



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell
to the Reinforced Permanent Council, Vienna
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Thank you, Foreign Minister Borg, for convening this important session today. I have recently been sworn in as Deputy Secretary of State here at the Department of State. I came from the White House, where I was the Indo-Pacific Coordinator. Obviously, the events in Ukraine have rocked Europe, but I want to offer a personal acknowledgement of how important and how critical these developments in Europe have shaped Asian and Indo-Pacific perspectives. They are as concerned and focused on this today as they were two years ago during the invasion.

We gather in this Council for a third year to condemn Russia's full-scale invasion and to mark the tenth year of its aggression against its peaceful neighbor, Ukraine. I do want to acknowledge the importance of remembrance and memory. It's a critical foundation from which we build our policies going forward.

In 2022, Russia again chose war over diplomacy. In January 2022, OSCE States offered a diplomatic path to address Russia's stated security concerns through a Renewed European Security Dialogue that the United States and the OSCE had worked very closely on. Russia rejected this offer out of hand.

For ten years we've witnessed Russia reject diplomacy and continue its brutal war and occupation of parts of Ukraine. Russia could end this war today if it so chose. But conquest, not cooperation, is Moscow's goal. Each day of this war brings further confirmation and evidence that President Putin has no interest in a diplomatic resolution -- or peace in line with the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act principles.

Each day also brings further confirmation of the interconnection between Russia's aggression toward its neighbors and its intensifying internal repression. We together express our sincerest condolences to Alexei Navalny's family, friends, and supporters around the world on the news of his tragic death. As a champion for democracy and transparency in government, Mr. Navalny offered hope for those who believe in a better, more inclusive future for Russia. Mr. Navalny's death also underscores, as Secretary Blinken put it, "the weakness and rot of the system Vladimir Putin has built" and the Kremlin's contempt for democratic principles and human rights.

For a decade, Russia's aim has been to deny Ukraine the sovereign right to pursue the future its people have freely chosen. To justify its efforts to seize Ukraine's territory and subjugate

its people, the Kremlin even denies Ukrainians' national identity and culture and blatantly distorts history.

The OSCE – despite Russia's incessant obstructionism – has taken action, and firm action. It is supporting Ukraine in documenting Russia's abuses and violations of international law, as well as its other inhumane actions. The May 2023 Moscow Mechanism report found the Russian Federation's "non-consensual evacuations, transfers and prolonged displacement of Ukrainian children constitute violations of international humanitarian law, and in certain cases amount to grave breaches of the Geneva Convention and war crimes."

But the Kremlin's war is not only against Ukraine: it is a war against our shared values. Forty-nine years ago, the Helsinki Final Act was signed with the goal of advancing a "true and lasting peace" in the region. The signatories agreed to foundational guiding principles such as respect for sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of states. It also included respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and fulfillment of obligations under international law.

Again and again, Russia has itself endorsed OSCE Summit and Ministerial decisions reaffirming those same principles. But in its bloody war of aggression against Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated utter disregard for every Helsinki Final Act principle.

Moreover, Russia has systematically tried to undermine the OSCE's work to advance comprehensive security and strengthen cooperation in the region. Russia has blocked OSCE's budget and tried to prevent annual meetings to assess participating States' implementation of OSCE commitments. For nearly two years, Russia has detained three OSCE staff members for simply doing their jobs – they should be released immediately. In the face of Russia's repeated violation of our most basic rules and norms, we must continue to empower the OSCE to advance our founding values and hold governments to account.

As we enter a third year of President Putin's war of aggression, the United States and our Allies and partners remain united in our support for Ukraine. And, frankly, we must be vigilant and attentive to those countries that are privately or quietly supporting Russia in its war against Ukraine, and that includes North Korea and China. We will keep exposing Russia's war crimes and atrocities. We will not forget Belarus's complicity in Russia's war. We will act in solidarity with all participating States committed to the Helsinki principles adopted 49 years ago. We will continue to strengthen the rules-based order that undergirds international security and peace. We will continue to stand with Ukraine until it achieves a just and lasting peace its peoples deserve.

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