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Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1435<sup>th</sup> SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**25 July 2023**

Mr. Chair,

On Thursday, we condemned the three attacks Russia had launched against Odesa last week, and we queried whether these were the threatened retribution for the destruction of President Putin's Crimean bridge; an attempt to interrupt the export of food; or if they were just a continuation of Russia's pattern of targeting civilian infrastructure. An additional motivation could be to cynically drive up the price of grain on the world market for its own profit. It seems the answer is – all of the above.

In the short four days that have passed since last week's PC meeting, the onslaught on innocent Odesans and their civilian infrastructure has continued, with six waves of missile strikes killing at least three and injuring another 42. It seems that it is not sufficient for President Putin to block the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which stabilised global food prices, preventing over 100 million people worldwide from falling into extreme poverty; he must also destroy the very infrastructure required to transport grain to the port, store it, and load it onto the ships. Nor is it enough to do this in Odesa; he is also intent on destroying this infrastructure in Mykolaiv and in Reni, on the border with Romania, as well. He also seems to see the need to directly threaten the ships transporting grain in the Black Sea, as delaying their inspections under the BSGI was apparently not sufficient.

President Putin's actions are threatening the food security of millions of people around the world, particularly those in Africa and Asia who rely on Ukrainian grain and stable grain prices. As predicted, the decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw from the BSGI has led to an increase of global food prices. In the week since Russia's withdrawal, global grain prices have risen by almost 16% already. This price volatility and negative effect on global wheat and corn prices hurts everyone, but as per yesterday's statement by the UN Secretary General, "this is especially devastating for vulnerable countries struggling to feed their people. As food prices rise, the hopes of developing countries fall." The weaponization of hunger by the Russian Federation is deplorable and testifies to their utter disregard for the severe detrimental impact of their war on others far from Odesa's beaches and ports.

Mr. Chair,

During last week's PC the Russian Federation claimed concern around the persecution of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, yet their missiles this weekend heavily damaged Odesa's Transfiguration Cathedral and a reported 25 historical buildings in Odesa's city centre. Even before this latest attack on Ukraine's cultural heritage, UNESCO had verified damage to 270 cultural sites since 24 February 2022 – 116 of which were religious sites. We all remember the attack on Mariupol's municipal theatre. The Russian Federation seems to consider the destruction and looting of Ukraine's cultural history to be a legitimate tactic of war. It is not.

Nor are attacks targeting civilian infrastructure legitimate, and yet Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure seem to significantly outnumber their attacks on actual military targets. The Russian leadership must be held to account, at all levels, for any and all war crimes they have committed and continue to commit against innocent Odesans and other Ukrainians. With damaged ports, no agreed corridor through the Black Sea, and Russia controlling much of Ukraine's coastline, the CEO of Kernal, one of Ukraine's biggest grain producers, believes Ukraine's grain export capacity will drop by a further 50%. He warns that, by not getting their grain out, the price paid to farmers will fall, leading to even less grain produced next year. As a result of destroyed farm infrastructure, the omnipresence of Russian unexploded ordnance, the attack and occupation of port facilities, and flooding of fields from the destroyed Kakhovka dam, the bread basket of Europe – which is so necessary to many of the world's most vulnerable countries – is facing decimation.

Moscow has failed to topple the government in Kyiv, it has failed to subjugate the Ukrainian people, and it has failed to reduce support to Ukraine from those who believe in freedom and respecting our commitments. However, it continues to work relentlessly to cause as much pain and suffering as possible, as widely as possible. This, Mr. Chair, is why Canada will stand with Ukraine as long as it takes.

Canada and its partners and allies, including so many around the table here, will continue to provide Ukraine with the financial, military, and humanitarian support it needs to defend itself against and to rebuild from Russia's brutal attacks. We call upon the Russian Federation to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea. Russia's senseless war must end.

Thank you, Mr. Chair