



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by H.E. Mr. Andrii SYBIHA,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine,
at the 1509th Reinforced Meeting of the Permanent Council of the OSCE,

24 February 2025

Madam Chairperson,

Excellencies,

Thank you all, especially you, Dear Elina, for organizing this special reinforced meeting of the Permanent Council.

It is hard to believe that today is the third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. I remember that morning very well. Waking up from explosions with my family near Kyiv. These memories will be with us for the rest of our lives. It was a very difficult moment but we made our choice. The choice to defend our lives, our freedom, our country.

This was a turning point for the history of Europe. And today, the past three years serve as a real test for our principles. Every single point of the Helsinki Final Act can be measured by the reality of Russian aggression.

We must not forget that this aggression started not three years ago. It started in 2014, when Russia occupied the Ukrainian Crimea peninsula.

Russia launched the biggest and longest aggression in Europe since the Second World War. Three years ago, few people gave Ukraine more than 3 days or weeks. As of now, Ukraine has been defending for 3 years.

Today, we defend not only ourselves, our sovereignty, freedom, and territorial integrity. Ukraine defends the very fundamental principles of the OSCE.

Dear colleagues,

This year, we will mark 50 years since the Helsinki Final Act. We welcome Finland's presidency and the upcoming summit in Helsinki.

We believe it's a good time to look back at the roots of the OSCE. The Helsinki Final Act begins with the declaration of ten principles guiding relations between participating states.

First principle: equality, sovereignty, freedom, political independence, territorial integrity. All of this was violated by Russia.

Second, the pledge to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Violated by Russia.

Third, borders cannot be violated. Brutally destroyed by Russia.

Fourth, territorial integrity of states. Ruined by Russia.

Fifth, peaceful settlement of disputes. Ignored by Russia, which chose war as its main tool.

Sixth, non-intervention in internal affairs. Disregarded by Russia, which tries to destabilise not only Ukraine, but also other states.

Seventh, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Brutally violated by Russia in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories.

Eighth, equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Violated by Russia, who tries to erase national identities of Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars, and other national groups.

Ninth, cooperation in accordance with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. Russia replaced this with coercion and bullying.

Tenth, the fulfilment of the obligations under international law. Needless to say, international law is an empty word for Russia.

Now, my question is – how is this possible that this organization still includes a country that violated all of its ten basic principles? Russia made a mockery of the Helsinki Final Act. Yet, it is still a part of the OSCE. This reality shows just how weak the current security architecture is. We must act together to restore it.

Friends,

Today, more than ever, it is important to remain united and committed to our common interests, values, and principles. First of all, those which were codified in the Helsinki Final Act 50 years ago.

The Helsinki Final Act should still function even-though Russia has ruined every single one of its provisions. It is in our power to make Russia stop, to hold it accountable, and to bring a comprehensive, just and lasting peace back to Europe.

The Helsinki Final Act and then OSCE were created precisely to prevent what Russia has been doing for more than a decade. Russians continue systematic executions of our prisoners of war. They continue to abduct our children, organize concentration camps, and ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories.

Three OSCE colleagues, Maksym Petrov, Vadym Golda and Dmytro Shabanov have been in Russia's illegal custody for almost three years. They must be freed.

What have we done, as a community united within the OSCE, to stop these atrocities? What has been done to bring criminals to justice?

Yes, these are very unpleasant questions. But what better time to ask them than today? We must finally start looking for an answer to them other than "nothing". Otherwise, why does the OSCE still exist? Without these answers, the crimes will continue.

They will be repeated not only against Ukraine. You all know this. Next in line is Central Europe and the Baltics, and possibly Central Asia, and other regions. I don't want to scare anyone, but Russian appetites go far beyond Ukraine.

Dear colleagues,

I am certain that it is time to modernise international humanitarian law. The entire system created to prevent wars of aggression and mass atrocities in Europe failed. Not only the Helsinki Final Act, but also the Geneva Conventions and other fundamental documents.

It is time to update our tools and make them effective. Ukraine will be leading this process this year and we invite all like-minded nations to join us.

It is equally important to realize that we are seeing a new era in Europe and most probably a new security architecture. It cannot be based on the impunity of the aggressor or appeasement. We must not repeat past mistakes.

Budapest memorandum, the NATO summit in Bucharest, the invasion of Georgia, the invasion of Ukraine, Minsk process.

Russia speaks about "legitimate security concerns" just to cover its own revanchism and genocidal aggression. Russia never negotiated in good faith. And for Putin, negotiations are simply an instrument to achieve his goals through deception, not military force.

There is not a single hint that Russians seek just peace or real talks. Russia seeks a surrender of Ukraine and destabilisation of Europe. Putin is not a deal-maker, he is a deal-breaker. We can only force Russia to a true peace.

A new effective security architecture in Europe can only be built on the comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

These are the principles that we, together with many of you, laid down in our resolution in the UN General Assembly on the third anniversary of the Russian invasion.

Voting for it will be a test for every country. Whether we are in favor of the rule of law or – the law of the jungle.

A security architecture built on the violation and humiliation of international law will not protect anyone. Rather it will be a verdict for the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act, and the entire international community.

Comprehensive and lasting peace demands comprehensive and lasting pressure on Russia.

To make such peace possible and bring this war to an end, we need to use all of our strength. That's why we call for peace through strength. Ukraine wants to end this war this year. And to achieve a just, long-lasting, comprehensive peace.

The decisions we take today will shape Europe's future for decades to come. **Let's make the right decisions and remain committed to our principles.**

Thank you for your attention.