



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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This week yet again we are obligated to speak about the sheer bestiality of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. As everyone in this Council knows, the truth is that Russia's forces are not mighty warriors, but murderers and criminals waging a vicious, bloody, and inhuman war for reasons they themselves don't seem to understand. They routinely kill civilians in the most ghastly and barbaric ways, spouting nonsense about Nazis when what they really ought to do is look in the mirror. Last Friday, a missile strike by Russia's forces on Ukraine's city of Sloviansk hit a residential neighborhood. The attack killed fifteen people, including a two-year-old boy. This carnage reveals the true face of the Russian Federation's war effort.

The truth is, evidence continues to mount of widespread war crimes and crimes against humanity. Just last week, as several of the preceding speakers have noted, a video emerged of what appeared to be a member of Russia's forces using a knife to behead a captive Ukrainian soldier while he was still alive. This is not the first time we've seen videos of members of Russia's forces hurting and mutilating Ukrainians in awful ways. This is not military prowess. It is not the warrior's code of conduct. It's simply inhuman and evil. Yet such incidents are not rare.

Reports have emerged that former Wagner Group commanders are admitting they were instructed to indiscriminately kill people in Ukraine. Azamat Uldarov, one of these commanders said, "[It was] a management decision. I wasn't allowed to let anyone out alive, because my command was to kill anything in my way." The violence they describe carrying out in Ukraine defies imagination and all morality. In Uldarov's own words, "it doesn't matter whether there is a civilian there or not. The house needs to be swept. I didn't give a fuck who was inside... Whether a hut or a house, the point was to make sure that there wasn't *a single living person left inside.*" Uldarov admits in the video to *shooting*, as was mentioned earlier, *a five-year-old in the head* because she would not stop screaming. I'm just going to pause right there because I don't know what else to say about that.

As far as its war effort is concerned, we've seen Moscow scramble to find personnel for its human-wave attacks on Ukraine. Remember that last year on March 5th, Putin said that "only professionals, officers and contract soldiers, [were] taking part" in his war and that "not even a single conscript" was involved. It took only four days for Russia's Ministry of Defense to admit Putin's claim was false by confirming Russia's conscripts were indeed involved in combat inside Ukraine. Later, on September 13th, Putin's spokesperson assured the people of Russia there were no plans for a mobilization of Russia's general population. Eight days later, Putin announced a large-scale mobilization of Russia's citizens to be dragooned into its

military. Putin's announcement led to the exodus of hundreds of thousands of citizens from Russia to avoid fighting in this war. This is not the sign of a winning campaign.

Just last week, we all saw Putin sign into law amendments that the Russian State Duma rushed to enact making it easier for the Kremlin to conscript citizens into Russia's military. At the same time, in Russia-occupied Luhansk, Russia's puppet authorities signed a dictate aligning their spring conscription cycle with Russia's. Occupation authorities have also reportedly instructed local officials to send lists of Russian passport holders to local military registration and enlistment offices. This is taking place after many months of Russia's enhanced passportization efforts in occupied Ukraine. Russia's officials, of course, deny there will be a second wave of mobilization in Russia and insist that conscription will not occur in any areas of Ukraine that Russia occupies. But clearly, we can't take the Kremlin at its word because what it says today won't be what it does tomorrow. These are facts. This is the truth.

Mr. Chair, what I have raised today are not the signs of a successful war effort. These are not the signs of a regime confident in its ability to succeed. These are the signs of desperation and failure. And yet, Russia's representatives in this room continue to deny the truth. They continue to use this body to spread disinformation and lies. But we know better. We see through it all. As a famous Russian once said, "we know they are lying. They know they are lying. They know, we know, they are lying. We know, they know, we know, they are lying. But they are still lying."

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