



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE
AT THE 1003rd FSC PLENARY MEETING
(9 March 2022)**

**Agenda item 1, General Statements,
on the subject of “Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine”**

Mr Chairperson,

Esteemed colleagues,

When our Forum last met on 23 February, we anticipated that a joint FSC-PC meeting would be convened today, on 9 March, to be dedicated to the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.

However, on the very next day following our last meeting, the world has changed completely for Ukraine and its people, as well as for the entire European security order.

In a desperate and pathetic attempt to absorb Ukraine, to erase its statehood and destroy its people, the Russian Federation waged a war that challenges the character and rules that have governed the international system since 1945.

Against this backdrop, there can be no „business as usual“ in the work of the Forum for Security Cooperation as the key OSCE platform where the States cooperate for greater openness and transparency to increase military security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas.

We appreciate and support the decision of the Polish OSCE and the Azerbaijani FSC Chairmanships to make appropriate adjustments to the schedule of our meeting.

Having said that, on behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine, I would like to deliver a Statement on the subject of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. We also kindly request that the title of the subject raised by Ukraine be reflected in the Journal of the Day as it is indicated in our Statement.

Dear colleagues,

At the FSC meeting on 23 February, the Russian delegation assured all of us that the Russian troops deployed along the state border with Ukraine and in the temporarily occupied Crimea conducted routine military exercise and that there was no threat of war.

Now we see that those words were nothing but a lie. On 24 February, the Kremlin started unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression against Ukraine by launching massive missile and air strikes against Ukrainian cities across the country and invading Ukraine from the territories of both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus, as well as from the temporarily occupied areas in Donbas and Crimea. This war of aggression is a brutal violation of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and all other norms and principles of international law.

Hiding behind fictional accusations of resurgence of neo-Nazism in Ukraine, alleged plans to resolve the issue of Donbas and Crimea by force or even far-fetched intentions of Ukraine to create so-called “dirty nuclear bombs”, the Russian Federation initiated the so-called “special military operation” that is actually the biggest war in Europe since World War II.

For Ukrainians, it is a Patriotic war, a sacred war for the life and independence of our people, for our country's and its every citizen's dignity and honour.

In this connection, I cannot but mention that 8 March 2022 was a special day for Ukrainian women. Yesterday, the International Women's Day, was more symbolic than ever. Ukrainian women are fighting the war for their right to freedom and to life. According to the latest data, women make up more than 15% of the regular Ukrainian army. Even more women took weapons in their hands and joined territorial defence units.

Today marks the 14th day of our struggle against the Russian invaders. Unexpected strong resistance of the entire Ukrainian society destroyed the initial plan of the Kremlin regime to

conquer the entire territory of Ukraine and destroy its statehood through a blitzkrieg. Thousands of Ukrainians have joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Territorial Defence Forces in their desire to defend Ukrainian sovereign territory and to protect the civilian population from the numerous war crimes and atrocities committed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Despite the heavy losses in manpower and weapons, the Russian forces continue the offensive, but the pace of advance of its troops has slowed significantly. They continue attempts to encircle and seize Kyiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Mykolaiv and Mariupol. In the Eastern and Southern parts of Ukraine, the enemy persistently tries to reach the administrative borders of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and to create a land corridor to the occupied Crimea.

At the same time, we observe the signs of the preparedness of the politico-military leadership of the Republic of Belarus for the possible participation of this country in combat actions against Ukraine on the side of the Russian Federation.

Russian invaders are increasingly violating the norms of international humanitarian law in an armed conflict, in particular by looting and terrorising the local population. Thus, in Kharkiv, Sumy, Chernihiv and Kyiv regions - in the areas temporarily occupied by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation - facts of robberies, acts of violence against local residents, the seizure of civilian premises, and the establishment of firing positions in the area of civilian infrastructure are widely recorded.

In the territories of Kherson and Mykolaiv regions temporarily occupied by the enemy, occupiers use psychological operations units to influence the local population. According to available information, up to 10 tactical groups of psychological operations have been created with the tasks of conducting propaganda among the local population.

The Ukrainian Armed Forces continue defence operation in the Southern, Eastern and Northern operational zones. The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reports that, as of 9 March, the Russian Federation has already lost more than 12,000 servicemen. The total number of destroyed or captured weapons and military equipment includes:

- 317 tanks;
- 1070 armoured fighting vehicles;
- 120 artillery systems and 56 MLRS;

- 28 air defence systems;
- 482 motor vehicles;
- 49 aircraft;
- 81 helicopters;
- 3 naval vessels;
- 7 UAVs;
- 60 tanks with fuel and lubricants.

Anticipating that the Armed Forces of Ukraine would not open intense fire when defending nuclear facilities, the Russian Federation seized and took under control the Chornobyl and Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plants. We dismiss any information disseminated by Russia regarding allegedly voluntary transfer of control over the NPPs from Ukraine to Russia. Information provided by the aggressor-state cannot be regarded as reliable and cannot be trusted.

The reckless seizure of the Ukrainian NPPs by the Russian armed forces poses unprecedented nuclear threat to Ukraine, Europe and the entire world. Hitting the Zaporizhzhia NPP as the largest NPP in Europe might create a devastating effect on a global scale. Movement of a substantial number of heavy military machinery of the Russian armed forces through the Chornobyl Exclusion zone significantly raised levels of radiation. The Zone is currently used by the occupiers as a logistics base to supply the Russian troops operating in the Northern direction with fuel and lubricants. While Russian tanks spread the radiation dust from the Exclusion Zone, their tank personnel remain heavily contaminated with levels of radiation that will inevitably lead to severe illness or death.

The situation around the Pivdennoukrainska nuclear power plant in Mykolaiv region also remains tense, since the Russian forces continue their offensive operation aimed at seizing one more nuclear facility.

Against this background, we observe a surge in Russian disinformation campaign that fuels devastating war against Ukraine. The Russian Federation attempts to convince the international community of alleged Ukrainian intentions to create “dirty bombs” and to use them in Russia. This fake “news” might be used by the Russian Federation to justify its own use of nuclear weapons.

Having been met with Ukrainian population's total rejection of the possibility to perceive Russian occupation troops as the so-called "liberators", the Russian Federation has responded by launching massive air and missile attacks against civilian infrastructure and residential areas in a number of cities across Ukraine. Contrary to the statements of the Russian defence ministry that its forces do not attack civilians and use only precision munition, numerous facts demonstrate that it is nothing but a whopping lie.

In the power point presentation that will follow, allow me to demonstrate only a small number of war crimes committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine.

[Presentation] [Slide 1]

[Slide 2] On this slide, you can see the results of the Russian missile attack against the residential building in Kyiv on 26 February. Fortunately, there were no casualties. However, dozens of people lost their homes.

[Slide 3] The results of this particular strike were much more tragic. On 1 March, the Russian Federation launched a missile attack against the TV tower in Kyiv. 5 civilians were killed and 5 were wounded. This attack is particularly cynical taking into account that the TV tower is located near the historic Babi Yar Holocaust Memorial Centre and Lukyanivske Military Cemetery.

[Slide 4] On the same day, the enemy launched a number of missile and air strikes against Kharkiv, damaging numerous buildings in the city centre and residential areas.

[Slide 5] On 2 March, a kindergarten in Severodonetsk (Luhansk region) was shelled causing substantial damage to the building.

[Slide 6] On 4 March, the Russian Federation destroyed the power plant in Okhtyrka (Sumy region) having left the local population without electricity and heating.

[Slide 7] This slide clearly demonstrates what the Russian leader means when he talks about precision-guided munition. It is hardly possible to classify this unexploded FAB-500 air bomb as a precision-guided munition. Such bombs are widely used by the Russian air forces to strike cities and towns throughout the entire territory of Ukraine.

[Slide 8] Not only large cities became targets of the Russian armed forces. Markhalivka is a small village with a total population of 1,200 residents that was attacked by the Russian rockets

on 4 March. 5 civilians, including 3 children, were killed as a result of this attack against peaceful settlement.

[Slide 9] Another example of Russian deliberate attacks against the residential areas is the Ovruch settlement where 25 private residential buildings were damaged and 5 totally destroyed.

[Slide 10] On 7 March, as a result of the rocket attack with the use of cluster munitions for Smerch MLRS, a number of residential buildings were damaged in Mykolaiv. Although Russia has not acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of Cluster Munitions, their use in human settlements can be considered a war crime because of their non-selectivity.

[Slide 11] The evidences that you have just seen on the screen constitute only a small number of war crimes committed by the Russian armed forces in Ukraine. The number of civilian casualties speaks for themselves: over 450 civilians, including 38 children, were killed; over 2300, including over 120 children, were wounded. It should be noted that according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights the real figures are considerably higher.

Against this backdrop, it is particularly cynical that the armed forces of the Russian Federation block the possibility of opening humanitarian corridors for the safe evacuation of civilians and the delivery of medicines and food. Russia ignores the appeals of international humanitarian organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross, to cease fire in order to create safe conditions for the departure of civilians.

The situation in the city of Mariupol gets worse every day. There is no electricity, no gas, no water and no connection. Chaotic shelling of the residential area, dead bodies on the streets and shelters full of people without food. That is the reality of the so-called “Russian world” for the inhabitants of Mariupol today.

Let me quote one of the staff members of Médecins Sans Frontières from Mariupol: “Last night the shelling was harder and closer. We collected snow and rain water yesterday to have womsome water”. These words clearly show the inhuman nature of the so-called “special military operation”. We consider as inappropriate any attempts by the Russian Federation to force civilians of the besieged cities to flee to the territory of Russia and Belarus. Taking into account numerous cases of the use of civilians as human shields, this is nothing but a cynical provocation.

To evacuate the civilians from Mariupol, the defenders of the city took a number of measures: cleared roads of mines, removed engineering barriers etc. However, on 8 March, the Russian occupiers did not let children, women and the elderly leave the city and launched an attack in the direction of the humanitarian corridor. Such actions of the Russian inhumans are nothing but destruction of the people of Ukraine.

Esteemed colleagues,

The Armed Forces of Ukraine have already demonstrated their ability to fight against the aggressor. International political, military and financial support is of crucial importance for us and we are grateful for the assistance already provided.

Regrettably, the Kremlin regime does not demonstrate even a sign of its readiness to stop the war. Moreover, the Russian Federation continues to spend substantial resources on spreading its false narratives and open propaganda.

The Russian diplomatic service continues to misuse international platforms to justify the armed aggression and numerous violations of international law. In this regard, Russian diplomats have a particular responsibility for their complicity in crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. It is time for them to choose whether they stay on the side of the evil or take a clear position against the ongoing atrocities perpetrated by the Kremlin regime.

Since the very beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, we reiterated our intention to resolve the conflict by politico-diplomatic means. Regrettably, all attempts of Ukraine to stabilise the situation, all efforts of mediators to organise the dialogue, all calls of international community were disregarded by the Russian Federation in order to launch the full-scale war in the very heart of Europe.

Ukraine is ready to hold a dialogue with Russia, but we are not going to capitulate. All three rounds of negotiations conducted between Ukraine and Russia demonstrated that the aggressor state puts forward unacceptable conditions and violates humanitarian agreements – it appears the aggressor state considers them only as a propaganda tool. Ukraine remains open to dialogue on how to stop the war, and not on how not to surrender. However, there is no room for compromises when one state invades your country and wants to destroy it, threatening the entire world with its nuclear weapons.

We have no doubt that the power of the spirit of Ukrainian people and the advance defence weapons will defeat the enemy. The only question that remains open is how many lives the Kremlin regime will take before recognising its defeat? It is in our common interest to end this war as soon as possible and to restore peace and stability and Europe. We call on all members of international community to increase politico-diplomatic pressure against the aggressor state and to take all possible steps aimed at supporting Ukraine's defence.

We also urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease its war of aggression against Ukraine and to withdraw all its occupation troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine, including the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.