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Russian Federation.

The conclusions are worth of the OSCE's attention. According to the Rapporteur, "the situation in Russia has significantly worsened" since the first report a year ago.

The report clearly states that the Russian Federation "is now governed by a state-sponsored system of fear and punishment, including the use of torture with absolute impunity".

The Special Rapporteur concludes that in Russia "the State's systematic human rights violations are part of a government strategy to control all spheres of life, both public and private, and to suppress dissent towards its aggressive foreign policy of waging war" against Ukraine.

"Seven years for reading a poem or producing a play perceived to be anti-war" – this is how the hand of the Moscow regime is cancelling real Russian culture.

At the same time, "anti-war activists are being punished by forced psychiatric treatment, very much reminiscent of the practice against Soviet dissidents and human rights defenders during the Soviet times".

This trend is particularly worrying given the number of Ukrainians illegally kept by Russia and in view of the use of punitive psychiatry against political prisoners in the temporarily occupied Crimea.

Contrary to the Russian delegation's statements, the situation of freedom of expression in Russia is also deeply worrying, as the terms "foreign agents" and "undesirables" are used to persecute and shut down the work of media, NGOs, human

rights activists and anyone who engages in civic activism or expresses an alternative viewpoint from that of the government”.

The situation of national minorities and indigenous peoples is no better.

According to findings of the report “small-numbered Indigenous Peoples and national minorities have been disproportionately mobilized, some by force, to fight against Ukraine [...] Moreover, independent analysis shows wide ethnic disparities in fatalities, however, with minority groups approximately four times more likely to be killed in Ukraine than ethnic Russians and 100 times more likely than people from Moscow”.

How many times have the Russian delegation boasted about the national unity and consolidation of people around the kremlin regime? In reality, some small-numbered groups are on the verge of physical extinction because of Moscow’s policies.

We believe that this issue will be duly addressed by the future HCNM. When it comes to human lives, the time for quiet diplomacy is over.

At the same time, as the report concludes, “the presidential elections in March 2024 were severely compromised” by illegal constitutional amendments in 2020, arrests of opposition leaders, and restrictions on civil and political rights, which “enabled Vladimir Putin to remain as head of state and thus to continue his repressive domestic policies and foreign aggression abroad”.

This speaks volumes about the need for ODIHR, RFOM and HCNM to act and to keep the situation in Russia high on their radar. Keeping in mind, that Moscow has only one objective – to consolidate its power and regime – there will be a lot of work for the OSCE and its institutions.

As the Special Rapporteur rightly underlined, “it is impossible to fully understand the scale and implication of domestic repressions in Russia without recognizing its stark link to the policy of foreign aggression as manifest by the war, now in its third year, that Russian authorities have been waging against Ukraine”.

Against this background, the OHCHR report published on 1 October provides further evidence that this policy of fear and intimidation has been brought by Russia to the occupied Ukrainian territories.

The report documents “widespread violations of residents’ rights to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security, and unlawful restrictions on fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, assembly, religion and belief”.

Moreover, the announcement by the Russian President of a new conscription campaign on 1 October in the occupied territories of Ukraine, in gross violation of IHL, has just served as a reminder that the population there faces existential threats.

Distinguished colleagues,

Poverty, violence and fear remain the key pillars of the Russian regime helping to keep Russians on a tight leash and sustain its war machine.

At the same time, Moscow relies on terror to achieve its aggressive goals externally.

The brutal attacks on Ukraine carried out by Russia in the course of this week is a stark reminder of this Russian tactic.

These tactics have remained unchanged from the very first days of the war - violating the rules of war, destroying civilian infrastructure, and killing innocent people.

For example, on 28 September, Russia's double strike on a hospital in the city of Sumy killed 10 people and injured 15 others.

On 29 September, Russia dropped 13 aerial bombs on Zaporizhzhia, hitting residential buildings, the railway station and other city facilities, and injuring 14 people.

The bombs also fell on the Kharkiv, Donetsk and Sumy regions.

On 1 October, Russia attacked Kherson, hitting the city centre. At least six people were confirmed killed. Six others were injured.

Later that day, Russia again attacked Zaporizhzhia with guided bombs. One person was killed and 32 were injured.

And last night, an ordinary residential building in Kharkiv, Saltivka, was again hit by a Russian bomb. At least, 10 people, including a 3-year-old child, were injured.

In addition, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office has launched an investigation into the alleged execution of 16 Ukrainian defenders. This could be the most massive execution of prisoners of war by Russia since the invasion began.

Russia believes that such heinous crimes will terrorize Ukrainians into submission.

But what all these attacks demonstrate is that the Russian regime must lose in Ukraine in order to break this vicious cycle of violence and crime, both internally and externally.

Otherwise, Russia and its allies, such as North Korea and Iran, will be emboldened to further challenge the international rules-based order.

All these attacks also prove that any ideas and plans regarding the restoration of peace for Ukraine must be based on the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Otherwise, Russia and its allies, such as North Korea and Iran, will be inspired to further challenge the credibility of existing security arrangements. This will mean a less secure world for everyone, including for those trying to feed the crocodile today.

Moreover, all these attacks speak volumes that a future peace will only be credible if the Russian regime is denied the ability to advance on the battlefield, making any new major offensive impossible for Moscow.

And to keep Russia's weapons at bay, Ukraine's Victory Plan must be implemented. This will be the cheapest price to be paid for peace.

This means providing Ukraine with strong and consistent military support, lifting all restrictions on attacking legitimate military targets in Russia, increasing pressure on Russia through diplomacy and sanctions, holding the Russian leadership to account, and fully integrating Ukraine into the Euro-Atlantic security architecture.

This will help to implement the Peace Formula of the President of Ukraine, as the only path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, rather than freezing and postponing a wider war.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.