



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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As we approach the third year of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, I would like to reflect on Ukraine's remarkable gains since February 2022. The facts are clear, despite Russia's efforts to disguise its failures and the bluster it deploys in this chamber to make military campaign appear successful.

On the ground, it is Ukraine that has successfully pushed back Russia's forces. Ukraine has liberated over 50 percent of the territory Russia has seized since February 2022, pushing the frontline of the war back towards Russia. And now, Ukraine's forces are bravely holding against ongoing attacks.

In the air and at sea, Ukraine has also achieved significant successes. Ukraine has effectively used defense assistance to intercept wave after wave of Russia's missiles and drones. By working with its neighbors to establish a new export corridor after Russia unilaterally withdrew from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Ukraine has countered Russia's efforts to keep Ukrainian grain from reaching a world in need. Over 600 ships have left Ukraine using the new Humanitarian Corridor. More than 19 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have reached global markets since the corridor was established in August. This pace of agricultural shipments now rivals the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Under U.S. leadership, a coalition of over 50 nations continue to contribute to Ukraine's ability to defend itself. Officials from 83 countries, including 18 from Asia and 12 from Africa, gathered in Davos on January 14 to discuss Ukraine's 10-point peace plan. That's almost twenty more than at the previous meeting. The growing support is because countries recognize that this war is about much more than just Ukraine. They understand it's about upholding the principles of the UN Charter against an aggressor. It's about the Helsinki Final Act. It's about a rules-based international order where every country's sovereignty and territorial integrity are respected. Ukraine is succeeding in this diplomatic battle because its cause is righteous.

All of this stands in stark contrast to Russia's consistent string of failures. Russia has been reduced to deepening ties with sanctioned international pariahs like the DPRK and Iran. It is increasingly dependent upon these regimes' support for waging its war. This includes unlawful arms transfers of munitions and ballistic missiles between Russia and North Korea in direct violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions.

Russia has used weapons from both in the aerial bombardments it continues to launch at Ukraine. Just yesterday, Russia reportedly launched 20 drones and 44 missiles at Ukraine, killing at least five people in Kyiv and Mykolaiv. Striking Ukraine's cities and killing civilians is not a sign of strength. It's a sign of weakness. It's a sign that Russia has failed to win on the frontlines.

Russia's influence and support at international organizations has also collapsed. It has lost roles in the UN Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice, the International Telecommunication Union, the International Maritime Organization, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, UNESCO, the UN Environment Program, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, Interpol, and the UN Economic and Social Council. Russia is isolated here at the OSCE, due both to its war and its continued detention of OSCE officials. And we once again call for the immediate release of Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov.

Russia is also scrambling on the battlefield. We've seen the Kremlin resort to mobilizing convicts from its prison system. The Kremlin is also giving its young conscripts – the youth who ought to be the foundation of Russia's future – as little as two weeks of training before directing them to the front lines. Russia's tactics in Ukraine, including so-called "meat assaults," have driven hundreds-of-thousands of Russian citizens of military age to leave the country. And yet Russia's attempted offensive has resulted in no strategic gains. The Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine has, however, come at an immense and tragic cost in human life.

At the same time, Russia has become even more repressive at home. The Kremlin must consistently ramp up punishment against its own citizens who dare to dissent against its war of choice. Take for example the case of Aleksandra Skochilenko who was sentenced by a Russian court to seven years in a penal colony. Seven years for simply putting small anti-war messages on price tags in her local St. Petersburg market. Or this week on February 6 when Russia detained 20 journalists for trying to witness a group of women protesting for the return of their mobilized husbands. All to maintain the illusion of popular support and prevent accurate reporting about the war to the Russian people. Russians' civil and political rights are being violated on a daily basis. Everyone from opposition politicians to average citizens are fined and jailed for peacefully criticizing the Kremlin's policies and abuses including its war against Ukraine.

As a Human Rights Watch official put it on January 11th, quote "as the Kremlin continues its war, it redoubled efforts to eradicate the mere possibility of public criticism of its foreign and domestic policies. At the same time, they are spewing homophobic and xenophobic tropes in an apparent attempt to distract public attention from the accumulating domestic social and economic challenges." End quote. This raises the question, why does Russia fear letting its own citizens openly express their dissenting opinions?

Madam Chair, the Kremlin and its war propagandists try to project a picture of inevitable victory to the Russian people and the world. This narrative, however, is detached from reality. The truth is the Kremlin's war is *already* a military and diplomatic disaster that is only weakening Russia for a long time to come. Meanwhile, Ukraine is fighting to defend its freedom and

independence, and it is succeeding. The United States and its partners will continue to stand with Ukraine to ensure Russia's war of aggression remains a strategic failure. We will stand with democratic Ukraine to ensure that it emerges from the war able to deter any future aggressor, that it recovers and thrives, and that Ukraine can realize its aspirations of Euro-Atlantic integration.

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