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**STATEMENT MARKING THREE YEARS OF RUSSIA'S FULL-SCALE
INVASION AGAINST UKRAINE**

As delivered by Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide at the Reinforced Permanent Council, Vienna, 24 February 2024

Mr. Chair,

Three years of war. Three years of Russian brutality. Three years of Ukrainian courage.

Three years ago today, Russia launched its full-scale attack on Ukraine. With devastating humanitarian consequences. Russia's continued aggression has destroyed and forever changed the lives of millions of people. The level of death and destruction caused by Russia is almost beyond comprehension.

Ukraine fights not only for its own survival but for the very principles that bind us together in this organization - sovereignty, freedom, and the rule of law. Norway stands firm in protecting European security. We will not waver. We will further bolster our support to Ukraine.

A just and lasting peace can only be secured on Ukraine's terms, through strength, not through submission. Anything less would reward aggression and encourage future violations of international law. A peace agreement must be just, lasting, and guarantee Ukraine's full independence, sovereignty, and freedom to choose its own path – including its alliances – both now and in the future.

Ukraine and its European allies must have a seat at the negotiating table. Europe cannot be the guarantor of a future peace agreement if it is not part of the negotiations.

The OSCE is built on dialogue and diplomacy. But diplomacy requires respect for international law. Russia has shown none. Its crimes are undeniable. The forced

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deportation of Ukrainian children. The relentless attacks on civilians. The systematic destruction of Ukraine's future. These crimes will not be forgotten. They will not go unpunished. Again, we call on Russia to release the illegally detained OSCE colleagues Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov, and Dmytro Shabanov.

Norway will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. Because this is not just about Ukraine. It is about the future of Europe.

Thank you very much for your attention.