



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

## **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF UKRAINE ON RUSSIA'S WAR OF AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

**1039<sup>th</sup> FSC Plenary Meeting**  
(15 March 2023)

Agenda Item 1, General Statements

Mr Chairperson,

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine allow me to deliver a statement on the subject of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Today marks day 385 of this unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric full-scale war of aggression that the Kremlin launched to destroy Ukraine. Despite the extremely difficult situation in the area of Bakhmut, our forces continue to defend the city causing considerable damage to the enemy. Any tactical gains the Russian troops have managed to achieve have come at a huge cost of hundreds of Russian soldiers killed in senseless attempts to assault the positions of the Ukrainian Defence Forces.

We all clearly see that even using the superiority in the number of manpower, artillery and aviation, the Russian troops cannot reach their goals and continue to bear significant losses of people and weapons. Within the past week alone, in the area of Bakhmut, the enemy lost 1,100 killed and at least 1,500 wounded.

Despite heavy losses, the Russian forces continue their offensive efforts and terrorise Ukrainian civilians by attacking critical infrastructure and residential areas causing additional casualties among the civilian population and inflicting significant destruction.

The most recent massive attack occurred on 9 March 2023, when the Russian Federation launched 81 missiles and 8 kamikaze drones against targets in the Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zhytomyr and Vinnytsia regions.

In total, since the beginning of the war, almost 5,000 missile strikes, almost 3,500 air strikes, and nearly 1,100 drone strikes have been carried out by the Russian Federation. Without any military sense, the Russian troops continue to pursue the strategy of wanton destruction reducing entire cities to rubble and killing innocent civilians.

The results of these barbaric actions are obvious: the death toll of civilian victims is growing every day. According to the recently updated estimates of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), since the very beginning of full-scale Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there have been already registered 21,793 civilian casualties, including 8,231 killed and 13,734 injured (as of 13 March 2023).

Against the backdrop of the regular attacks against energy infrastructure, nuclear safety remains a cause of our particular concern. Regular missile attacks and artillery shelling continue to pose a serious threat to the physical security of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and undermine its normal functioning. The recent massive missile attack that occurred on 9 March forced the NPP off the power grid for the sixth time since the Kremlin's invasion began. Such actions may cause a devastating nuclear disaster on a global scale and should be stopped immediately without any preconditions.

Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric continues to jeopardise international security and stability. As the Russian Federation is fully aware of the possible consequences of its actions, we consider them as a deliberate strategy and a part of its nuclear sabre-rattling. The Kremlin should immediately cease all actions directly or indirectly affecting Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and any other nuclear facility and return full control over the illegally seized facilities to legitimate Ukrainian authorities.

Mr Chairperson,

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine continues to demonstrate the Kremlin's disrespect for the norms and principles of International Humanitarian Law aimed at protecting the civilian population in times of war. Credible human rights organisations regularly report on the deliberate targeting and killing of civilians by the Russian troops, facts of sexual and gender-based violence and deportations of protected persons to Russian territory.

In the infamous Stalinist traditions of their totalitarian past, that is painstakingly being reconstructed by the current Kremlin regime, Russian special services continue to persecute the local population in the occupied areas. For example, last week, the so-called «court» of the Russian occupation administration in the temporarily occupied territory of the Luhansk region sentenced the Ukrainian human rights defender and journalist Maksym Butkevych to 13 years in prison, as well as two other citizens of Ukraine to different terms of imprisonment.

Such actions clearly illustrate the methods the Russian side uses to sow fear and terror in an attempt to suppress any kind of resistance in the temporarily occupied territories and we call on all participating States to reinforce their pressure on the Kremlin in order to release illegally detained persons from the Russian captivity.

A particularly disturbing situation remains around the children in the temporarily occupied territories. Openly violating the provisions of the IV Geneva Convention of 1949, the occupiers forcibly deport Ukrainian children to the territory of the Russian Federation and facilitate their illegal adoption. These actions constitute a war crime and will not go without consequences.

It is important that the international community, in particular independent human rights organisations, continues to keep a close eye on these terrible actions and regularly report on the issue. As was highlighted in the recently published document of Human Rights Watch on the consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine for children entitled «We Must Provide a Family, Not Rebuild Orphanages»: «Children have been forcibly transferred to Russia and separated from their families, and have suffered traumatic experiences of war and displacement.»

The Government of Ukraine continues to take all possible steps to ensure that all responsible persons will be taken to account for their crimes, including within the framework of the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The Kremlin has committed the crime of aggression and it must not go unpunished. The Tribunal for the Russian state and its leadership shall serve as one of the key guarantees that the aggression against any other sovereign state will not be repeated.

As President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy said «Russia has become a synonym for terror and will be an example of defeat and fair punishment for this terror. The punishment that the Kremlin cannot stop».

Esteemed colleagues,

It is particularly cynical that despite the obvious responsibility of the Russian Federation and its troops for committing terrible war crimes, the aggressor not just denies it but blames other states for its own violations. Following its well-knowing propaganda playbook the Kremlin tries to gaslight us. However, nobody is a fool here. We all know that neither in 2014 when the Russian Federation attacked Crimea and Donbas, nor in 2022 when it started the full-scale invasion, the Kremlin was not provoked but took a deliberate decision based on neo-imperialistic and unlawful aspirations. Against this backdrop, there is no other way but to be united and resolute in our common response to this massive disinformation campaign we all witness, including in this very room.

Contrary to the empty claims of the Kremlin propaganda that there is no will among the Ukrainians to fight against the Russian Federation, the real situation is quite the opposite. The entire country is united in its resolve and determination to defeat the enemy and liberate the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders from the Russian occupiers.

Since the very beginning of this unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression, thousands of Ukrainians have joined Ukraine's defence forces in their desire to protect their country and defend their land. And today we can say with confidence that after more than a year after the full-scale war started, the number of volunteers does not decrease.

The figures speak for themselves – according to the information of the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine since February 2023 alone more than 28,000 volunteers have already applied to serve in the recently established units of the Assault Guard – a special military formation established within the structure of National Guard, National Police and State Border Guard Service.

«Glory to Ukraine» were the last words of a Ukrainian soldier whose shooting by Russian invaders was captured on video and became a horrible revelation last week. The killing of an unarmed prisoner of war is a cynical and defiant disregard by Russia of the norms of international humanitarian law and the customs of war. The fact that it was shot on camera is evidence of the cultivation of war crimes in Russia and their justification by propaganda and myths about «the Nazis». This is what worthless cowardly murderers do, but not warriors.

But no crime will go unpunished. This will be done in a legal and fair way - on the battlefield, in court or in an international tribunal - with respect to the rules of war and with honour.

Ukraine and all its people will continue to fight till the full restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including the territories that the Russian side attempted to annex in Crimea, Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions.

Glory to Ukraine!

Glory to the Heroes!

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.