



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement on
“71st anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe”

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1100th meeting of the Permanent Council,
12 May 2016

Mr. Chairman,

71 years ago, at the cost of tremendous sacrifice and collective heroic efforts by dozens of nations, the most horrible and the biggest armed conflict in the history of mankind - the Second World War - was brought to an end in Europe.

On 8 and 9 May people across the globe paid tribute to millions of those who saved the world from a deadly threat of the Nazi totalitarian regime and its aggression, genocide, dictatorship and oppression. These days are also defined as the Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during the Second World War, established by the UN General Assembly.

On 8 May the Ukrainian nation marked the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation, on 9 May – Victory Day over Nazism in the Second World War.

The people of Ukraine sacrificed themselves and made an enormous contribution to the victory over Nazism in 1939-1945 by exemplary heroism in the struggle for the liberation of their native soil and Europe. An extremely high human price was paid as over 8 million of Ukrainians lost their lives in the course of the Second World War. The most fierce battles on the Soviet-German frontline were related to Ukraine. 29 of 76 military operations of the World War II took place on the territory of Ukraine.

On these days we also pay our earnest tribute to the historic role of other nations of the former Soviet Union, of the allied forces, to their selfless sacrifices which brought about the defeat of Nazism.

Distinguished colleagues,

For the third consecutive year my country is marking the anniversary of victory over Nazism in the Second World War defending itself from an armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine launched on 20 February 2014 in flagrant violation of the fundamental norms of international law, the OSCE principles and commitments.

Today we recall that the Judgment of the Nuremberg Tribunal found immaterial any motives of aggressive actions. This clear position has been codified in international law, whereby “no consideration of whatever nature, whether political, economic, military or otherwise, may serve as a justification of aggression.” The Nuremberg Tribunal also qualified the planning and conduct of an aggressive war in violation of treaties, agreements and assurances as a crime against peace. We recall today that by resorting to an armed aggression against Ukraine the Russian Federation violated, among others, the bilateral Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership of 1997, ratified by the Parliaments of the two states, the bilateral Treaty on the State Border of 2003, ratified by the Parliaments of the two states, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, co-signed by Russia, on security assurances to Ukraine in connection with Ukraine’s voluntary renunciation of the world’s third largest nuclear weapon arsenal.

For the first time since the end of the Second World War the Ukrainians again stoically defend their native soil from external aggression. Tens of thousands of killed and wounded, over 1,5 million of displaced persons, destruction, sufferings and grave human rights violations in the illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Sevastopol and Donbas are the tragic outcomes of the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The horrible lessons and losses of the Second World War must not be in vain. We, therefore, deem it of paramount importance for all OSCE participating States to stand strongly united in upholding common values and principles and defending from Russia’s aggression, which breaches the sovereignty of states and aims at changing the borders in Europe by force.

Unity and firmness in confronting the violation of our agreed principles, which underpin the OSCE, and bringing the aggressor to account are the means to avert the erosion of foundation of peace and security in the OSCE space. It remains imperative to seek that Russia returns to the tenets of international law and of the fundamental OSCE principles which would bring about restoration of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and allow for comprehensive advancement of peace, security and cooperation in the OSCE region in the interests of all nations.

Ukraine, being a co-founder of the United Nations, remains fully committed to the core norms and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. We firmly believe that there must be no place for the use of force and coercion to change internationally recognized borders in Europe or elsewhere in the world in the 21st century.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.