



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by H.E. Mr. Dmytro KULEBA,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine,
at the 1462nd Reinforced Meeting of the Permanent Council of the OSCE,

23 February 2024

**Mister Chairperson, Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I thank the OSCE Chairperson, Minister Borg, for calling this special reinforced meeting of the Permanent Council.

First of all, I thank all participating States who are standing with us.

It is only by acting together that we can protect the rules-based international order, including the Helsinki Final Act. We appreciate all of your support and will always remember it.

Dear colleagues,

Exactly ten years ago, we won our battle for democracy at home.

I remember that day on the Ukrainian Maidan very well. It was a day when we preserved our dignity. It was also the day when the true invincible Ukrainian character was born out of the flames of Revolution of Dignity.

At the same time, it was also back then when Russia invaded Crimea and the East of Ukraine. Our struggle for freedom and against external aggression began.

Moscow denies Ukraine's right to exist. This was and remains the sole reason for Russia's war of aggression, total neglect of the rule of law and mass killing of Ukrainians.

Putin continues to live in this historical absurdity. And we can ironize a lot about him being detached from reality.

But however false Russia's goals are, we must admit that it acts systematically and pragmatically to mobilize forces to achieve them. Including by partnering with other brutal dictatorships like Iran and North Korea.

What they have in common is a desire to defeat democracy, human rights, freedom and re-shape the existing order. This is why Russia's war matters to all.

This is why supporting Ukraine is not charity but an investment in our common security. This is why aggression must not pay off for Russia.

And it is our obligation not to allow Putin to turn our world into chaos and ruin.

The brutal murder of Alexei Navalny just a few days ago is one of too many wake-up calls to those who still believe that Putin is someone you can make a deal with.

The unwillingness to end such a naivete only contributes to Russia's feeling of total impunity, which leads to new killings, destruction and aggression.

And let's be clear. Today's apologists of compromises with Russia must first propose Putin something that belongs to them before suggesting concessions that others need to make. We have enough lessons from 2014 and 2022 to know that an aggressor always comes back to ask for more.

Today those, who were still children in 2014, are already defending us with arms in trenches near Avdiivka, Kupiansk, Robotyne and Krynky.

Because in 2014 the price for stopping Putin was considered too high and belief in a compromise was too naive.

Any hesitation or delay to act now will only increase the price to be paid later.

That's why we can't allow a new Mariupol or Bucha in the future. And that's why we should do finally what must be done today for a just peace.

As I said a year ago, while addressing the OSCE Permanent Council, there is no alternative to Ukrainian victory.

We should keep this big picture in mind and stay on track. Voices of defeatism and fake peace proposals should not overcome us. We have to learn the lessons of the past.

Enabling a Ukrainian victory over Russian aggression is the best way to prevent a larger war in Europe.

To that end, we need weapons, including artillery ammunition, air-defense and long-range capabilities. History knows no better way of how to protect people from an aggressor but to keep him at bay with a stick.

As I speak from the UN, I also call for Russia's isolation in every possible international organization. From New York to Geneva and Vienna.

The aggressor must be defeated, not helped out. To those who still believe in the value of dialogue with Russia: please get real.

There can be no meaningful engagement with Moscow either in the OSCE or the UN, as long as Russia remains focused on chattering our societies, including through election meddling, state propaganda cyberattacks, weaponization migration, food and energy. And as long as it keeps the three OSCE officials in illegal detention. I urge Russia to release them without any preconditions.

As long as it remains a prison for its own people and national minorities are oppressed there. I once again urge OSCE to pay more attention to the oppression of ethnic groups in Russia. Putin continues Moscow's centuries-long imperial policy of assimilating ethnic groups. He disproportionately drafts them for war against Ukraine and oppresses their identity. This is probably the largest imperial assimilation project in this century.

And as long as Russia kidnaps our children, detains civilians, attacks infrastructure, ruins the environment, the OSCE has to serve as a platform for Russia's accountability, not dialogue with Russia.

In my view, OSCE can and should be more active and swift in deploying existing instruments and developing the new ones, where necessary, to help bring back Ukrainian children, deported to Russia, return civilian captives, the most internationally overlooked vulnerable group, systemic cases of sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers against Ukrainian civilians and servicemen, and crimes against environment.

This is how the OSCE can contribute to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, as laid out in President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's ten-point Peace Formula. I also invite all of you to join the Global Peace Summit, which Switzerland has generously agreed to host soon. Let's shape together conditions for future peace.

Dear colleagues,

No country in the world desires peace more than Ukraine, as we are paying an immeasurable price. But it is also true that the cost of unfreedom would be even higher. We have learned it too well.

That's why, I want to conclude with a quote by President Zelenskyy, "please, everyone in the world, do not ask Ukraine when the war will end. Ask – why is Putin still able to continue it. Let's not fear Putin's defeat".

And on my behalf, I also urge you to ask yourselves – What else can be done to help Ukraine win this war and restore peace sooner.

I thank you.