



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Destruction of Ukraine's Kakhovka Dam and Hydroelectric Power Plant

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna
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The destruction of Ukraine's Kakhovka Dam and hydroelectric power plant is an outrageous act of environmental destruction that will have profound humanitarian consequences. The dam's 30-meter-high concrete walls have collapsed and 18 billion cubic meters of water are now pouring downstream, threatening the lives and livelihoods of Ukrainians who live in the path of impending devastation. The Russian Federation's willful disregard for civilian life and infrastructure has been a hallmark of its military campaign since the very beginning of its war on Ukraine.

At least 80 settlements are now in the path of the deluge caused by the dam's breach. On the right bank of the Dnipro alone, there are around 16,000 Ukrainians who now find themselves in the critical flood zone. Thankfully, Ukraine is able to reach and is actively assisting those living in these areas it already liberated. Those living on the left bank of the Dnipro in areas of Ukraine that Russia continues to temporarily occupy are tragically not so fortunate.

The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam will also have significant consequences upriver, and will require careful monitoring in the days ahead, including at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. While the IAEA has said there is no immediate nuclear safety risk at the plant, the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam creates yet another challenge to maintaining the safety in and around the ZNPP.

Mr. Chair, the Russian Federation's brutal war against Ukraine has resulted in many tragedies. Its forces bombed a theater in Mariupol last year where Ukrainian children took shelter. Russian forces also struck the Kramatorsk railway station where Ukrainians were trying to escape Russia's onslaught. Russian Federation forces spent months last winter bombing Ukraine's electrical infrastructure, trying to freeze Ukraine into submission. These tragedies only underscore the imperative to continue to support Ukraine to ensure it wins this war and that the Russian Federation is held to account for its war crimes.

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