



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE MARIE-JOSEE  
RHEAUME ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1424<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**25 May 2023**

*Speaker #6*

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has caused immeasurable pain and suffering, not only in Ukraine, but all over the world.

Last week, G7 partners met in Hiroshima to discuss how to create a more peaceful, stable, and secure future for all. As Putin's attacks continued, G7 leaders were joined by Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, who shared direct accounts of the acute needs of Ukrainians and discussed longer-term challenges relating to reconstruction and economic recovery.

G7 leaders reiterated their condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, reaffirmed their shared commitment to uphold the free and open international order based on the rule of law, and committed to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. Canada fully associates with the G7 statement that Japan will read out today.

Befitting the venue of this year's Summit, the G7 leaders also issued their first document focused specifically on nuclear disarmament. In it, they addressed Russia's concerning approach to nuclear power and to nuclear weapons: "Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, its

undermining of arms control regimes, and its threats to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus are dangerous and unacceptable.”

The message from Hiroshima is clear: G7 partners will continue to apply pressure on Russia to end this war and we will not be intimidated by nuclear rhetoric. The G7 leaders reaffirmed our commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons, with undiminished security for all. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

All states must take their responsibilities seriously to meet the highest standards of safeguards, safety, and security in promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science, and technology. In this respect, we are profoundly concerned over Russia’s attempt to control Ukraine’s nuclear facilities. This poses serious nuclear safety and security risks and is in total disregard of Ukraine’s right under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to pursue peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Just this week, Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant lost its external power supply again. Through its actions, Russia has significantly raised the risk of a nuclear accident or incident and continues to endanger the population of Ukraine, neighbouring states, and the world. Russia must return to Ukraine the full control of all nuclear facilities within Ukraine’s internationally recognized borders.

In addition to its reckless occupation of Ukraine’s nuclear facilities, the Russian Federation has continued to engage in irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. The Russian Federation’s stated intent to move tactical nuclear weapons into Belarus is yet another dangerous step by President Putin threatening regional and global peace and security. And just this week, we have heard former Russian president, and current deputy chair of Russia's Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev, threatening "nuclear apocalypse" as a response to Ukraine’s valid exercise of its right to self-defence.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's Foreign Ministry perpetually attempts to blame others for this war. They continue to confuse Ukraine's right to self-defence with their own unjustified aggression. They continue to show blatant disregard for the foundational concepts of sovereignty and territorial integrity. They continue to pursue a path of nuclear threats and brinkmanship that threatens the globe.

This war continues for the same reason that it began. This is Russia's war of choice. It was Russia's choice to violate the UN Charter. It was Russia's choice to reject its OSCE commitments. It is Russia's choice to end this war by withdrawing from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.

Mr. Chair,

I conclude, as always, by reaffirming Canada's support for Ukraine.

Prime Minister Trudeau in meeting President Zelensky, in person, last week, underlined Canada's multifaceted and ongoing support to Ukraine, including financial, humanitarian, development, military, peace and stabilization assistance, sanctions against Putin's enablers, and immigration measures for Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion.

Canada will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Thank you Mr Chair.