



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1449th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
09 November 2023

Mr. Chairperson, dear colleagues,

Last week the russian president once again reminded what Ukraine is fighting against.

During his public appearance, he once again denied Ukraine's right to exist.

Such hatred towards Ukraine and incitements to genocide enable even more aberrations.

A member of russia's state дума and the leader of one political party even suggested to provide for russians a possibility to get the so-called "Eastern Ukrainian hectare" in the occupied regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhzia and Kherson.

According to him, "russia has already expanded by more than 100 million hectares, and someone has to cultivate this land".

And not a word about the Ukrainians who had lived there peacefully until russia came with its war.

But should he, if russia is "liberating" Ukraine from everything alive?

This is a pure policy of colonization.

In addition, during the last PC meeting the russian envoy was even more outspoken and demanded to respect interests of those "fighting for its civilization space".

This sounds like a replay of the concept of expansionism from Europe's infamous past, when another totalitarian regime was trying to get a "living space" in Ukraine.

However, plans to annihilate Ukraine is nothing new for russia.

The erasure of the Ukrainian identity is deeply rooted in moscow's DNA.

The Sandarmokh massacre, the anniversary of which we commemorated over this weekend, is one of those horrible wounds left by russia in the past.

86 years ago, prominent Ukrainian writers and poets, artists, scientists, dramatists were killed by the Soviets in the Sandarmokh forest.

They are known today in Ukraine as the Executed Renaissance.

This is how the cancellation of culture looks like.

People with their hands tied behind and shot into the head.

These crimes have never been properly prosecuted or punished. Even the "Memorial", which discovered the massacre site in 1997, is currently being oppressed by putin's dictatorship, as it was mentioned by delegations last time.

Being emboldened by its impunity, russia repeats these horrible atrocities.

Today Ukraine is getting its new Executed Renaissance.

That's why bringing russia and its leadership to account lays at the heart of Ukraine's Peace Formula.

Dear colleagues,

According to open data, russia has spent around \$167 billion on its full-scale war against Ukraine between February 2022 and August 2023.

With this money moscow could build almost 24, 000 kindergartens across russia, or over 4, 500 maternity wards, or around 17, 000 schools, or around 1, 300 hospitals, or rebuild 20% of all paved roads in russia.

However, russia made another choice. The kremlin not only deprives its people of their future but also wants to destroy ours.

Even according to a conservative assessment, russia demolished or damaged more than 130,000 elements of civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

This includes 104,004 residential buildings, 2,805 educational and 622 medical institutions, 495 cultural and 151 religious buildings, and 5,320 water and electricity networks.

Ahead of winter season, russia is intensifying again attacks on energy infrastructure.

For instance, gas distribution facilities in Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy regions were shelled with artillery on November 7.

On November 8, a thermal power plant in Donetsk region and gas distribution networks in the Dnipropetrovsk region were damaged.

Furthermore, according to Ukraine's military intelligence, russia has started to mine electrical infrastructure in occupied part of the Kherson region.

At the same time, port infrastructure remains among priority targets.

Just yesterday in result of russia's attack, one person was killed and three foreign citizens were wounded on a civilian ship.

russia is a real threat to security, trade and prosperity of the Black Sea region. It must be stopped.

Also, russian occupiers damaged 1,702 objects of cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure of Ukraine, including 601 libraries and 99 museums and galleries.

Even this week russia attacked the Odesa National Art Museum.

There are constant attacks on Kherson, Donetsk and Kharkiv regions.

On the other part, the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflicts reminds us about the devastating impact of the russian war on the environment.

The damage in this area amounts to over 55,6 billion EUR.

To date, more than 2,500 cases of environmental damage caused by russia's war of aggression have been recorded, and 252 cases of environmental war crimes investigated.

While the military hostilities are conducting solely in the territory of Ukraine, russia's policy of ecocide does not stop on the borders of Ukraine – it has already been affecting people in the OSCE region and will in the future.

The numbers I mentioned are striking.

However, each and every cent must be and will be repaid by russia through the establishment of an international compensation mechanism and confiscation of russian state assets.

We are grateful to our partners for systematic work in this direction.

However, there is something which can never be recovered.

This is human life.

So far, russia killed 11, 393, including 510 children and wounded 17,464 civilians, including 1,141 children. Of course, real figures are much higher.

Every day brings new tragedies or reminds about previous one.

There is one such tragedy. A few days ago, Yuri Hlodan was killed in action.

He volunteered for the Ukrainian Defence Forces after his 3-months-old daughter Kira, wife Valeria, and mother-in-law were killed by the russian missile in Odesa.

As we remember, the three generations of Ukrainians were killed in April 2022, just on the eve of the Orthodox Easter.

At the same time, the fate of deported children is of a special concern.

A story of Bohdan Yermokhin who was deported from Mariupol to russia is an emblematic one. He is still fighting for his return to Ukraine.

Since he is to turn 18 this month, he was reportedly called to appear at a military commissar's office.

As we repeatedly warned, the Ukrainian children are subjected to forced assimilation and military indoctrination.

And this what the russian passport means – future mobilization for the occupying army.

This speaks volumes of the need to step up our joint efforts aimed at gathering information about the deported children, imposing additional sanctions against russia, and applying additional international pressure to return those children as well as other individuals, including detained civilians and POWs, to Ukraine.

Dear colleagues,

russia's propaganda is trying to convince that Ukraine and the Free World are losing.

Last time, the russian diplomat was bragging that about 1600 of people are joining the russian army every day.

However, when one compares this number with russia's loses in Ukraine, the picture is more than clear.

This only testifies to what I already said – human life is the cheapest thing in putin's russia.

The developments around Avdiivka speaks volumes about that.

At the same time, the Ukrainian defenders every day prove that they are capable to effectively stop russia.

Even despite Ukraine's limited Navy capabilities, russia is gradually losing control of the Black Sea.

This week russia has lost one more missile launching warship. It seems to be the unique case in world's history when a warship was destroyed before its first combat mission.

This situation on the Black Sea proves that effective deterrence of Russia is the key to future stability and security in Europe.

At the same time, the aggression against Georgia in 2008, occupation of Crimea and attack on Donbas in 2014, and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 display a very simple math.

Russia needs from six to eight years to learn from its mistakes and to come back with more savage blow against democracy and freedom.

That's why the Free World cannot allow Russia to freeze the ongoing aggression into a trench war.

Continued arms and munitions supplies will make further difference on the ground. Russia understands this very well.

And this clearly explains Russia's diplomatic tactics.

Therefore, we are grateful to our partners for their unwavering defense assistance.

We are also grateful to the EU for yesterday's historic conclusion – the European Commission's recommendation to open accession negotiations with Ukraine.

Let me also congratulate our colleagues from the Georgian and Moldovan delegations.

This decision is both significant and symbolic.

A lot of work is still ahead of us. However, yesterday's recommendation reflects how much Ukraine is committed to its internal transformation, despite ongoing war.

This transformation is a part and parcel of our resilience and future victory.

As Minister Kuleba stated on this historical day, "we recall the Revolution of Dignity and all the years that have taken us to this moment. Our fight and sacrifices are not in vain. Our transformation is recognized. Our dreams and hopes are coming true".

I thank you, Mr. Chair.