



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON MOSCOW MECHANISM INVOKED BY 45 PARTICIPATING STATES, FOLLOWING
CONSULTATIONS WITH UKRAINE, TO ADDRESS THE FORCIBLE TRANSFER AND
DEPORTATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN AS PART OF RUSSIA'S WAR OF
AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1421st MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

4 May 2023

Mr. Chair,

As this is the first time I am taking the floor today, I would like to express Canada's sincere condolences to our Serbian colleagues for the tragic incident yesterday in Belgrade. Our thoughts are with all those bereaved, injured or otherwise affected by this event.

Mr. Chair,

We align ourselves with the statement made by Finland on behalf of the invoking states and add the following in our national capacity. Canada would like to add our thanks to Professor Bilkova, Dr. Hellestveit and Dr. Steinerte, who have produced a significant report within a short time frame, and also thank them for their succinct summary today of their important findings. We also thank ODIHR for the support they have provided.

The Report tabled today builds upon two previous Moscow Mechanism reports on Ukraine, as well as on the comprehensive human rights monitoring performed by ODIHR. This report documents the facts and applies the law. It corroborates the March 2023 findings of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (IICIU).

All these entities have documented that, as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, thousands of unaccompanied and separated children have been forcibly transferred to Russia or to temporarily occupied territories. These children are at risk because, as the Report succinctly states, the Russian Federation has "manifestly violated the best interests of these children repeatedly" in separating them from their families, their homes, their schools, as well as their culture and their language.

Canada is deeply concerned about the Kremlin's efforts to wage this war against the Ukrainian people not only by targeting civilian infrastructure but also through deporting Ukrainians, separating families, and instituting policies aimed at the erasure of Ukrainian language and culture.

There is a reason that the deportation or forcible transfer of protected persons from occupied territories is a war crime.

We take note of the recommendations made by the experts in the Moscow Mechanism report, and we call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease the practices of forcible transfer or deportation of children from Ukraine to the Russian Federation and to territories temporarily occupied by Russia, as well as granting these children Russian citizenship and authorizing their subsequent adoption by Russian families.

We call on Russia to urgently compile comprehensive lists of the names and whereabouts of all children that it has moved from or within Ukrainian territory and to take all necessary steps to facilitate family reunification or their return to Ukraine.

The Russian Federation and its proxies must fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, they must respect human rights, and they must end grave violations against children.

Canada strongly supports all efforts at holding those responsible for serious international crimes accountable. This is why we contributed \$1 million to the ICC Trust Fund to support both witnesses and survivors, as well as to develop expertise on gender-based crimes and crimes committed against children.

Canada will continue to work with our allies and partners to hold Russia accountable and support the people of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Children cannot be the spoils of war. Ukraine's children must be returned to their homes and families.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you again to the experts for their report today.