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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1422nd MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

11 May 2023

Mr. Chair,

Last spring, President Putin wanted to celebrate Victory Day on Kyiv's Maidan following a quick invasion. Instead, over the past 15 months, that invasion has faltered and seen a sequence of defeats, as Russia's formations came up against brave and determined Ukrainian defenders - both civilian and military - valiantly fighting for their right to live freely, under a democratically elected government. Today I want to take a few minutes to reflect on some of the many things that Ukrainians, across Ukraine and across the world, are doing to defend their country, their independence, their democracy and their human rights.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine, defending Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, continue to demonstrate incredible courage and stamina in the face of Russian aggression. They have adapted to using and maintaining a plethora of weapons systems and shown ingenuity in their use. This past week, they reportedly used the Patriot air defence system to shoot down a Kinzhal hypersonic missile for the first time. In the face of Russian forces' increasing artillery and air attacks on Ukraine ahead of Russia's May 9 Victory Day celebrations, Ukrainian Armed Forces intercepted waves of cruise missiles and Iranian-made Shahed drones, launched against Kyiv, Kherson, Kharkiv, Odesa, and Mykolaiv. The Ukrainian Armed Forces continue to demonstrate relentless determination to rightfully defend their country and their people.

The Ukrainian Armed Forces' successes in protecting civilians and retaking occupied territory over the past year have been supported by heroic resistance and efforts of Ukraine's civilian population. In the early days following Russia's invasion, they set up self-defence forces and conjured homemade weapons to defend their towns and cities. They raise funds for the military and provide medical care to the injured. Civilians put out the fires and form search and rescue teams to search through the rubble of wrecked buildings. Journalists courageously bring the story home from the front lines. Ukrainian civil society is actively fighting Russian disinformation and defending against malicious cyberactivity. Ukrainians across Ukraine have set up soup kitchens, shelters, recharging stations, and food banks – to help each other. Ukrainians are actively demining and rebuilding those areas destroyed by Russian bombs, mines, and unexploded ordinance.

Others repair the roads, electrical infrastructure, water pipelines, and phone systems. Ukrainians, and the Ukrainian government, are providing psycho-social support to those suffering the very real mental health impacts of living under a constant torrent of Russian nighttime attacks, the trauma of losing friends and families, and of living under siege. We cannot but salute the bravery and courage of all those Ukrainians continuing to defend their homeland from the relentless onslaught, bombings, and atrocities, which have failed to break the iron-will, spirit and determination of the Ukrainian people and their sovereign right to self-determination.

Mr. Chair,

Outside of Ukraine, Ukrainian diplomats are tirelessly defending our shared values of freedom and human rights, building awareness of the dire situation Ukrainians are facing daily at home, rallying international support, and fighting Russian disinformation. They are driving the international campaign to ensure accountability for Russia's attacks against civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, and other war crimes and crimes against humanity. This comprises the ongoing work of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine; President Zelenskyy's recent visit to the International Criminal Court in the Hague; last week's Moscow Mechanism report; and Tuesday's Core Group joint statement on efforts to establish a tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine. And the Ukrainian people, both individuals and civil society, are on the ground collecting evidence, recording testimonies, keeping records, and moving cases through the judicial system to ensure justice will be served for those committing and ordering these untold atrocities.

Mr. Chair,

We reiterate our call for Russia to end its war of aggression by unconditionally withdrawing all troops and military equipment from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. We urge Russia not to politicize nor impede the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative for a full half-year mandate, and to fully comply with the conditions agreed. We call on Russia to release all SMM staff and assets, and to abide by its obligations under international law and by its commitments to OSCE principles.