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Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1377 MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
9 JUNE 2022**

Mr. Chair,

Thank you for inviting Chairman Oleksandr Samoilenko of Kherson region today, to bear witness at the Permanent Council of what is happening in Kherson. To Chairman Samoilenko, I say: thank you, and we see you. We see the people of Kherson. We see the inhumane treatment they are subject to at the hands of the Russian occupiers. We see the heart-wrenching fear that Kherson children face in having constantly to be prepared for their parents to be killed. And we see their brave resistance and defiance in defence of their freedom, to show that they will not be broken by the Russian forces. Canada stands with the people of Kherson, just as we stand with all Ukrainians against Russian aggression.

On February 24 of this year, Russia sent a seismic wave across the world when it launched an unprovoked, unjustified, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. In doing so Russia violated every shared principle of our common security, including the Budapest Memorandum and the UN Charter.

Since the invasion, Russia has been waging a war under false pretenses, gravely violating the Geneva conventions, International Human Rights Law, and multiple UN Security Council resolutions. With each passing day, we learn new information regarding Russia's deplorable actions and tactics in this war – actions that demonstrate both the reckless disregard Russia shows for the Ukrainian people, as well as for vulnerable people far from Ukraine.

This week, Russian forces callously destroyed another large grain storage facility in Mykolaev – the second largest such facility in Ukraine. Russia did this against the ringing alarm of the looming food crisis for millions of people in the Middle East and North Africa. This is unconscionable. The food crisis is not caused by sanctions against Russia. It is caused solely by Russia's war against Ukraine. Either through cruel indifference or malicious calculation Russia's actions are putting at risk millions of lives. We call on Russia to immediately stop targeting agricultural infrastructure, storage, and production, to unblock supply routes for grains, and to cease spreading lies in an attempt to deflect Russia's responsibility in aggravating the global food crisis.

Mr. Chair,

Since the start of the war, nearly 13 million Ukrainians – mostly women and children, elderly, and people with disabilities – have had to flee their homes to save themselves from Russia’s bombs. Sadly, escaping the war zone does not necessarily equal safety. The risks associated with displacement are high, and organised crime is keen to exploit the vulnerable. For human traffickers, Russia’s war is an opportunity. This week, the UN Special Envoy for Sexual Violence in Conflict said that the humanitarian crisis triggered by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is turning into “a human trafficking crisis.” Last week, at the OSCE Security Committee, experts shared worrying statistics demonstrating increased demand for sexual content featuring Ukrainian women and girls, which dramatically increases risks of human trafficking and exploitation for Ukrainian refugees far from home and family safety nets. The fate of Ukrainian citizens and children who are forcibly deported to Russia is also unclear, and we are deeply concerned about their safety and their illegal relocation from Ukraine.

In addition to the human trafficking risks, Ukrainians are suffering from sexual and gender-based violence at the hands of the Russian armed forces. Credible reports indicate that gender-based violence has increased since the start of the war and that Russian forces may be using sexual violence as a weapon of war. As of June 3rd, the UN office against sexual violence in conflict registered 124 allegations of conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine — 97 of them involving women and girls and 26 against men and boys. As we know, for every victim that comes forward, many, many more sadly do not.

Canada is providing funding and sending experts to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to strengthen accountability for conflict-related sexual violence. These new funds will support both witnesses and survivors, and will help develop expertise on gender-based crimes and crimes committed against children. Those who commit sexual violence in conflict situations must be held to account. Canada condemns in the strongest terms the use of conflict-related sexual violence, and we will continue to work with partners, such as the ICC, to end impunity for these heinous crimes.

Mr. Chair,

Canada stands firmly for human rights, democracy, freedom and the rule of law. Canada strives for a rules-based international order. We place diplomacy over aggression, and value strong institutions and cooperation. This is why we are continuing to work with the international community – with partners all around this table – to do everything we can to end the Putin regime’s aggression against Ukraine. This is why we are working to ensure accountability for violations of international law. This is why we continue to support Ukraine’s chosen path to freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Canada calls on Russia to immediately cease its aggression, withdraw its troops, and restore Ukraine's territorial integrity, including Crimea. We reject Russia's claims to the occupied territories and do not recognise the self-proclaimed authorities in Donbass, nor any other self-proclaimed Russian-backed authorities that may emerge in other areas of Ukraine.

Canada condemns Russia's policies aiming to fracture and partition Ukraine.

Our support to Ukraine remains unwavering. We call on Russia to stop this war.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.