



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by the Ukrainian delegation
to the 1463rd meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
29 February 2024

Madam Chairperson,

Let me express once again sincere words of gratitude for support and solidarity with Ukraine as this was voiced during the reinforced PC meeting last Friday.

We are sincerely grateful to all partners who stand side by side with Ukraine, providing military, financial, political, legal, humanitarian assistance, and applying powerful economic sanctions against the aggressor state.

We have to keep the momentum.

Excellencies,

russia continues to practice “human wave attacks”.

It took russia tens of thousands of soldiers and many months to occupy Avdiivka.

To be correct – to get the ruins of the city, as russia used an enormous number of guided aerial bombs.

This is how russia “liberates” Ukrainian lands from buildings and people.

As one can observe how entire settlements and cities are being razed to the ground, it is more than clear what putin meant when he spoke of his dream about “Ukraine that has one week to live if weapon supplies are stopped”.

The russian regime simply wants to destroy my country.

A few days ago, Dmitrii Medvedev, close confidant to the russian president, was even more outspoken, stating that the Ukrainian government “must fall, it must be destroyed, it must not remain in this world”. End of quote.

And what could expect Ukrainians, if russia seizes new territories?

According to Medvedev, Ukrainian citizens who “harm” russia must be “exposed and punished, sent to Siberia ... for re-education in forced labor camps.”

Unfortunately, these policies have already been implemented in the occupied territories.

Yevgeny Balitsky, russia's gauleiter of the occupied part of the Zaporizhzhia region, recently openly discussed russia's occupation policies, including forced deportation and summary execution of Ukrainian citizens.

Showing disrespect for the russian flag, anthem, and the president of the russian federation is among the reasons for russia's repressions.

As he confessed, those people “were brought to the line, the decision about the deportation was read out, they were given a bottle of water and sent away”.

He went even further by saying – and I quote – “We beat - and beat hard. Sometimes we had to make extremely tough decisions, which I will not talk about yet”.

This is a grim reality in the occupied territories.

The reality faced by Crimea throughout ten years of occupation, as the Russian Federation consolidated its control over the peninsula

Yesterday’s report of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission says that “opposition to the efforts by the Russian Federation to consolidate its hold on Crimea has been met with harsh reprisals. Individuals who opposed or challenged the occupation were subjected to human rights violations, including enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment”.

HRMMU also “said the Russian Federation has unlawfully imposed its citizenship, laws, and institutions on Crimea’s population across all spheres of life, suppressing opposition and dissent. Crimean Tatar leaders, perceived as opposing the occupation of Crimea or the Russian Federation policies, were among those particularly affected by the measures”.

One can see, that Russia remains very consistent in implementing its policies in the occupied territories. The same blueprint is used – be it Crimea, Donetsk or Zaporizhzhia region.

At the same time, those who remain in Russia’s captivity, including both military and civilians, are especially exposed to Russia’s violence.

Testimonies we heard yesterday about what happened in Olenivka, where Russia committed one of the gravest war crimes against Ukrainian POWs, are blood-chilling. This is something beyond humanity.

And if Russia is not stopped there would be a lot of such places like Olenivka across Ukraine.

New recent execution of the Ukrainian POWs on the battlefield, including near Avdiivka and Robotyne, speaks volumes that the Kremlin regime is driven by feeling of impunity.

Moscow believes that it can just kill before the eyes of the civilized world.

The brutal killing of Alexei Navalny is the latest outrageous example of this impunity.

And of the delegitimization of the Russian authorities.

But what kind of legitimacy one can talk about in the Russian state at all, where the opposition is either killed or imprisoned, where the constitution was changed to prolong the rule of one man, where so-called elections are being organized in the occupied territories of Ukraine and Ukrainian citizens are forced to take the Russian passport and go to vote?

After all, can anyone still believe that Putin is a person to make a deal with?

Is there any guessing what would happen with Ukrainians if we stop resisting the occupation?

Is there any alternative to Ukraine’s victory and Russia’s accountability for everything it did to Ukraine, to Georgia, Moldova, national minorities in Russia itself?

Dear colleagues,

A few days ago, we paid tribute to the Heavenly Hundred Heroes.

Ten years ago, different people from different regions of Ukraine courageously defended our common values.

As Minister Kuleba stated on the occasion of this anniversary, “the regime was far stronger, and the protesters appeared to be doomed. But we prevailed, and today's defeatists should never forget where we came from. The Revolution of Dignity eventually won. Ukrainian courage was born in the fires of revolution, and it continues to help us withstand aggression and terror today”. End of quote.

Then we won our right to choose our future.

Too high price has been paid to protect this right in the course of these ten years.

And today we cannot let down those people who ten years ago, on February 26, under the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar flags peacefully resisted to the beginning of russia's occupation of the Crimean Peninsula.

These days, we have stopped the russian aggression and also we are capable of returning freedom and human dignity to those people in the occupied territories.

And on a final note, I would like to congratulate Sweden with the accession to NATO.

This is the best manifestation of freedom of choice we are fighting for.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.