



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON CURRENT ISSUE (2) "On the Continued Glorification of Nazism in Western Countries"  
(RAISED BY THE DELEGATION OF BELARUS)**

**1444<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**28 September 2023**

Mr. Chair,

I would like to exercise my Right of Reply to the statement made by the delegation of Belarus, although I address my comments to all in the Council today.

Canada deeply regrets the incident that took place in our Parliament on September 21st.

An individual, Mr. Hunka, was invited to the Parliamentary session by the Speaker of our House of Commons, who has since resigned from his position as Speaker in consequence.

No advance notice was provided to the Prime Minister's Office, fellow parliamentarians or the Ukrainian delegation about the invitation or recognition.

On Tuesday, following the Speaker's resignation, Canada's Parliament unanimously passed a motion condemning Nazism in all its forms; and expressing its full solidarity with all victims of Nazism.

Yesterday, my Prime Minister apologized on behalf of Canada's Parliament: "This was a mistake that has deeply embarrassed Parliament and Canada. All of us who were in this House on Friday regret deeply having stood and clapped even though we did so unaware of the context... It was a horrendous violation of the memory of the millions of people who died in the Holocaust." Prime Minister Trudeau further acknowledged that the incident was "deeply, deeply painful" to Jewish people, Poles, Roma, the LGBT community and the millions of others who were targeted by or suffered at the hands of the Nazi regime in the Second World War.

Mr. Chair,

Canada's commitment to combat racism, antisemitism and all hateful ideologies is unwavering. Canada has been resolute in its commitment to Holocaust remembrance, and we also recognize the horrific suffering that the Nazi regime inflicted more broadly on the peoples of Europe. We can and must learn from the bitter lessons of history.

Canada fought proudly alongside our allies in the Second World War against the fascist regimes of the Axis Powers. Tens of thousands of Canadian troops died while liberating Europe.

In the post-war period, Canada sat at the negotiating table as part of the community of nations while we collectively created an architecture whose fundamental aim was to prevent a repetition of the horror that the world had just endured and to ensure a lasting peace. In those years, we collectively negotiated and agreed to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, and the Geneva Conventions.

Mr. Chair,

My Prime Minister went on to apologize specifically to President Zelenskyy for the situation this has put the Ukrainian delegation in: “It is deeply troubling that this egregious error is being politicized by Russia to provide false propaganda about what Ukraine is fighting for.” Indeed, we have seen such attempts here today. And so I offer my sincere apologies to our Ukrainian colleagues here as well.

Mr. Chair,

We deeply regret the recent incident in our Parliament. At the same time, we categorically reject disinformation and attempts to misuse the past to justify current violations of this architecture that was adopted in the post-war period.

We fully reject the Russian Federation's continued attempt to distort the history of WWII and the Holocaust as they seek to justify Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine with spurious references to de-nazification.

We stand resolutely with Ukraine as it fights for its sovereignty, for its democracy and for the principles that we all agreed in the post-war period.

All participating States, including Canada, can and must do more to combat hate and discrimination. We will continue to strive to do so.

In response to my colleague from Belarus,

I would begin by categorically rejecting the allegation that the incident in Parliament was somehow intentional. Anyone can see – as reported in our free, active and independent media – Parliamentarians and Canadians were shocked and horrified to learn about this individual's past affiliations.

Canada has made no attempt to whitewash the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime, including the genocide of European Jews and the persecution of others including the Roma, the LGBT community and other racialized groups.

We have not forgotten history.

In response to Belarus' intervention, I would underline that Canada has never "granted official asylum" to individuals known to have Nazi affiliation, and in 1985 established an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations that Nazi war criminals had gained admittance to Canada through illegal or fraudulent means.

Since you mentioned Khatyn, I would like to express again, as I did when Belarus raised the 80th anniversary of the Khatyn massacre this March, my deep sorrow for the loss of Belarusian lives in Khatyn in 1943. This was one among countless tragedies that the Belarusian people suffered in World War II, when an estimated 2.2 million Belarusians died. This included the destruction of Belarus' thriving community of Ashkenazi Jews, 90 percent of whom were killed during the Holocaust.

As I said in March, we also grieve the tens of thousands – and by some accounts, as many as 250,000 – Belarusian lives that were violently taken through mass killings in the Kurapaty forest from 1937 to 1941, where poets, authors, journalists and leaders of Belarusian intellectual and cultural life were killed at the hands of the Soviet NKVD as part of Stalin's Great Purge of dissenters.

You have rightly highlighted that "whoever forgets the lessons of history is doomed to repeat them". We must learn from history, but the lessons of history should not be selectively applied.

Today, Belarusian journalists, civil society leaders and political opposition are jailed, tortured and sentenced to outrageous and unjustifiable prison terms simply for exercising their freedom of expression.

The Belarusian people have suffered too much over the past 100 years. The people you claim to represent deserve better. They deserve democracy, they deserve freedom, they deserve independence, and they deserve the protection and defence of their human rights.

You closed your statement by appealing to the conscience of each of us. I appeal to you to look at present-day Belarus and do the same.

We remember the people of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia who suffered under both Nazi and Stalinist tyranny. And we stand with the people of Belarus, Ukraine and Russia today to fight against the repression of the Lukashenka and Putin regimes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.