



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE  
ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

**1071<sup>st</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(28 February 2024)

Agenda Item 1, General Statements

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the Delegation of Ukraine, allow me to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

As Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine has entered its 11th year and the third year of full-scale war has begun, it can be said unequivocally that the Russian Federation has failed to achieve its key goals. Neither in 2014, when it attempted to stage a coup d'etat in Ukraine, by exploiting internal instability during the Revolution of Dignity, nor in 2022, when it launched a full-scale invasion, did the Russian Federation succeed.

Ukraine did not submit and continues to fight for its people, its statehood and its independence. Thanks to broad international support, Ukraine has been exercising its legitimate right to self-defence, as provided by Article 51 of the UN Charter, for over a decade now.

All the so-called successes that Russian troops managed to achieve on the battlefield led to the destruction of entire cities, the murder of large numbers of civilians, and forcing a large part of the population to flee outside of Ukraine or to other regions of the country free from Russian occupation. Russian troops enter depopulated cities, which they have completely destroyed, and cynically call it "liberation".

Only during the final attempt to capture the settlement of Avdiivka, Russian troops lost up to 17,000 soldiers killed and more than 30,000 wounded. Russian troops managed to enter the ruins of Avdiivka, which had been on the frontline since 2014, only when the Ukrainian military command decided to retreat to better positions.

For any other country in the world, such a casualty rate would mean a complete disaster of a military campaign. But this does not apply to the Russian Federation, where the Kremlin

regime sees this as an acceptable price and stubbornly wages its brutal total war, completely ignoring the grave consequences.

Esteemed colleagues,

For years, the international community has worked to improve International Humanitarian Law to limit the terrible effects of armed conflicts. Today, the Russian army demonstrates that all these efforts can be neglected by simply denying responsibility, manipulating evidence and claiming that everything the Russian Federation is doing is right.

Since we last discussed Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine at the FSC, Russian forces have launched more than 110 missile strikes, conducted more than 1300 airstrikes, and carried out more than 1800 strikes using multiple launch rocket systems.

In total disregard of the IHL requirements, such strikes were often carried out against populated areas and critical infrastructure. As a result of these barbaric actions, the number of civilian deaths is growing every day. According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, more than 30,000 civilian casualties have been confirmed since 24 February 2022. These horrifying figures include more than 10,000 killed and almost 20,000 injured.

On 20 February, during a conversation with Defence Minister Shoigu, Russian President Putin stated that Russia "has always adhered to international legal documents and conventions" in the treatment of prisoners of war. He lied so brazenly and shamelessly again.

The complete disregard for the requirements of IHL, which the Russian Federation demonstrates on the battlefield in relation to prisoners of war, causes deep indignation.

On 18 February, it was revealed that during the withdrawal of the Ukrainian military from the positions in Avdiivka, the Russian occupiers shot 6 wounded Ukrainian soldiers who laid down their arms. On 24 February, in the Donetsk region, Russian troops killed seven unarmed Ukrainian soldiers seeking to surrender. These acts are no isolated cases. The growing number of such crimes is indicative of disregard for International Humanitarian Law by the Russian forces.

The Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine is investigating 19 cases of the brutal murder of 45 soldiers who tried to surrender. These grim statistics stand in stark contrast to the regular assurances we often hear from the Russian delegation in this room.

In addition, Russian authorities continue to stage "show trials" of Ukrainian prisoners of war. In February alone, the so-called "courts" in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Luhansk held five such trials so far, involving a total of 45 Ukrainians. A particularly egregious example occurred on 7 February, when 33 Ukrainian prisoners of war were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 27 to 29 years for their participation in hostilities.

This reprehensible practice is nothing less than a war crime, which is contrary to the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. By this, the Russian Federation deprives Ukrainian prisoners of war of their right to a fair trial and employs them as an instrument of intimidation of their fellow soldiers and the civilian population of Ukraine.

Mr Chairperson,

The numerous atrocities that the Russian troops continue to commit in Ukraine and the Kremlin's persistence in destroying Ukraine leave us no other choice but to fight until the aggressor is defeated. This is only possible with the consistent support for Ukraine of all responsible members of the international community.

It is symbolic that it was on the anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that the leaders of Canada, Italy and Belgium paid a visit to Ukraine. We highly value our partners' strong support and regard this as a demonstration of genuine determination.

This visit and the security deals Ukraine signed with Canada and Italy are a clear signal to the Kremlin regime that the international community will support Ukraine as long as practical steps are needed to strengthen Ukraine's defence capabilities and weaken the Russian military machine.

Sanctions, in particular those targeting the economic sector of the aggressor state, remain an important tool for limiting Russia's military potential, which makes war an unsustainable burden for the Kremlin. We see how persistently the Russian side continues to criticise existing restrictions and at the same time tries to circumvent them. This is a clear indicator that the sanctions are effective and are impeding the ability of the aggressor state to wage war. Any attempts to evade and circumvent sanctions and export control measures, including with the support of third countries, should be prevented.

This will help to prevent new civilian casualties in Ukraine. This will also contribute to global peace efforts by not allowing global pariahs to continue to strengthen and by disrupting their attempts to ultimately ruin the international order.

As President Zelenskyy said in his address to the participants of the Paris Summit in support of Ukraine on 26 February: "Together, we have already saved millions of lives. And together we must ensure that Putin cannot destroy our achievements and cannot expand his aggression to other nations."

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.