



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

1444th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

28 September 2023

Mr. Chair,

Three days ago, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry revealed systematic and widespread use of torture and indiscriminate attacks on Ukrainian civilians at the hands of the Russian military.

In over ten visits to Ukraine, the Commission of Inquiry documented unlawful attacks with explosive weapons, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, and attacks on energy infrastructure.

The accounts are simply harrowing.

They document that the Russian military launched explosive weapon attacks on residential buildings, a medical facility, a railway station, a restaurant, shops and commercial warehouses, among others. There seemed to not have been any military presence at the affected sites or in their vicinity.

In a systematic and widespread manner, Russian armed forces tortured Ukrainians whom they suspected of being “informants”. A victim who suffered torture through electric shocks stated: “Every time I answered that I didn’t know or didn’t remember something, they gave me electric shocks. [...] I don’t know how long it lasted. It felt like an eternity.”

In some cases, torture was inflicted with such brutality that it caused the death of the victim.

All of these reports corroborate the findings we have all heard from the OSCE Moscow Mechanism reports.

Mr. Chair,

Canada is extremely concerned about credible reports of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by Russian forces in Ukraine on women and girls, men and boys.

The Commission of Inquiry, in their recent update, recount how Russian soldiers have raped women, often together with threats or commission of other violations. Frequently, family members were kept in an adjacent room, and forced to hear the violations taking place.

These violations are simply and utterly depraved. These horrific acts are war crimes. And they are still happening today.

Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said there are 105,000 cases of war crimes currently registered in Ukraine. This is a chilling number - more so as it is likely only a fraction of the total incidents of ongoing abuse meted out by Russian forces against civilians. Accountability must follow for Russia's aggression and crimes.

Mr. Chair,

The Commission of Inquiry also expressed concerns about allegations of genocide in Ukraine, in particular concerns that rhetoric transmitted through Russian state and other media may constitute incitement to genocide. We heard examples of this rhetoric last week, from some delegations in this room.

We have said it before, and we repeat again: there are rules, even in warfare. Russia will answer for their crimes. Canada already supports accountability initiatives, including those focussed on cases of conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls, men and boys, and will continue doing so. The victims and survivors deserve justice.

Mr. Chair,

Last year, beginning in the Fall, Russia launched a barrage of attacks on Ukraine's energy grid, cutting off heat in frigid temperatures, and leading to a nationwide blackout.

As we enter the Fall this year, Russia has resumed its attacks on Ukraine's energy grid, causing partial blackouts in western and central Ukraine. Ukraine's energy authority reported that 398 settlements had been cut off from the power network as a result of Russia's recent strikes, many of them in the front-line areas.

Civilian infrastructure should never be a military target. We call on Russia to cease attacking Ukraine's energy grid, withdraw its troops and equipment from all of Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, and respect the principles of this organization.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.