



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1413th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
02 March 2023

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me start with words of gratitude for support and solidarity with Ukraine as this was voiced during the reinforced PC meeting last Friday.

We are sincerely grateful to all international partners who stand side by side with Ukraine, providing unprecedented amounts of military, financial, political, legal, humanitarian and energy assistance, applying powerful economic sanctions against the aggressor state.

The Ukrainian people will always keep memory about this support in their hearts.

Dear colleagues,

On the 26th of February Ukraine marked the Day of Resistance to the Occupation of the Crimean peninsula.

Nine years ago, under the Ukrainian flags, people went to the Crimean parliament to express their support for Ukraine, democracy and freedom.

For nine years, Crimea has been resisting russia's occupation.

With waves of persecutions russia desperately attempts to break the will of people on the peninsula.

The same pictures we saw eight years later when people under the Ukrainian flags and barehanded tried to defend the cities of Kherson and Energodar from the russian occupation.

As it did nine years ago in Crimea, russia repeats the same mistakes trying to break people's aspirations.

And, likewise in Crimea, russia responded with brutal force, intimidation and detentions to this manifestation of people's strength. We know what followed next. Kherson is free now. So as Crimea will be.

Moreover, on the 1st of March, 2014, the russian federation Council supported deployment of the russian armed forces in the territory of Ukraine.

This was the first test of the pen by the same people who wanted to convince us last week that they are for dialogue.

And let be honest, the place for these people is not in Vienna for multilateral meetings but in the Hague for international court hearings.

We remember that day of the 1st of March very clearly.

It was already a wake-up call of the beginning of the aggression against my country which resulted in a full-scale invasion after eight years of detailed preparations.

A year later after Crimea and Donbas occupation, on the 27th of February, 2015, Borys Nemtsov, a prominent politician and outspoken opposition leader to vladimir putin, was assassinated.

He was killed in the most brutal manner in front of heavily guarded kremlin walls and Red Square. This was to show to the world kremlin's confidence in their impunity.

It was yet another wake-up call of kremlin's large-scale plans to silence any opposition voice in the run up to a future aggressive war against the Free World.

Since those days of 2014 and 2015 russia made a long way.

Today moscow commits more crimes, much more terrifying crimes, and in a much bigger scale.

Ukrainian law enforcement agencies registered damage or destruction of 82,483 civilian infrastructure facilities, including 63,203 residential buildings and houses, 2,321 educational and 468 medical institutions, 322 cultural and 98 religious buildings, and 4,074 water and electricity networks. russian occupiers damaged 1,271 sites of cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure in Ukraine.

Furthermore, today we are compelled to discuss such crimes as forced deportation of Ukrainian children to russia, their re-education, military indoctrination, and assimilation.

And what we heard yesterday from the "Voices of Children" during the informal briefing is heart-breaking.

This is what genocide is about.

More and more people are illegally detained in the occupied territories. It is almost a year since three SMM staff members have been kept hostage.

And even potential release not always means survival.

Horrors people passed in captivity could echo in the future. Last week, 35-year-old Oleh Mudrak, a former prisoner of war and defender of Mariupol, passed away.

The heart of the young man could not cope with consequences of mistreatment he faced in russian captivity.

This case speaks not only about prisoners of war but also about civilian hostages, political prisoners and all those who still have the courage to raise their voices again crimes of the kremlin regime.

In russia itself, a new Orwellian reality has been created.

Any opposition figure is either in prison, like Vladimir Kara-Murza, or in exile, like Gari Kasparov.

In its attempts to consolidate and mobilize russians in view of its overall failure of the military gamble in Ukraine, apologists of putin's regime are trying to find a new ideology to justify its aggressive war.

It took less than a year for moscow to evolutionize from the intentions to conquer Ukraine in three days to calls on russians to stand up for a sacred war to defend their motherland, that in reality means to save putin in power.

To prolong his criminal reign for a few additional months, putin is ready to sacrifice more and more lives by sending endless human waves in attempts to capture Bakhmut, Vuhledar and Avdiivka. Because for moscow human life costs nothing.

But just a week ago, the russian envoys were again trying to reassure the Permanent Council that everything was going according to initial plans.

It is now not even interesting do they believe in what they say or not.

Interesting is how long they are going to continue to say this.

Dear colleagues,

As we see today, we could not prevent the full-scale invasion in February 2022. The decision to launch this aggression was done long ago, in 2014.

But in 2023 we can prevent new deaths, new destruction, and new sufferings.

The Free World can do that by providing Ukraine with combat aircraft, long-range missiles, air defence systems, armoured vehicles and ammunition.

We can do that by undertaking further steps to set up a Special International Tribunal which will examine the highest political and military leadership of russia regarding the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Last night missile attack on Zaporizhzhia, when in the middle of the night, a residential building was hit, is yet another reminder why we cannot allow more impunity for this terrorist regime in moscow.

At least three people killed. 11 people were rescued, including a pregnant woman.

We can do that by further consolidating our efforts around the Peace Formula of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The implementation of which will ensure a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and prevent the recurrence of similar aggression in the future.

Colleagues, what we learned over the last years is that freedom is not for free and should not be taken for granted.

Freedom costs a high price. And we are ready to pay this price. We are ready to continue our fight for the sake of our children and their future.

Our fight will last until our victory.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.