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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1407th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

19 January 2023

Mr. Chair,

I would like to express once again our sincerest condolences to the friends and families of those who died in yesterday's tragic helicopter crash near Kyiv. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with them, as they are with the loved ones of those killed or injured in the appalling missile attack in Dnipro last weekend.

Last Saturday, Russia continued its deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, the main strategy in its brutal war of aggression. In this instance up to 44 people in Dnipro were killed and some 79 injured, and 72 residential apartments destroyed and over 200 damaged, when Russian forces bombed another target without military value, obliterating the central part of a large apartment complex with a 950kg Russian warhead designed during the Cold War to destroy aircraft carriers. And the tally of casualties from this egregious attack continues to rise as the search continues in the rubble.

Once again, Mr. Chair, Russia's leadership has shown no signs of remorse for the civilians killed, injured, and displaced. Rather, they resort to worn-out narratives: first, TASS blamed the collective West, specifically the [“foreign, most likely British, special services as an operation to distract attention from the failures on the frontline”](#); and second, they blamed Ukrainian air defences for supposedly being placed in a residential area, thus causing the missile to [“fall onto a residential building”](#). Russian presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov even vowed on January 16 that “Russian troops do not target residential houses.”

We only have to look at continuing waves of attacks against all of Ukraine's cities, large and small, to see that such claims have no correlation whatsoever with the truth. We have seen it in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Dnipro, Odessa, and Soledar. We have heard the reporting from independent media, UN bodies, Moscow Mechanism missions, NGOs operating in Ukraine, and the residents themselves of these cities. We are all witness to these deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects, without any respect for the principles of distinction, precaution or proportionality and in violation of international humanitarian law. Regardless of what stories Russia tries to tell us here at the PC or in their state-controlled media, the reality on the ground in Ukraine is undeniable.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's narrative around this conflict has changed repeatedly to try to justify the unjustifiable. In the lead up to the February invasion, they claimed that their troops at Ukraine's borders were there solely for military exercises. They then spent the first six months of the war justifying their invasion on supposed actions of what they call the "Kiev regime", which they preposterously tried to frame as "neo-Nazis and drug addicts". As Ukraine began to re-take its occupied territories, Russia's narrative shifted again, and now they try to claim that NATO and what they refer to as the "collective West" started this war. All of these narratives are false and lack any credibility. Because we in this chamber have followed the events of this war, since 24 February and indeed since 2014: everyone here knows that the Kremlin launched this war and that the Kremlin continues to try to occupy Ukraine's sovereign territory. The title of their Current Issue has changed to support their changing narrative. In his statement to the PC last week, Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative spoke for over twenty-five minutes to try to divert and distract us from the reality of the situation – reality as described by every other representative who spoke about Russia's ongoing aggression.

Mr. Chair,

Russia has violated virtually every core principle of this organization and continues to use its membership to regularly obstruct budgets, investment plans, and draft decisions, and to block consensus on the extension of field mission mandates. It withholds funding, and routinely tries to undermine the work of the field missions, the Secretariat, and the autonomous institutions. That Russia actively works against the OSCE and our shared principles is also ablatantly evident with regard to OSCE personnel and assets. Three SMM staff remain detained in Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine, and we have recently heard reports that Russia will now repurpose the vehicles used by SMM staff to flee at the outset of the conflict for its own war aims.

Mr. Chair,

We call on Russia to release all SMM staff and to promptly return any SMM assets to the OSCE. We call upon the Russian Federation to end this war of aggression and to withdraw all troops and military equipment from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine.

Thank you.