



## United States Mission to the OSCE

# **The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Katherine Brucker  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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At the top, the United States condemns Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, or BSGI. We strongly supported the Initiative brokered by the UN and Türkiye and join UN Secretary-General Guterres and many others in expressing our disappointment that Russia refused the UN's proposals to continue implementation of the Initiative. Despite claiming concern for global food security, the Russian government is yet again imperiling global food security to punish Ukraine and advance its own parochial interests.

Let's be clear about the facts. One: Since August 2022, the BSGI enabled the shipment of nearly 33 million metric tons of Ukrainian grain and foodstuffs to the world. Two: Russia's agricultural exports have recovered to pre-war levels and would be even higher if not for its own self-imposed export restrictions. No G7 sanctions target Russian food and fertilizer exports, and Russia has been enjoying record exports of wheat. Russia has stopped sharing trade data to try and hide this fact from the world. Three: Despite Russia's claims to the contrary, over half of the grain and two-thirds of the wheat from the BSGI have gone to developing countries, including some of the most food insecure regions of the globe like the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, Yemen, and Afghanistan. Four: Every BSGI shipment contributed to reducing hardship in the world's poorest countries, since bringing grain to world markets reduces food prices for all. By suspending its participation in the BSGI and attempting to remove Ukrainian grain from the market, Russia will increase its market share and be able to sell its wheat at a higher price. We've already seen examples of Russia unilaterally raising wheat prices for countries in Africa. We urge Russia to reverse its decision, return to negotiations, and extend and fully implement the Initiative immediately.

As it scuttled the BSGI, Russia reportedly launched massive air attacks against southern Ukraine, especially the port city of Odesa. On Monday, Russia reportedly fired six cruise missiles and 36 Shahed kamikaze drones at Ukraine. On Tuesday, it reportedly fired 30 cruise missiles and 32 Iranian drones. And overnight, Russia again attacked Odesa for the third night in a row. Russian forces reportedly launched a total of 19 cruise missiles and 19 attack drones against Odesa, injuring 18 and damaging port facilities, residential buildings, and stores. Whether by unilaterally suspending the BSGI, manipulating the global grain market, or striking Odesa and Ukraine's farmland in the east, let's be clear about what's happening here, the Russian Federation is continuing to weaponize food during its unlawful war.

Over the last week, we also learned more about the Russian Federation's detention of thousands of Ukrainian civilians in a system of camps and prisons. Survivors and eyewitnesses report that in these facilities, Ukraine's civilians are tortured, endure

psychological abuse, are forced to labor in support of Russia's war of aggression, and face other ill-treatment. Based on official Russian Federation documents, the Kremlin is preparing to expand this system with plans to create 25 new prison colonies and six other detention centers in occupied Ukraine by 2026.

While Russia continues to commit abuses and atrocities that demand our attention, I would like to remind us all of some of the actions it has taken in violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In the more than 500 days since Russia began its full-scale invasion, Russia's military has occupied parts of eastern and southern Ukraine. The Kremlin conducted farcical referenda last September which flouted international law. Russian soldiers and security personnel, wearing balaclavas and wielding guns, rounded up individuals at schools, in hospitals, and off the street, forcing them to vote. Some went as far as to fill out people's ballots for them. To no one's surprise – and despite polls conducted by independent researchers and even Russia's own officials reporting otherwise – occupation authorities shamelessly announced that around 99% of voters were in favor of incorporating themselves into the Russian Federation, providing the Kremlin an ostensible pretext to claim Ukrainian territory.

Even before these sham referenda, Russia's officials sought to russify Ukraine. Russian Federation occupation authorities forced people to take Russian Federation passports, use Russia's ruble, imposed school curricula that glorified Russia and demonized Ukraine, and cut off populations from Ukrainian language broadcasts. Russia's forces removed countless Ukrainian civilians from their homes through its cruel filtration system, forcing many into detention camps in occupied Ukraine and across Russia. Members of Russia's armed forces and other Russian officials transferred within occupied parts of Ukraine and/or deported to Russia thousands of Ukraine's children, removing them from their families and legal guardians, attempting to strip them of their identities as citizens of Ukraine.

The United States will never recognize Russia's predatory claims to any parts of Ukraine's sovereign territory. Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, and Crimea are not – and never will be – part of Russia. We will continue to support Ukraine and call out the Russian Federation for the war crimes and other atrocities and abuses members of its forces and officials have committed in Ukraine.

Last week, the United States, in coordination with the Group of Seven, committed to continued support for Ukraine through the provision of additional modern military equipment, training, and intelligence sharing. The United States and its NATO Allies also announced that NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine would be developed into a multi-year program aimed at strengthening Ukraine's defense sector. And this week, we announced an additional 2.3 billion dollars in defense and humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. This will help Ukraine defend itself, assist those displaced by the war, and repair critical infrastructure damaged by Russia's attacks. This international support, combined with Ukraine's resolve, will ensure Ukrainian victory.

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