



## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
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Week after week, we hear Russia accuse the Chair and other participating States – my own country included – of bias. Of “opportunistic political expediency.” Of the inclusion of a “contentious separate item” on our agenda. More than 60 meetings of the Permanent Council have been convened since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and Russia has complained of bias – yes, you guessed it – more than 60 times.

Mr. Chair, when one participating States blatantly lies in this Council about its preparations for a surprise attack against its neighbor, illegally uses force to launch the biggest land war since World War II, occupies its neighbor’s territory, establishes a network of “filtration centers,” engages in the most brutal and systematic methods of torture against civilian hostages, including electroshocks and rape, is it bias to call this out? Is it contentious?

Is it merely political expediency to refer to systematic, centrally planned efforts to relocate and re-educate Ukrainian children to Russia? Is it biased to cite the UN *Independent Commission of Inquiry*’s documented cases “in which Russian soldiers burst into houses of villages they occupied, raped women and a girl, and committed additional war crimes against the victims and their family members”?

Was it confrontational, as the Russian representative said this morning, when we and so many others expressed horror at Russia’s theft of Ukraine’s children from their families and lawful guardians? Was it opportunistic when, at the October 6 Special PC, more than 25 participating States condemned Russia’s attack on the town of Hroza for inflicting so many civilian deaths?

Was it political expediency when participating States reacted in disgust to the evidence that members of Russia’s forces carried out targeted, organized killings of more than 400 civilians in Bucha, many of whom were found shot dead, hands tied behind their backs?

No. It wasn’t bias. It was the brutal truth. And when that same expert mission documented the discovery, after the liberation of the town of Zabuchchya, of 18 mutilated bodies of murdered men, women, and children – some with their ears cut off, and others with their teeth pulled out, that wasn’t bias either. Those are facts. Persistent, stubborn, and indeed, appalling facts.

We understand perfectly well why the Russian Federation tries to avoid discussion of its atrocities and abuses and goes to great lengths to dwell on procedural debates in this Council

or to raise any subject other than its war of aggression against Ukraine. Who would want to admit to such brutality? But here's another fact: we have an obligation to raise these atrocities. Remember that, like all participating States in this organization, Russia agreed to uphold the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, and Russia is obligated to comply with international law. It undertook these commitments freely and moreover it agreed to be held to account by other participating States for its adherence to these commitments. Let's recall what they entail, citing directly from the Charter of Paris:

“We undertake to build, consolidate and strengthen democracy as the only system of government of our nations. In this endeavor, we will abide by the following: Human rights and fundamental freedoms are the birthright of all human beings, are inalienable and are guaranteed by law. Their protection and promotion is the first responsibility of a government. Respect for them is an essential safeguard against an overmighty State. Their observance and full exercise are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace.”

This is what the Russian federation signed up to. So when we call Russia to account for its unconscionable behavior, we are not being arbitrary, opportunistic, or biased. We are acting in accordance with our principles, the rule of law, and, yes, *our own* commitments. In this light, I want to condemn the Russian Federation's attack last night, that reportedly damaged a civilian ship flying the Liberia flag, as it entered the port of the Odessa municipality.

Ladies and gentlemen, as Mahatma Ghandi once said, “Silence becomes cowardice when occasion demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly.” The conduct of this war demands speaking out the whole truth and acting accordingly. We must use all the OSCE instruments that this platform accords to us to call out the atrocities that are so clearly and wholly incompatible with our OSCE commitments. We must use OSCE tools to help meet the needs of suffering people in Ukraine and elsewhere, for example through the Support Program for Ukraine. And we look to ODIHR to continue to document and speak out forcefully about the Russian Federation's horrific acts, in order to help support international accountability efforts.

We must also cooperate with other international organizations. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine released a report on October 31. The report concluded there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that the October 5 strike on a memorial gathering in Hroza, which we talked about here in this Council, which killed 59 people – 36 women, 22 men, and an eight-year-old boy – was launched by Russian armed forces, and that there was no indication of military personnel or any other legitimate military targets at or adjacent to the funeral reception at the time of that attack. The report said, “Russian armed forces either failed to do everything feasible to verify that the target was a military objective... or deliberately targeted civilians or civilian objects. Either scenario would be in violation of international humanitarian law.”

We will continue to call out these monstrous actions for what they are, and fulfill our commitment to hold the Russian Federation, a participating State at this organization, accountable for its behavior. We will continue to use the tools at our disposal to promote accountability for Russia's atrocities and abuses in Ukraine. One of those tools is to speak out in this forum.

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