



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

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

1052nd FSC Plenary Meeting
(19 July 2023)

Agenda Item 1, General Statements

Madam 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.

More than 500 days have passed since the start of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In February 2022, Russian troops were under the delusion that they could capture Kyiv in two weeks. Today, the Defence Forces of Ukraine have taken over the initiative from the enemy and are gradually retaking the territories previously occupied by the invaders in the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine continue to conduct an offensive operation in the Bakhmut area, advancing on the flanks, launching counterattacks, and strengthening their tactical positions. In the process of advancing, Ukrainian troops have taken control over the main commanding heights around Bakhmut, effectively tracking the enemy's movements in the city.

Bakhmut, which was a subject of obsession for Russian propaganda, became a trap for the invaders. In the battle for Bakhmut, the Russian forces suffered the largest losses in personnel during the war but failed to achieve their objective and will now be forced to retreat in disgrace.

Since the beginning of the counteroffensive, the Ukrainian Defence Forces have already liberated more than 210 square kilometres of territory previously seized by the Russian army.

The complete liberation of all temporarily occupied territories remains Ukraine's top priority. To achieve this goal, Ukraine will use all available means in full compliance with its right to self-defence according to Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Esteemed colleagues,

On 7 July, the US Government announced an additional security assistance package to Ukraine, which includes, among other things, the supply of 155 mm cluster munitions.

Taking into account the extensive reaction that followed this decision, we would like to state the following.

Ukraine remains fully committed to its obligations under international law. The specific ammunition provided to Ukraine at this stage of repelling Russian aggression meets the most urgent needs of the Ukrainian Defence Forces. In close cooperation with our international partners, the Ukrainian military command carefully assessed the potential risks to the civilian population.

We are committed to ensuring the proper standard of transparency and control, and cluster munitions will be used exclusively for the de-occupation of internationally recognized territories of Ukraine. These munitions will not be used on the internationally recognized territory of Russia.

In accordance with the relevant requirements of international law, the Ukrainian Defence Forces will refrain from using cluster munitions in inhabited urban areas in order to minimize the risks to the civilian population. Cluster munitions will be deployed exclusively in areas where Russian troops are concentrated so that to dismantle the enemy defence with minimal risk to the lives of Ukrainian soldiers.

Protecting the lives of our citizens, both civilians and military personnel, remains our highest priority.

We will keep careful records of the use of these weapons as well as of the specific areas where they will be employed. After the de-occupation of all Ukrainian territories, these zones will be a priority for demining, which will eliminate the risks associated with unexploded components of cluster munitions.

We thank all our international partners for military assistance, which contributes to strengthening the capabilities of the Ukrainian Defence Forces. With ongoing intense fighting, strong political support and continuous military assistance to Ukraine are more vital than ever.

Ukraine welcomes the results of the NATO Vilnius Summit held in Lithuania on 12-13 July and appreciates the strong support and solidarity from the Alliance member states. Ukraine has demonstrated in practice its true commitment to Euro-Atlantic values

and readiness to defend them. We firmly believe that today, sovereign Ukraine is a guarantee of stability and peace in Europe and a world order based on international law.

We also appreciate the strong language of the Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine issued by the G7 countries and joined by 10 more. This document sends a clear message that the international community will never accept Russia's armed aggression against an independent and sovereign state, and will not tolerate the use of violence and open coercion as foreign policy tools.

Madam Chairperson,

Determined to destroy Ukraine, the Russian Federation is persistently launching large-scale air and missile strikes against Ukrainian civilians and critical infrastructure.

Over the past two weeks, since we last discussed Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine in the FSC, Russian troops have continued to shell peaceful communities across Ukraine, deliberately targeting critical infrastructure such as medical and educational institutions, electricity and water supply facilities.

Despite its apparent strategic failure, the Russian Federation, as a mere terrorist state, continues its attempts to reverse the course of war with its traditional methods, including fierce artillery shelling of front-line settlements, drone and missile attacks on residential areas, indiscriminate shelling of civilian infrastructure.

On 8 July, Russian forces attacked a residential area in the city of Lyman in the Donetsk region. Nine people died and 12 were injured in the attack.

On 10 July, a local school in Orikhiv in the Zaporizhzhia region became the target of the Russian forces. This horrific attack claimed the lives of seven people and caused injuries to 13 more. Those people were there just to receive humanitarian aid.

On 17 July, Russian troops shelled the town of Bilopillya in the Sumy region. The attack resulted in the death of two local residents, at least ten individuals sustained injuries.

The only consequence of these Russian strikes is that the number of casualties in the war is increasing daily. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates that the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine has already claimed 9,287 civilian lives, and at least 16,384 civilians have been injured (as of 16 July 2023).

The number of war victims in the heart of Europe in the 21st century produces an extremely painful impression. However, even more distressing is knowing that these numbers will continue to grow due to the actions of the Russian armed forces aimed at intentional killing of Ukrainians.

The Russian armed forces operate in gross violation of international humanitarian law and various international human rights obligations. We reiterate that no form of immunity from prosecution will prevent Russian civilian leadership or military

commanders from escaping responsibility for the numerous war crimes committed in Ukraine during this brutal and inhumane war.

Esteemed colleagues,

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has been responsible for undermining the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Ukrainian ports and grain terminals were targeted and damaged by Russian missiles and drones. These actions inevitably led to the destabilization of food markets and to the emergence of social chaos in countries that heavily depend on food imports.

The Kremlin appears indifferent to these consequences and continues to view grain exports as a means of coercion. The recent decision of the Russian Federation to withdraw from the Grain Initiative is a prime example of it.

Russia's withdrawal from the Grain Deal further exemplifies its disregard for the interests of countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, that depend on receiving vital food supplies at affordable prices. We condemn such an attitude.

During his recent visit to the UN Headquarters in New York, Ukraine's Minister for Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba emphatically stated that "Russia must cease its manipulation of hunger games that impact people worldwide."

We find it particularly telling that the day after Russia's withdrawal from the Deal, the Russian forces attacked Odesa, Ukraine's largest seaport, using 21 UAVs and 6 Kalibr missiles.

Despite Russia's overt blackmail attempts, Ukraine remains committed to its obligations under relevant agreement with Türkiye and the UN. We need to restore the proper functioning of the maritime corridor in the Black Sea.

We firmly believe that the Black Sea Grain Initiative can and should continue to operate even without Russia's participation. To this end, Ukraine will persistently cooperate with international partners, including the Black Sea states and the United Nations, to find alternative options and routes for food exports.

Madam Chairperson

In conclusion, I would like to recall that on 16 July, the Ukrainian people celebrated the Day of State Sovereignty of Ukraine. On that day, 33 years ago, the Declaration of State Sovereignty was adopted by the MPs of the then Soviet Ukraine.

This Declaration became the foundation of the independence of our state. Independence, with which imperial Russia could not come to terms.

We know very well that nothing is more valued than freedom and independence, territorial integrity, the right of the people to choose their own path of development and integration. For more than nine years, Ukrainians have been defending these values from

Russia, which, with its unhealthy outdated imperial ambitions, has become a mere terrorist state.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy made it very clear that "Our country will never surrender its sovereignty. This is evident to the entire world. Regardless of Russian terror, we know that Ukrainian freedom will endure and prevail."

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.