



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1471st MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

2 May 2024

Madam Chair,

On April 28, 2004, the UNSC unanimously reaffirmed its support for multilateral treaties aimed at eliminating or preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as outlined in UNSCR resolution 1540. Since then, significant progress has been made towards this noble objective worldwide. Notably, the Global Partnership against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, an initiative started at the Kananaskis G7 Summit in 2002, has delivered over US\$25 billion in tangible threat-reduction programming, particularly working with partners to mitigate CBRN threats in the world, including across the OSCE region.

However, amidst these collective efforts, the Russian Federation, Iran, North Korea, and Syria, flaunt international norms by maintaining illegitimate WMD programs in blatant violation of their obligations under global disarmament treaties or UN resolutions. These very nations also enable Russia's aggression towards Ukraine by either supplying weapons or propagating Russia's illegitimate justifications for it.

In Ukraine, Russia's seizure and continued military presence at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, pose severe nuclear safety and security threats, risking catastrophic consequences to the immediate surroundings, as well as the wider region. The Director General of the IAEA continually raises alarm about this precarious situation.

In attempting to justify its illegal and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, Russia jeopardized its credibility by resorting to baseless claims, including alleging the existence of biological weapons laboratories and absurd accusations about training migratory birds, mosquitoes and bats to carry biological weapons to Russia.

Furthermore, Russia's attempts to cover up facts regarding the Douma chlorine attack in Syria, which the Russian representatives raised in this room several weeks ago, only substantiate why we shouldn't take anything Russia says at face value. The OPCW established that Russian and Syrian forces were co-located at the Dumayr air base from where the attack was launched and shortly after Russian efforts to negotiate the surrender of Jaysh al-Islam failed. The report also noted the special relationship between the Russian Federation and the perpetrators. Russia alleged the report was written in Western capitals, evidence was falsified, the organization was biased against Russia or used as a Western tool, witnesses were paid, the attack was staged. These are the same building blocks we recognize in Russian disinformation narratives across multilateral institutions, including at the OSCE.

We remain deeply troubled by repeated credible reports of the Russian military's use of riot control agents, and possibly other chemicals, on the battlefield in Ukraine, a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We stand in solidarity with Ukraine as it seeks to address these concerning allegations.

Madam Chair,

Allow me to give you an update on our efforts to bring back Ukrainian children. During the last meeting, the Russian representative claimed deporting and forcibly displacing Ukrainian children was an effort to keep them safe from warfare. The person he credited with keeping Ukrainian children safe, Maria Lvova-Belova, is under an international arrest warrant from the ICC for alleged war crimes.

Since the establishment of the Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, we have welcomed new members, including most recently our OSCE Partner for Cooperation, Japan.

On March 28, Canada and Ukraine organized a joint briefing for diplomatic missions in Ottawa, which garnered significant interest, demonstrating widespread global concern for the welfare and safety of these children.

During the second plenary meeting of the Coalition on April 11, attended by 47 states, including representatives from valued partners in the Global South, Canada and Ukraine highlighted various opportunities for tangible support. This includes Canada's initiative to develop a network of communication professionals to highlight this issue globally and combat Russian disinformation on this topic.

Canada, Norway and Ukraine also discussed efforts across international organizations in Geneva on Working Group 4 of Ukraine's 10-Point Peace Formula ahead of the Swiss-hosted peace summit in June.

Canada, Norway and Ukraine will continue seeking our opportunities in support of WG 4 objectives elsewhere, including at the OSCE.

Finally, Madam Chair,

Russia's aggression is driven by a sense of entitlement to exert control over its neighbours. And its actions demonstrate that Russia is willing to trade its most precious asset – the lives of its youth – in the pursuit of its former imperial glory. A real Faustian bargain, and as we know, such bargains don't end well.

It is our unwavering belief that every country should chart its own future, as the right to self-determination does not have to be negotiated.

Thank you, Madam Chair.