



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES DANIEL BARBARIE
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1382nd MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL
14 July 2022**

Mr. Chair,

Another week brings with it another litany of atrocities against Ukrainian civilians, as Russian artillery continues its bombardment of cities in Ukraine's east.

At last week's Permanent Council, the Russian delegate stated that following their so-called "Special Military Operation" we would need a new security architecture in Europe, and that Russia would not be able to return to "business as usual" when Russians had died in Ukraine. His comments showed no awareness or acknowledgement that these actions were both entirely the choice of the Russian Federation. For the Polish Chair had offered a credible and serious approach on a Renewed European Security Dialogue. Russia rejected this offer. Russians have died and are dying in Ukraine during this invasion; but this is entirely the choice of Russia. It could end such deaths today if it so chose.

Many Russian arguments made in this Council deny their own agency and their own responsibility. As if they were not actors making decisions, but merely responding to the actions of others. According to the Russian Federation, they did not start the war. They were "forced" to protect their sovereignty and defend Russian-speaking Ukrainians in Donbas. In their narrative, Ukraine, aided by the West, and with the complicity of the OSCE and its institutions, threatened the existence of Russian speakers. They hold to this view despite the High Commissioner on National Minorities effectively reaffirming to this Council in his report last week that there was no justification for Russia's invasion. Despite ODIHR, the PCU, the SMM having been on the ground in eastern Ukraine for years without raising grave alarms about a "genocide" in the Donbas.

Yet despite all this, Russia acts as if the whole world is against them, that there is a grand conspiracy, menacing their identity, their culture, their right to exist.

Every unspeakable act, every failure of Russia, every act of aggression, is seemingly someone else's fault. Russia presents itself as a perpetual innocent victim. The reality is that Russia has never shied away from displaying its imperialist ambitions to expand its territory and subjugate other cultures. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia has made multiple attempts to recover its influence in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus using military force. Repeatedly, Russia used military actions, force, and terror in its desperate attempt to maintain influence in neighboring states.

Mr. Chair,

Russia has been repeating *ad nauseam* that the West is responsible for civilians dying in Ukraine, for the food crisis, and for infringing on Russia's security. In this hall, the Russian delegation serves us week after week the same fantastical tales about what is going on in Ukraine. No one with access to objective facts and critical thinking skills believes any of this. Every single monitoring mission, every media outlet, apart from those controlled by the Kremlin, document, report, and condemn the terror and deliberate attacks by the Russian Forces on civilians and civilian objects in Ukraine.

The Austrian-British philosopher Karl Popper once said: "No rational argument will have a rational effect on a man who does not want to adopt a rational attitude". In the absence of rationality or logic, no dialogue is possible.

Russia pretends that they want dialogue, and a diplomatic solution. The Russian delegate even said at the Annual Security Review Conference this year that Russia and Europe will have to find a way to coexist peacefully, through the OSCE. However, and almost in the same breath, the Russian ambassador threatened, "*If dialogue is not working, we will take other avenues to solve problems.*"

On July 3, while speaking on Russian television, Kremlin spokesperson Peskov provided insight into Russia's approach to negotiations and dialogue. He said that negotiations would need to proceed as follows: Ukraine needs to "*understand Moscow's conditions ... Agree to them. Sit down at the table. And just formalize the document that has already been agreed in many respects.*"

This is not dialogue. This is Russia as the aggressor demanding that Ukraine sit, listen, and capitulate to whatever it wants. This will not lead to peace.

Mr. Chair,

Russia paints itself as a Great Power with a grand vision for the Commonwealth of Independent States, which it pretends to protect and support. However, what Russia's actions more accurately reflect are that of a bully. One that creates internal conflicts in its neighbours, complaining that the West made them do it, in order to create instability in its periphery and continue to subjugate its own people.

Russia is an aggressor state who attacked Ukraine unprovoked, who is shelling, torturing and displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians, and who is taking hostage millions of others with its naval blockade. That is the truth, regardless of Russia's attempts to present it otherwise.

Thank you Mr. Chair.