



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Timothy Hanway
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is a brutal attempt to seize territory and to thwart a sovereign neighbor from realizing its chosen future. It is also a campaign against Ukraine's existence as an independent state. Russia is trying to undermine the very notion of Ukrainian statehood, of the Ukrainian language, and in effect, of Ukrainians as having their own separate identity.

The Russian regime has used its state-controlled media and adulterated educational materials to spread lies about Ukraine's history. Russian textbooks now indoctrinate students with Russia's disinformation. Russian representatives here have perpetuated blatant lies surrounding the nature and ideology of Ukraine's government. They hope that by falsely painting Ukraine as an enemy of old, they can manipulate you, your people, and their own citizens into believing Ukrainians deserve the suffering they are enduring at the hands of Russia. Such rampant lies are perverting the perceptions of young Russians about their neighbor.

Russian state media is another instrument of the Kremlin's historical revisionism. An RT propaganda piece titled "Inventing Ukraine: How was Modern Ukraine Created?" attempted to deny the legitimacy of Ukraine's statehood by grossly distorting centuries of history. This so-called documentary denies Ukraine's distinct social, cultural, and political history. For centuries, denizens of the Kremlin have distorted facts and promoted falsehoods with the deliberate intent of undermining Ukrainian national identity to advance their own geopolitical goals.

In Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, Moscow's occupation authorities have established so-called "ministries" to reeducate Ukrainians on the Kremlin's version of Russia's culture and history. These bodies purportedly debunk what Russian officials call Ukrainian "historical myths." This campaign seeks to replace historical facts with narratives that glorify Russian imperial history under the guise of "restoring historical justice and combating lies."

Ukraine's culture and heritage are under continuous threat. Russia's relentless attacks have caused extensive damage to cultural and historic sites in Ukraine. On May 27th, a Russian missile strike destroyed a Ukrainian publisher and book warehouse in Kharkiv, killing seven civilians and burning 50,000 books. These facilities, apparently devoid of military value, were seemingly targeted solely because they represented Ukrainian cultural identity, which Russia denies exists. Such attacks would be prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

We've also witnessed Russia's theft of Ukrainian art and cultural artifacts and the demolition of historic sites. The attack that struck the Transfiguration Cathedral in Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa in July 2023, like so many other attacks that have damaged or destroyed cultural and historical treasures, lacked any apparent military purpose.

The efforts to deny, suppress, or rewrite Ukraine's rich culture and history are an integral component of Russia's war. They are an attempt to legitimize the Kremlin's aggression, break the spirit of the Ukrainian people, and subjugate them to its will. We must hold Russia accountable for its historical revisionism and lies. Our collective work to counter these narratives remains essential. We must stand united in our support for democratic Ukraine, as it defends against Russia's relentless assaults on its territory, its sovereignty, its history, its national identity, and the truth.

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