



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

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Agenda Item 2, General Statements

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine allow me to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

As a state that has been suffering from the unprovoked and unjustified armed aggression committed by its neighbour for more than 9 years, Ukraine is more than anyone else in the world striving to restore peace. However, it is not about peace at any price, not about peace at the expense of sovereignty and independence, but about peace that will be just and lasting. The peace that we seek can be achieved only with the full restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

By contrary, the seizure of the entire territory of Ukraine and the destruction of its statehood remain the main goal of the Russian Federation. When after years of negotiations within the Trilateral Contact Group and the Normandy Four format, the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, it just confirmed its intentions to pursue its long-standing plan of destroying Ukraine as an independent and sovereign country.

After more than 14 months of high-intensity combat, the Russian Federation continues its attempts to advance and seize the entire territory of the Donetsk region where the most difficult situation is observed in the area of Bakhmut. According to the current estimates, in the area of Bakhmut alone, the Russian Federation has concentrated 25,600 troops equipped with at least 65 tanks, 450 armoured vehicles, 154 pieces of tube artillery and 56 multiple-launch rocket systems.

Just think: in order to seize a settlement with the pre-war population of approximately 70,000 people, the Russian Federation was forced to deploy a task force comparable to the overall military strength of some European countries.

Despite such a numerical superiority of the Russian troops, the Armed Forces of Ukraine hold the line and cause heavy losses for the enemy. Any territorial gains the Russian regular army and the Wagner convicts have managed to achieve in Bakhmut have come at a huge cost of hundreds of soldiers killed in senseless attempts to seize this Ukrainian city.

In total, since the beginning of the invasion, the Russian Federation has already lost more than 191,940 soldiers, 3,702 tanks, 7,199 armoured vehicles, 308 aircraft and 294 helicopters (as of 03.05.2023).

Only by realising the true purpose of the Kremlin's war - the destruction of Ukraine's statehood, can we understand why cruelty and non-selectivity constitute a hallmark of Russian military tactics.

Senseless from the military point of view missile attacks by the Russian army continue. On 28 April, the Russian forces attacked a city of Uman (Cherkasy region) – that is absolutely peaceful, known to the whole world for hosting tens of thousands of Hasidic pilgrims every year. The attack left 23 civilians, including 6 children killed, and 9 persons wounded.

On the same day in the morning, a Russian missile took lives of two civilians in the city of Dnipro - a mother and her 2-year-old daughter.

Two days later, on 30 April, as a result of the Russian strike against the industrial facilities and warehouses in Pavlohrad (Dnipropetrovsk region), 2 people were killed and 30 were injured. At least 40 private houses and a school building were severely damaged.

These deliberate attacks on civilians are just some of many Russian war crimes aimed at sowing fear and undermining the will of the Ukrainian people to resist and fight against the aggressor state. Such actions by the Russian armed forces constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law and human rights obligations.

Millions of Ukrainians continue to suffer from regular Russian attacks that cut them off from water and electricity supplies and cause severe problems with access to basic needs, such as medical care. Regular strikes carried out by the Russian forces have become an everyday reality for the Ukrainians regardless of how close to or far away from the frontline they are. Be it a village located near the combat zone or a big city 1,000 km from it, the dead hand of the so-called «Russian world» can reach them.

As a result of such actions, the number of war-related casualties grows every day. According to the estimates of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine has already taken the lives of 6,520 civilian persons and at least 11,492 civilians were injured (as of 27.03.2023).

The situation in the occupied areas remains extremely tense. In violation of the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law, the Russian Federation

persecutes the local population and forcibly draft people to serve in its armed forces. Credible human rights organisations regularly report on the deliberate targeting and killing of civilians by the Russian occupation troops, as well as new facts of torture, sexual and gender-based violence.

In clear violation of the provisions of the IV Geneva Convention of 1949, the Russian Federation continues to forcibly deport Ukrainian children to its territory and facilitates their illegal adoption by Russian citizens. By coercing Ukrainian children to abandon their native language and learn Russian, the occupying country is carrying out the forcible assimilation of the Ukrainian people.

According to the latest data, 19,500 Ukrainian children are considered illegally deported. It is also known that there are more than 4,000 Ukrainian orphans and children deprived of parental care in the temporarily occupied territories and in Russia.

Russia's forced transfer of Ukrainian children clearly falls under the definition of genocide. The Resolution adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 27 April is the first qualification of Russian crimes against Ukraine as genocide in an international act since the aggression. Ukraine will continue to document the crimes of Russian military personnel and officials involved in such criminal acts in order to bring them to justice.

Madam Chairperson,

The current Kremlin regime does not demonstrate even a sign of its readiness to stop this atrocious war. Neither the high number of war casualties nor the devastating consequences for its own country could change president Putin's aggressive plans. Ongoing Russian missile terror, irresponsible nuclear sabre-rattling rhetoric and persistent attempts to mobilise at least some foreign allies are clear indications of the Kremlin's determination to continue the war regardless of its price.

In its pathetic attempt to gaslight the world, the Russian Federation continues its massive disinformation campaign. Following its well-known propaganda playbook, the Kremlin tries to justify its actions and convince the international community of its so-called «peaceful» intentions.

However, it is clear that calls for «armistice» and «negotiations» without prior de-occupation of Ukrainian territory can only lead us into a trap allowing time to the aggressor-state to strengthen its military potential and prepare for new aggression. The Kremlin's war of choice is an illegal and inhuman war, which contradicts the very basics of international law. It must be stopped immediately with the decisive actions of the entire international community.

And we are grateful to all participating States who continue to provide their military assistance to Ukraine, introduce additional sanctions and restrictive measures as well as exert political pressure on the aggressor state. All these actions have a direct impact on a swift end to the war.

As President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy said: «It is very important that Russia receives ever stronger signals that the world will not forgive any of Russia's acts of terror. And that as many global players as possible are absolutely principled in upholding the sanctions regime against Russia for terror».I

Ukraine is fighting a war of self-defence for its independence and its very existence. If Ukraine stops resisting, it will be destroyed. If Russia withdraws its troops from the territory of Ukraine and stops hostilities, this will lead to the restoration of peace.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.