



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

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Madam Chairperson,

Allow me to start my statement with words of appreciation.

It is very inspiring to see such a wide diversity of Vyshyvanka today in the OSCE.

Thanks to your support and solidarity, today we have this opportunity to practice our national identity.

At the same time, the upcoming 80th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars people by the Stalinist regime brings us to a dire humanitarian situation on the Crimean Peninsula.

In whatever of its reincarnations, the moscow regime always relies on repression, deportation, and genocide.

Today's justification and glorification of the Stalinist regime signals how far russia is ready to go.

And this sad anniversary amplifies the importance of the liberation of Crimea as soon as possible, while the Crimean Tatars are fighting for the preservation of their culture, history and identity under the pressure of the russian occupation, repressions and assimilation policies.

Colleagues,

Denial of Ukraine's right to exist and the right of Ukrainian people to have its identity, culture and traditions remains the main driver for russia's war of aggression.

Even according to very conservative assessment of UNESCO, as of 10 April 2024, the organization has verified damage to 351 sites since 24 February 2022 – 129 religious sites, 157 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 31 museums, 19 monuments, 14 libraries, 1 archive.

Some of these sites, like Drama Theatre in Mariupol, have become a mass grave for hundreds of civilians including children.

For many Ukrainians their destroyed houses have become a final resting place.

Usually, russians are trying to erase such sites as evidence of these crimes, thus, mocking memory of the killed.

And such places, like Mariupol's Drama Theatre, is a stark reminder about the pain felt by thousands of Ukrainian families looking for their loved ones missing due to russia's war, as we heard yesterday during the meeting with family members.

Furthermore, this obsessive hatred against anything Ukrainian fuels new shelling, killings, and destruction.

On the 10th of May, russia has intensified attacks in the Kharkiv direction.

Currently shelling and fights are ongoing in border areas.

A day ago, 30 settlements in the region were under mortar and artillery fire.

In preparation for this assault, the russian federation was attacking Kharkiv, as regularly informed by the Ukrainian mission, with missiles and aerial guided bombs almost daily for months. These attacks continue.

russia is not giving up its plans to re-occupy the territories that were liberated by the Ukrainian defenders in September 2022.

Instead of returning to peaceful life, people have to flee again.

So far, more than 7000 people were evacuated. People are afraid of the repetition of the russian occupation.

They still remember too well seven months under the russian rule.

Let me give you an example of the city of Vovchansk, that in recent days has become a key target of russia's new offensive.

This city has still fresh wounds left by the russian soldiers in the past.

Like in all other occupied areas, a "filtration point" was set up in Vovchansk.

Locals who refused to cooperate with the occupation authorities were "re-educated" in the basements of a local plant.

As russians again reached the outskirts of Vovchansk, unfortunately first reports appeared about civilians taken by russians to the basements.

russians are coming with a clear intention to complete their unfinished crimes.

We have to do our utmost not to allow this happen.

The idea behind these attacks is clear – to expand the war at any cost to human life.

russian command is sending endless "human waves" just to please the kremlin leadership.

In addition to that, the kremlin, being driven with a maniacal desire to destroy the Ukrainian cities, also does not even care about the safety of their own population.

Malfunctioning of hastily refurbished russian weapons have become routine.

Even according to reports by russian online sources, there have been 33 incidents with "unauthorized drops" of guided aerial bombs in russian border areas and occupied Ukrainian areas since March this year.

Several incidents have already occurred in May. For example, on May 4th, a russian aircraft dropped a 500kg bomb on Belgorod, damaging 30 private houses.

Esteemed colleagues,

This new russia's escalation serves as a stark reminder that moscow has not given up its aggressive plans with regard to Ukraine.

To stop this repetition of evil one just needs to empower Ukraine's right to self-defense, by increasing the potential of Ukraine's air defense, aviation, and by accelerating deliveries of military aid to our country.

As well, we have to oppose any russia's attempts, in particular within the OSCE, to shift the focus from moscow's responsibility for the collapse of European security architecture.

In view of this, let me touch upon one of the favorite russian lies.

As we are approaching the Global Peace Summit, russians, including here in the OSCE, are promoting a false narrative that Ukraine and russia were close to a peace deal in spring 2022, but Ukraine rejected it.

But they never mention how bizarre were their demands that the prospect of a real solution was not even remotely in sight.

However, by doing so, russians try to shift the blame for the war in the middle of Europe from themselves, the aggressor, to Ukraine, the attacked country.

In view of the intensification of this disinformation campaign, Minister Kuleba recently explained in detail what really happened in March 2022.

Let me quote just a few lines from his explanations, "Who actually ruined the prospect of peace? This person's name is putin. He has been ruining peace in Ukraine for more than a decade. First, by occupying Crimea, and parts of Donbas in 2014. Then by obstructing the Minsk and Normandy peace processes. Then by launching full scale aggression. And then by refusing to end it. This is why the war drags on. Only together can we stop russia and put an end to its aggressive plans for the rest of Europe. For this to happen, keep supporting Ukraine and don't buy russian lies".

Colleagues, a predictable and peaceful Europe is possible only when the principles of the Helsinki Final Act are faithfully observed by all, excluding any chance for russia to get any gains from its aggression.

The upcoming Global Peace Summit is the right place where we all can recommit ourselves to these principles.

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.