



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the 75th anniversary of the end of the World War II in Europe

As delivered by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1266th meeting of the Permanent Council,
7 May 2020

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, let me join others in warmly welcoming Ambassador Michaela Kuchler, Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, and Ambassador Wolfgang Paul, special representative of the Mauthausen Memorial, and thank both of you for the presentations.

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the next two days, by marking first the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation and then the Victory Day, along with other nations across the globe, Ukraine will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe – the most tragic chapter in the history of the entire world.

We are paying the tribute to the millions who sacrificed their lives 75 years ago to fight for liberty and peace. We shall remember the tremendous sacrifices, human pain of all the people who lost their lives, the victims of the war, the Holocaust, occupation, and repression. And we shall not allow modern territorial ambitions and aggression of one participating state to shadow once again peace on the continent and to bring Europe back to the darkness of the past.

Having been already bleeding country as a result of massive Soviet repressions, Ukraine paid a particularly high price for the victory. Over 8 million Ukrainians were killed at the front lines and resistance movements. Over 2 million Ukrainians were incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps, including the Mauthausen. 1.5 million of victims were Ukrainians of Jewish origin, or sixty per cent of Ukraine's Jewish population who perished in Holocaust. By the end of the war, the overall population of the country had declined by a quarter, with entire towns and villages reduced to ashes.

While paying tribute to the heroes and innocent victims and condemning the crimes against humanity of Nazi totalitarian regime we cannot afford ourselves to be deaf to aggressive rhetoric and claims to “protect compatriots” echoing across Europe

in nowadays. Neither shall we tolerate first ever attempt since the end of the Second World War to annex a part of sovereign state in Europe, as well as aggression my country is witnessing in Donbas. Nor shall we spare no efforts to resume respect of Russia for the rule of law and democracy, including for territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and sovereignty in Europe.

To that end it is our duty and responsibility to remember the causes, overcome the legacies and learn lessons from that tragic past:

- Accommodation or appeasement of an aggressor by allowing it to occupy parts of or the entire territory of sovereign states breeds further aggression.

- The deafening silence in response to appalling human rights violations inflicted by two dictators – Hitler and Stalin – on their own population contributed to the sense of impunity and spreading this practice to the occupied territories.

- The pillars of the international security order – national borders, international norms and principles, multilateral institutions – must not be stretched to satisfy the appetite of aggressive intentions, otherwise the established security order will be irreparably destroyed.

- When values and principles are compromised for an illusion of peace, this quickly leads to more aggression: the Secret Protocol to the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, whereby the both parties criminally conspired to divide Europe between themselves, is a direct evidence that World War II was started jointly by two totalitarian empires – the Nazi Third Reich and the communist Soviet Union.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ukraine along with the rest of the world will commemorate the events of WWII under the motto “*Never again*”.

We mark the Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation on 8 May and the Victory Day over Nazism in the Second World War on 9 May to honour the memory all those who sacrificed their lives fighting the Nazism and defending their country, family and home.

The memory of millions of losses in 1939–1945 must be a constant reminder that humanity is not immune from the atrocities of war. They should inspire us to multiply our efforts towards ensuring peace across the entire OSCE region within the frameworks of our common democratic commitments and with full respect to the Helsinki Final Act’s fundamental principles.

I thank you.