



United States Mission to the OSCE
U.S. Statement for the
Forum for Security Cooperation:
Agenda Item 1: General Statements

As delivered by Chief Arms Control Delegate Daniel Wartko
September 21, 2022

Thank you Mr. Chair, and good morning colleagues.

In just three weeks, we have witnessed the brave service members of the Ukrainian armed forces roll back the Russian forces from more land than Russia had managed to seize since April. Ukraine's counteroffensive has been very methodically planned out and has benefited from broad international support, ensuring that Ukraine has what it needs to pursue one clear purpose, to defend itself against Russian aggression and to take back its own land from Russian control. While still a dangerous menace, the Russian forces are revealing themselves to be mostly spent and demoralized. Russian forces are instead stepping up attacks against civilian infrastructure following their battlefield setbacks.

As Ukraine continues to take back control over areas of its country that had been held by Russia, we are hearing more reports of the grievous atrocities carried out by Russia's forces and their proxies, including allegations of torture, abuse, and executions. We have heard shocking reports of beheaded Ukrainian military service members, of

widespread looting by Russian soldiers, and of terrorized children still too scared to leave their basements, as well as the devastating reports of a mass grave in Izyum with 440 men, women, and children. And if true, these are not acts befitting a professional army but rather are the acts of cowards and criminals, who have lost all sense of their own humanity. And it's not surprising that such behavior has become so prevalent, as recent credible reporting shows that Russia is actively recruiting convicted criminals from its prisons to fight on its behalf in Ukraine. But what is especially galling in the wake of Russia's retreat is Russia's cynical claims that these atrocities – in the areas that Russian forces had just abandoned – had been committed by Ukraine against its own people. Russia's blatant attempts to mirror the reports of true Ukrainian suffering with its own half-hearted attempts at propaganda here in this forum border on the absurd.

Mr. Chair,

While the speed of the Ukrainian advance is encouraging, the fighting still continues in the east and south of the country, and it is far from over. Together with our Allies and partners, we are delivering the arms and equipment that Ukraine's forces are utilizing so effectively as they continue their successful counteroffensive against Russia's full-scale invasion. The United States has stood with the people of Ukraine

for 31 years, and we will continue to firmly stand with them as they defend their freedom and independence. Our support for Ukraine is unwavering. And President Biden has been clear: we will support the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes.

On September 15, Secretary Blinken announced that an additional \$600 million in arms, munitions, and equipment from U.S. Department of Defense inventories will be transferred to Ukraine's armed forces, bringing the total amount of U.S. military assistance to Ukraine beyond \$15 billion since the Russian renewed invasion began in February. We see the effectiveness of the weapons we are providing Ukraine's forces every day on the battlefield as they use U.S.-provided equipment to defend their country against Russia's aggression.

We also strongly encourage other countries and partners to provide the necessary military equipment for Ukraine to defend itself and to facilitate transfers as appropriate. As we can see from the ever-growing catalog of Russian atrocities in Ukraine, this war must end as soon as possible.

While diplomacy is the only way to truly end this conflict, Russia has shown no signs that it is willing to seriously engage in negotiations. We must work together with Ukraine and our allies and partners to show

Russia that it cannot win on the field of battle or through its disinformation. Russia must stop this war – it must withdraw all its forces from Ukraine, return to diplomacy, return to a constructive role in this forum, and return to the goals and principles upon which this organization was founded, including adherence to international law.

Mr. Chair,

The destabilization brought by Russia's illegal and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is spreading. We note with concern the escalation of violence between Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent weeks, and we regret Belarus's stubborn unwillingness to acknowledge its complicity in Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. The violence we recently witnessed between Armenia and Azerbaijan is unacceptable, and Belarus must halt its facilitation of Russia's war against Ukraine and reject Russia's use of Belarusian territory as a base for military operations. And additionally, we note with concern the recurrence of violence along the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and we urge the participating States of this forum to come together in rejecting this violence as a means to achieve political objectives.

And one final note, exercising our right of reply.

Mr. Chair,

When we hear comparisons, such as anti-Russian sentiment on a sticker on a bus, and hear that compared to the atrocities and the persecution of the Jewish people during World War Two, we find that it trivializes the Holocaust, it trivializes the horrors, and we reject such comparisons as completely illegitimate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.