

ENGLISH only



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

# **On Russia's Latest Act of Unprovoked Armed Aggression Against Ukraine**

As prepared for delivery by Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Harry Kamian  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 26, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The United States condemns Russia's aggression and provocations in the Kerch Strait on November 25 when Russian warships rammed, fired upon, and seized Ukrainian vessels as they attempted peacefully and legally to transit to sovereign Ukrainian territory. Russia's attack apparently resulted in the wounding of six Ukrainian sailors. Russia's unilateral and bellicose actions were in direct contravention of the Law of the Sea, as well as OSCE principles and commitments.

With this latest act of wanton aggression, Russia has upped the ante in its long-standing bid to undermine and destabilize the Ukrainian nation and to further violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's actions yesterday are but another example of its disregard for international norms and a rules-based order.

We call on Russia to immediately release the illegally detained Ukrainian crewmembers, reopen the Kerch Strait, cease its harassment of international shipping in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, and return the Ukrainian vessels it seized illegally. The United States further calls on Russia to exercise maximum restraint to immediately de-escalate the situation.

The United States supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters, as well as the right of its vessels to traverse international waters.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.