



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
1386th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
24 August 2022**

Mr. Chair,

On February 24th of this year, Russia launched a full-scale, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign nation-state. For the past six months, Russia has caused unprecedented human suffering in Ukraine in the Kremlin's war of choice, instilling terror in Ukrainian civilians. Russia has also aimed to inspire fear globally, and to threaten serious food and energy scarcity and deprivation. Today, six months since Russia's invasion began and, as it happens, on Ukraine's independence day, we once again reaffirm our solidarity with Ukraine and its people, and we pay tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives for the independence of Ukraine. Today is especially significant as Ukraine fights for a future that continues to remain independent.

Mr. Chair,

Allow me to join my UK colleague and others in underscoring that in fact, as everyone in this room is aware, Russia's invasion started in 2014 with its attempted annexation and illegal occupation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. At the virtual Crimea Platform Summit yesterday, Prime Minister Trudeau, alongside German Chancellor Scholz who was visiting Canada, used the opportunity to once again reiterate that Crimea is a part of Ukraine and to reaffirm Canada's steadfast support for the full restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Since February, Russia has killed and injured thousands of civilians, many of them children. Millions have been internally displaced and driven from the country, while disturbing allegations of mass killings, sexual violence, and torture by the Russian Armed Forces continue. Russia has unequivocally failed to uphold its responsibility under international humanitarian law, failing to protect civilians, including the wounded and the sick. Russia has also failed to respect the principles of proportionality, distinction, and precaution in the conduct of its hostilities towards Ukraine, causing widespread destruction leading to excessive loss of life and untold human suffering. And now Russia is reportedly preparing a "show trial" for the prisoners of war in Mariupol, something the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights says could also amount to a war crime.

Russia's blatant violations of international law and horrific abuses against civilians also include appalling reports, including through the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism fact-finding missions, of sexual violence against Ukrainian civilians. Rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones are serious breaches of international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity. States have an obligation to prosecute the perpetrators of these types of crimes. Russia's use of sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war and as part of a widespread attack against civilian populations, is a grave threat to international peace and security.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's war of choice has significantly raised the risk of a nuclear accident or incident, endangering the population of Ukraine, neighbouring states, and the international community.

Their actions in Chernobyl appear to have been a preview of what was to come: the situation today at the Zaporizhzhia power plant, the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, is grave. In continuing to occupy the plant and to disregard the IAEA safety, security and safeguards principles, Russia is raising the risk of a man-made and avoidable nuclear incident. We call on Russia to restore control of these facilities to the Ukrainian authorities, and to allow IAEA access to the site.

Mr. Chair,

For six months, we have called on Russia to abide by its OSCE commitments, and we reiterate our demand today for the immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, of all attacks directed against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine. As we have done weekly for over eight years, I reaffirm today, on Ukraine's Independence Day, Canada's unwavering commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea.

Slava Ukraini.

Thank you Mr. Chair.