



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **U.S. Statement for the Forum for Security Cooperation: Closing Statement**

As delivered by Ambassador Michael Carpenter  
December 14, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

And I thank you, Cher Didier, for your able stewardship of this forum in these extremely challenging times. As we sit here in this room, Russia's artillery and missiles continue to rain down on helpless Ukrainian civilians and the critical infrastructure that sustains them. Civil discussion in a forum designed for security cooperation can seem tone deaf at a time when one participating State, Russia, is waging a brutal war against another, Ukraine, and a third, Belarus, is enabling that aggression. Nevertheless, this forum can still be put to good use by maintaining the focus of our work and discussions to support Ukraine and to condemn the horrendous atrocities being perpetrated by Russia's forces in their war of aggression against Ukraine and its people. We can use this forum to remind Russia face-to-face on a weekly basis that it has the power to end its war of choice at any time, to demand that it withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, including Crimea, and to underline that it will be held accountable for all atrocities committed.

Mr. Chair,

I would like to commend you, as Chair of the FSC, for maintaining our focus on Ukraine, even in the face of bitter complaints from Russia, which of course wants to hide its crimes in Ukraine from the eyes of the world and see us all go back to "business as usual." Russia's complaints are purposefully deployed in an attempt to distract us so that it can continue its war of choice and attempt to seize additional land in Ukraine and perpetrate additional monstrosities while pretending in this Forum as if nothing was amiss. We've all seen this show before – Russia tried to distract us and return to business as usual after its attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its so-called recognition of the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states in 2008. We are not fooled. We will not empower Russia by shifting our focus away from its on-going war in Ukraine.

We have not gone back to business as usual. We have kept the orientation of the work we do firmly fixed on the circumstances of Russia's barbaric behavior and aggression in Ukraine and the plight of the Ukrainian people. I applaud Belgium for including Ukraine and inviting Ukrainian speakers to participate in this trimester's security dialogues on Children and Armed Conflict, Women, Peace and Security, Explosive Remnants of War, Armed Forces and the Environment, the Code of Conduct, and International Humanitarian Law. We cannot and should not ignore the war in our midst any more than Ukrainians can ignore the daily bombardment of their hospitals and schools and loss of power, water, heat, and communications in the midst of winter.

Supporting Ukraine has been, and is, the right thing to do because it is important for all of us that Ukraine restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Not just so that we protect the European security order, but because what Russia is doing on a human level is barbaric, vile, and repugnant. Russia must learn that this war of aggression and the atrocities perpetrated in Russia's name will be met with a firm response, and that "might does not make right." Caving to Russia's aggression and accepting its brazen attempts to redraw borders by force tears up the post-World War II rulebook that has made all of us more secure and would have repercussions not only in OSCE region but around the world. Allowing the Geneva Conventions and International Humanitarian Law to be trampled makes us all weaker, less secure, and morally deficient.

Mr. Chair,

I strongly encourage all successive FSC Chairs during this time of war to follow Belgium's example in keeping the this body's focus firmly fixed on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, in having the courage to stand up to Russia's attempts to bully participating States in this forum through personal threats and propagandistic lies, and in resisting Russia's cynical rhetoric and its attempts to distract from the war crimes its forces have committed against the Ukrainian people. I assure you that you will have the strong support of the United States.

Congratulations, Ambassador, dear Didier, on the conclusion of Belgium's Chairpersonship. Many thanks to you and the rest of your able team for the positive collaboration we have had together this trimester. We welcome the departure of Belarus from the troika and of course welcome Bosnia and

Herzegovina as the next Chair of the FSC as well as Bulgaria as the next member of the troika.

Ambassador Bencun and Ambassador Krалеva, we look forward to our future collaboration with you and your respective teams next year as we continue the important work of the OSCE in this forum.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.