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Delegation of Canada  
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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1459<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**1 February 2024**

Madam Chair,

As we approach the two-year anniversary of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable full-scale invasion against Ukraine, Ukraine continues to strongly and determinedly defend its territory, against relentless brutal aggression.

Every day, missiles, drones and bombs rain down on Ukraine. Thousands of civilians have died in the war. Millions of Ukrainians are displaced in countries all over the world, including in Canada, and the world has witnessed and documented unimaginable horrors inflicted by Russian forces on Ukrainian civilians.

Russia weaponizes everything it can – civilians, children, information and disinformation, hunger. Even when not using conventional force, Russian authorities find ways to make life difficult, even unbearable, for civilians who live under their control.

This is the case for people living in the territory of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russian forces. We are troubled by the picture that emerges from those regions, and I would like to reflect on some of those reports today.

I'll start with children, and some of the pressures they face. In Melitopol, there are reports that Russian forces visit schools in uniform, talking to children about punishments for breaking Russian-imposed laws or prevaricating on "the role of the Russian Federation in the modern world".

In Kherson oblast, residents have reported that visiting commissions are using inspections of living conditions of children as a covert way of assessing loyalty to the occupation administration. They reportedly check phones and social media posts, and threaten parents with deprivation of parental rights and criminal liability for their children's actions. Children are reportedly threatened by the occupiers for disrespecting the symbols of the occupation or for what the occupiers deem "inappropriate publications" on social media. We have also heard troubling reports of young people being pressured to hand over "disloyal" students to the occupation authorities.

There have also been bleak reports about general living conditions, and that the most vulnerable people frequently suffer the most. Medicines and basic necessities of life are difficult to come by in the occupied territories, and often simply inaccessible. Lengthy queues have become commonplace for everything from medicines to social benefits. Food prices are often higher than in Russian cities, and store shelves are often empty. Residents worry that occupying authorities are making money off locals by selling products at a mark-up.

Heating is particularly difficult this winter. As one example, in Mariupol many buildings are still not heated. Where the electricity supply has been restored, people are still often without power due to the severe state of disrepair of critical infrastructure, resulting from Russia's forceful seizure of that city.

Woefully inadequate transportation is another challenge for many people, and in some cases leaves entire villages virtually isolated. In the village of Luhanske, in Zaporizhzhia oblast, there is apparently only one small bus to take people in and out of the village, and it is nearly constantly out of service. When people complain about the long wait for transport, they are told by the occupation authorities to walk along the broken road to the next settlement.

Madam Chair,

Russian occupying authorities have been unable to install any form of competent, functioning or responsible government over the territories they are temporarily occupying, instead subjecting local residents to force and intimidation in order to try to control them.

It is in this context, and under these circumstances, that President Putin wants to once again hold sham elections in the occupied territories.

Canada does not recognize Russia's claim over the Ukrainian temporarily occupied territories, and never will. Nor will we ever recognize the results of the sham elections illegitimately held on these territories.

Despite all these challenges and oppression, a strong Ukrainian resistance movement persists and continues to thrive in the occupied territories. Canada stands with them.

Thank you, Madam Chair.