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Delegation of Canada  
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**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1420<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**27 April 2023**

Mr. Chair,

This week marks the 37th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, which had terrible consequences for human health and the environment in both Ukraine and Belarus. The Chernobyl disaster was also significant in that it was covered up by the Kremlin who lied to the world, its own authorities and, most devastatingly, to its own population. Very much in the same way it is doing so now, 37 years later, with horrible consequences for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and international law.

Holding the Kremlin to account for its lies, deception and disregard for human life, sadly, is still needed almost four decades later. Canada and others continue to call out Russian crimes against the civilian population of Ukraine, as well as against Ukrainian POWs. We will continue to decry the torture and mistreatment; the filtration camps; the kidnapping of children; the targeting of power plants, schools, hospitals, and cities - until Russia ends its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

We will also continue to highlight the true cost of Putin's war on Russia: the loss of hundreds of thousands of Russian lives, the repression and persecution of dissenting voices and economic decline, including a dearth of imported products and technology. In the face of these enormous costs, and with little to show after 14 months of murder and mayhem, the question of why President Putin continues his senseless war remains.

Mr. Chair,

President Putin started his war on the false pretexts of "de-nazifying and de-militarising" Ukraine, and then later changed course to characterize his invasion as "self-defence". He purposefully ignored the fact that Ukraine is led by a government democratically elected by the Ukrainian people with free and fair elections – unlike Russia, whose opposition is either in prison, in exile or assassinated. He ignored the fact that Ukraine had never attacked a neighbouring state – unlike Russia, with its ongoing violations of Georgia's, Moldova's and Ukraine's territorial integrity.

President Putin claimed at the time that "Ukraine has never had its own authentic statehood. There has never been a sustainable statehood in Ukraine". This was not an accident, but a deliberate attempt to erase Ukrainian history and undermine its sovereignty and right to exist. But Ukraine has statehood, it has sovereignty, it has history, and it has its own language. Putin denies the facts as he fears a successful, democratic neighbour; one whose vibrant, open society stands in sharp contrast to the restrictions and repressions that the Kremlin imposes on Russia's population.

Mr. Chair,

At the UN Security Council this week, Russia hypocritically spoke of upholding the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, as per Article 2 of the UN Charter, and protested the imposition of the "might is right principle" – yet this is exactly what Russia is attempting in Ukraine. Russia hypocritically called for the "rejection of neocolonial manifestations", even as it seeks to illegally annex more Ukrainian territory and speaks here at the OSCE of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk as Russian territory.

Last week, Russia hypocritically held itself up in the UN Security Council as a defender of multilateralism, even while it uses its veto to block action to maintain peace and security more often than any other permanent member, and while, here, in the OSCE, it abuses consensus to block the adoption of a budget, to close field missions, and to hinder the work of the autonomous institutions.

Mr. Chair,

Canada stands with Ukraine because we believe in our OSCE principles and commitments. 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 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.