



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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

1035th FSC Plenary Meeting
(8 February 2023)

Agenda Item 2, 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.

In three days from now a year ago, on 11 February 2022, Ukraine activated the mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities in accordance with the Chapter III of the Vienna Document 2011.

The Russian Federation ignored Ukraine's legitimate concern over the significant concentration of the Russian military forces in the areas in close proximity to Ukraine. In disregard for the norms and principles on which our Organisation is founded, the Russian Federation opted not to engage in a meaningful dialogue. As a responding party, Russia even went so far as to consider itself entitled to dictate to Ukraine whether it should have cause for concern.

Such an approach contradicted both letter and spirit of the Vienna Document and the idea of confidence- and security-building measures. Such an approach rendered the risk reduction mechanism ineffective as a real tool for maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE region.

A year ago, the Russian delegation denied plans for an invasion. They lied to our face that they were just doing routine and purely defensive military exercises. They had the audacity to accuse the future victim of being the threat.

Looking back, we clearly see how cold-bloodedly and treacherously the Kremlin regime was preparing for war against Ukraine, spreading lies and shifting blame.

Russia's behaviour is a vivid illustration of the principle: Don't listen what they say, watch what they do. And they did. After months-long military build-up on the ground and blatant lies in the FSC, the Kremlin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, brutally

violating the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and all other norms and principles of international law.

The mouthpiece of Russian propaganda in the OSCE never admitted that it was Russia that caused this war. On the contrary, they continue to blame the West for not allowing Russia to take over Ukraine.

For nearly a year now, Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression is going on in Ukraine. The Russian leadership still did not abandon an insane and unrealizable idea of absorbing Ukraine, erasing its statehood and destroying its people.

Today marks day 350 of the war and heroic struggle of the people of Ukraine against the Russian invaders. The enemy continues its attempts to advance and seize the entire territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The hostilities are going on now on the Kupiansk, Lyman, Avdiivka and Novopavlivka axis, while the most difficult situation is observed in the area of Bakhmut. Despite the numerical superiority of the Russian troops, the Armed Forces of Ukraine hold the line against the aggressor causing heavy loss of life for the enemy.

Without significant victories on the battlefield, the Russian forces also continue to launch numerous strikes on civilian targets in Ukrainian cities, in particular in the Donetsk, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia regions. The wide use by the Russian forces of unguided weaponry, such as rockets and air bombs, cause significant human losses and destroys critical civilian infrastructure.

On 1 February 2023, the Russian Federation attacked a residential building in Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region. 4 people were killed and 18 were wounded.

On 5 February 2023, downtown Kharkiv was attacked by the Russian troops with the use of the S-300 missile system. At least 5 people were affected. A number of buildings were severely damaged.

Last night, the Russian Army launched new missile attacks on the Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions. In particular, four missiles, preliminary identified as S-300, hit downtown Kharkiv again, damaging a civilian industry facility and the Central Park of the city. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

In total, only during one week since the last FSC meeting, the Russian forces carried out 30 missile strikes, 62 air attacks and around 425 strikes with the use of multiple launch rocket systems. Numerous Ukrainian towns and cities reduced to rubble and horrifying number of civilian casualties are the shocking consequence of cowardly attacks by the Russian forces.

Due to substantial losses in manpower and military equipment, the Russian Federation is forced to mobilise additional reserves and carry out yet another mobilisation campaign to replenish mounting losses.

Rather than recognising its strategic and tactical miscalculations and retreating, the Kremlin is planning to conscript additional troops and continue its senseless war whatever it may cost. According to the information of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, the Russian Federation plans to call up from 300,000 to 500,000 people.

The Russian Federation continues to engage people, including convicted criminals, to serve in private military companies. The Russian military leadership widely

uses such groups in Ukraine in an attempt to hide the responsibility of the regular forces. The mercenaries from such companies, in particular from the infamous Wagner Group, commit unspeakable atrocities in the territory of Ukraine and very often fall outside the command-and-control system of the Russian army.

In addition, the Wagner Group is trying to replenish its ranks at the expense of Ukrainian citizens who serve their sentences in correctional institutions of the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions, and during the partial occupation of these regions were taken to the Crimean and Russian territory. In order to force them to cooperate, unbearable living conditions are created for them.

Against the background of Russia's mobilisations efforts, however, we cannot but note the fact of the ever-increasing popularity of the Ukrainian state project under the title «I want to live», designed to help military personnel of the Russian and Belarusian armies to surrender safely.

Throughout the «I want to live» project, since 15 September 2022, more than 7,600 applications have been received from Russians and residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine regarding the possibility of surrendering.

In January alone, the website of the project was visited by 5.6 million users – 4.7 million of them were from the Russian Federation.

Before Russian propaganda distorts the facts, I want to assure you that the detention of prisoners of war who voluntarily surrendered under the project, takes place in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. At their own request, captives can then return home as a result of an exchange or ask for asylum.

The fate of those Russian servicemen who did not take advantage of the proposal of the «I want to live» project is reflected in the daily reports of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. So, for example, as of today, since the beginning of the invasion, Russia's loss of troops is estimated at 134,100 personnel.

Mr Chairperson,

Russia's war against Ukraine continues to target the most vulnerable group – children. As of 6 February 2023, 461 dead children and 919 injured have already been registered. The constant shelling of residential areas limits thousands of children's access to services that meet basic needs, such as health care and education.

Meanwhile, in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the Russian occupation administrations continue the forced transfer of children to the territory of the Russian Federation. As of January 2023, the Russian occupiers forcibly relocated more than 729,000 Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia, including children whose parents died as a result of Russia's military aggression. Some of these children were taken in by foster families and adopted.

The relocation of Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to the Russian territory and their subsequent adoption by Russian citizens grossly violate international law, in particular the IV Geneva Convention of 1949 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. This practice is unacceptable and it should be strongly condemned by the international community.

Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, using them as human shields; execution and rapes; forceful conscription and kidnapping; attacks on medical personnel and facilities; use of banned weapons constitute a short list of terrible crimes committed by the Russian troops in Ukraine.

The Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine registers new such crimes on a daily basis. As of 7 February 2023, 68,321 crimes have been already registered. The wilful violation of international humanitarian law by Russian troops is abhorrent, and anyone who gives or follows such illegal orders must and will be held accountable.

To this end, Ukraine takes all necessary steps to create a Special Tribunal for the Punishment of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine.

Addressing the recent international conference «Accountability for war crimes in Ukraine» which took place in Copenhagen, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said: «The Special Tribunal will help to call to account political and military leadership of the Russian Federation for committing the gravest crime, the crime of aggression. I call on all international partners to start implementing this initiative as soon as possible and to support the respective UN General Assembly resolution drafted by Ukraine.»

Esteemed colleagues,

Ukraine is a peaceful nation that has never threatened anyone. However, the people of Ukraine are ready to fight to the last. Ukraine will not cede any of its territories.

We strongly believe that the only possibility of ensuring lasting peace and stability in Ukraine, Europe, and the world is to restore the rule of international law and recreate the efficiency of international institutions. Undeniably, the road in that direction lies through the liberation of Ukraine from the Russian occupiers and restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.