



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

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Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
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Madam Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to begin on a positive note by congratulating Malta on the re-election of Roberta Metsola as President of the European Parliament.

In Ukraine, she is a well-known leader dedicated to protecting people and defending principles in the face of russia's war of aggression.

Such a commitment is the best guarantee of a stronger, more united and principled Europe, from which the OSCE would also benefit.

Today international institutions, including within the OSCE, need, as never before, strong leadership standing on the guard of our shared principles and values.

This is what Minister Kuleba called for, quote-unquote, "in the context of russia's hybrid aggression and putin's overt threats, there is an urgent need for unity, resoluteness and faith in our victory as well as for the recognition that the results of this war will determine the fate of future generations".

Colleagues, just a few days ago, Ukraine celebrated its Statehood Day. It is not just about the past and our more than thousand-year-old identity traditions.

It is also a stark reminder of what is at stake in the future – respect for sovereign equality and individuality, enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

Today moscow is trying to justify its aggression by claiming ownership of the historical events that took place long before this city was actually founded.

By attempting to steal Ukraine's past, russia is looking for self-affirmation.

These sickly tries have resulted in the denial Ukraine's right to exist, the declaration functional Ukrainian statehood as an existential threat and the promotion of the need to erase Ukrainian national identity.

This is more than rhetoric. russia is attempting to kill Ukraine's future. Namely, our children.

The heinous attack on the Okhmatdyt hospital has become the latest despicable example of this inhumane strategy.

And we are grateful to the EU and US for providing, earlier this week, the opportunity for the Reckoning project and the Okmatdyt representative to brief the participating States about existential threats faced by our children.

Against the backdrop of continued and ruthless attacks on Ukraine's critical and civilian infrastructure, we have seen russia's new absurd accusations of Ukraine allegedly preparing the destruction of the Kyiv HPP and the Kaniv reservoir dams.

Whatever it is – spreading disinformation, intimidating Ukrainian people, preparing for a false flag operation or trying to divert the attention of the international community – however, the OSCE community needs to monitor russia's actions even more closely.

The largest deliberate man-made disaster in Europe in recent decades, caused by blowing up the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station and preceded by an active disinformation campaign, speaks volumes about the kremlin's methods.

In the meantime, russia continues to rain Ukraine with aerial guided missiles.

Over the last week, russia launched about 100 such bombs on average per day.

Moreover, the russians boast of starting to use 3 tonne bombs.

As we know, these bombs are dropped by planes far behind the frontline.

At the same time, the russian army trapped in the Kharkiv region has shown where possible solutions can be found.

The possibility to strike military targets in russia has effectively contributed to stopping its army in this region.

In view of this, military logic and the right to self-defence, as guaranteed by the Article 51 of the UN Charter, also dictate the need to take further decisions.

International law is clear in this regard - there could be no safe havens for killers.

On the contrary, international law demands to take all necessary measures to create safe havens for the civilians.

By striking legitimate military targets deeper in russia, we will protect them.

russian bombers must be destroyed before they launch deadly gliding bombs or missiles.

moscow, on its part, has destroyed too many houses, hospitals, schools, kindergartens, power stations to leave the things as they are.

Apart from that, Ukraine's urgent needs are air-defence systems, combat jets, artillery shells, and long-range weapons.

In this way, we can effectively fulfil our humanitarian duty to protect people from aggression and literally from enslavement.

Let's recall all the critical decisions taken in the last two years.

None of them led to escalation, despite russia's threats.

On the contrary, hesitation to act was used by moscow to escalate violence.

And it is high time for the Free World to seize the initiative once and for all.

"By doing so, we can force putin to rethink his strategy and choose peace instead of war [...] one has to confront putin with force. Make him change his calculations", as Minister Kuleba recently called for.

Important decisions, which were made at NATO Summit, contribute to that end.

At the same time, the Ukraine Compact endorsed on its margins not only develops our security architecture but also paves the way to a just and lasting peace based on Ukraine's territorial integrity as agreed during the Peace Summit in Switzerland.

Also, the anchoring of the irreversibility of Ukraine's movement towards NATO membership is one of such steps.

This would finally neutralize russia's neo-colonial impulses and would guarantee European security for decades.

Rather than giving a thought to possible concessions to or appeasement of the aggressor, we must look to the future and free the OSCE from russia's malign influence and Europe from "grey zones" of impunity and insecurity.

As stated by President Zelenskyy on the occasion of Ukrainian Statehood Day, "Ukraine cannot agree to anything less than to live. Anything less than to preserve itself. Anything less than to remain human".

I thank you, Madam Chairperson.