



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

**STATEMENT ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION
AGAINST UKRAINE**

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Special Permanent Council,
Vienna, 26 January 2024

Madame Chair,

Thank you for convening this very timely meeting.

Norway stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who at the outset of 2024 continue to suffer the devastating impacts of the ongoing Russian aggression. Yesterday's drone and missile attacks on Ukraine's southern regions of Odesa, Mykolaiyv, and Dnipropetrovsk, wounding civilians and causing damage to civilian infrastructure, is a recent and appalling example of Russia's brutal warfare. We join others in condemning these attacks as well as the numerous severe attacks over the last month.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is alarming. Millions are in dire need of assistance and protection, facing harsh winter conditions without adequate access to essential services like electricity, heating, and healthcare. I commend the Government of Ukraine, civil society, and the people of Ukraine for their resilience.

Norway is committed to providing humanitarian aid and supports the call for safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian organizations to all affected areas. In 2023, Norway provided approximately 248 million euro in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and the regional refugee response. This year we will continue to provide high levels of humanitarian support, including support to humanitarian mine clearance activities in Ukraine.

We echo the urgent need for accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. All efforts must be made to protect civilians, uphold human rights, and ensure that perpetrators of war crimes are brought to justice.

Madame Chair,

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The impact of the Russian aggression on children is particularly appalling. Since the start of the war, nearly two-thirds of Ukrainian children have been forced to flee their homes – some of them alone, making them even more vulnerable. According to the UN an estimated 1.5 million children are at risk of post-traumatic stress and other mental health conditions. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism and ODIHR reports remain crucial tools, and we will continue to make full use of them in our pursuit of justice for all Ukrainian victims.

We remain gravely concerned about the situation of the Ukrainian prisoners of war. Norway urgently calls for the immediate and unconditional release of the three Ukrainian OSCE officials who have been detained in Donetsk and Luhansk for over 600 days. We strongly urge Russia to fulfil its obligations to protect civilians, which includes the immediate release of civilian hostages.

The situation in and around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant remains another grave concern. Since August 2022, the Plant has suffered eight instances of complete loss of off-site power. Despite repeated requests to the Russian authorities, IAEA experts have not been granted access to all parts of the site.

Madame Chair,

Russia must end its aggression and withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. Norway stands ready to support initiatives aimed at creating a foundation for a just and lasting peace in line with international law. Ukraine's peace formula clearly outlines a viable way forward.

I thank you.