



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on the russian federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,
to the 1435th special meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council
25 July 2023

Mr. Chairperson,

I thank you very much for convening this special meeting of the Permanent Council as well as for public condemnation of the attack on Odesa last Sunday.

The kremlin regime has reconfirmed once again its terrorist nature.

Following russia's withdrawal from the grain initiative, Odesa and the region have been under massive missile and drone attacks in fact every night.

The recent attack on July 23 has become the culmination of russia's terrorist efforts, when 19 missiles of different types were fired, including "Kalibr", "Kh-22", "Onyx", "Iskander-K" and "Iskander-M".

As a result, one person was killed. 22 more were injured, including four children of 11, 12, and two 17-year-olds.

Just imagine, an 11-m long Kh-22 equipped with a 1000 kg warhead, originally designed to hit warships in the open sea, heading towards a peaceful city.

The use of such missiles in densely populated areas is already a war crime due to their destructive power and inaccuracy.

In addition to the humanitarian dimension, this alone attack also raises cultural, religious and food security aspects.

Despite international law's obligations not to undertake any deliberate step that may directly or indirectly damage the heritage sites, russia hit the Historic Center of Odesa.

Recently it has been inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List.

Reportedly, about 29 heritage-listed buildings were damaged.

This is a war crime and gross violation of russia's obligations under international law.

This includes the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

In this regard we welcome UNESCO's intention to field a mission to Odesa to conduct a preliminary assessment of damages.

Neither russia respects the diplomatic law. Among other things, the building of the Greek Consulate was damaged.

This is already the second consular office in Odesa hit by russia, after the Chinese Consulate was damaged just three days before.

Furthermore, the Transfiguration Cathedral, the first and foremost Orthodox church in Odesa founded in 1794, was seriously damaged.

As UNESCO stated – and I quote – “This outrageous destruction marks an escalation of violence against cultural heritage of Ukraine”.

russia's missile - KH-22 - hit the altar of the Cathedral. Let me repeat - the anti-ship missile hit the altar. Is there anything sacred for russia? I am afraid, not.

The fate of this Cathedral speaks volumes what we are fighting for. For our past, present and future. For our identity, history and heritage. For our dignity, rights and freedoms.

In 1936 the Cathedral was looted and destroyed by Bolshevik moscow. Then it was restored when Ukraine regained independence.

And these days a terrorist russia destroyed it once again. As many other heritage objects across the country.

Last Thursday, russia raised in this Council the issue of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine.

Obviously, russia remains the only threat to Ukraine's Orthodoxy.

Dear colleagues,

Only last Thursday we discussed the impact of russia's withdrawal from the grain initiative on global food security, its attempts to destabilize prices on global market and intentions once again to play hunger games with those in need.

Since then, russia continues to destroy systematically grain terminals, reservoirs and berths of Ukrainian ports.

Since 18 of July russia attacked Ukraine with 74 missiles and 92 Iranian-origin drones.

Furthermore, yesterday russia switched to ports on the river of Danube.

The Ukrainian civilian infrastructure was attacked in close vicinity to Romania.

As a result of the attack, six people were injured and a grain reservoir and cargo storage tanks were destroyed.

Does anyone have any doubts about russia's true intentions?

In addition to that, russia intensively plants mines in Ukrainian land, hits agricultural farms and destroys equipment.

For instance, on July 21, russia launched a massive attack on a farm in the Bolgrad district, Odesa region. Three missiles hit grain reservoirs, administrative premises and agricultural machinery.

Neither should we forget about the repercussion russia's destruction of the Kakhovka Dam has for the irrigation system in the southern regions of Ukraine.

This will have a dire impact on future harvest.

Neither russia has stopped stealing Ukrainian grain.

Even a few days ago, as reported by Ukraine's General Staff, the russian invaders were robbing the grain from the village of Pryshyb in the Zaporizhzhia region.

russia shows once again what it can do the best – to destroy, kill and loot.

We call on the international community to condemn russia's actions.

And we call on the international community to support the efforts of the Ukrainian leadership aimed to unblock the grain initiative.

Appropriate measures are needed to ensure the safety of navigation in the Black Sea as a guarantee of food security around the world.

We should not allow would-be aggressors to challenge the freedom of navigation.

People around the globe need a humanitarian corridor for Ukraine's grain.

Given the risks created by Russia in the Black Sea, the conduct of the third summit of the International Crimea Platform is more than timely.

Russia should not be allowed to isolate the Black Sea with the occupation of Crimea.

We believe that the OSCE leadership will actively participate in the Summit and contribute to the discussion with valuable ideas how to make Crimea again a peninsula of peace, freedom and prosperity.

Colleagues, Sunday's attack on Odesa has just reconfirmed that Russia will continue its aggressive war as long as it has means to do that.

Neither will it stop killing people, destroying our infrastructure and targeting our heritage, as long as it occupies Ukrainian territory.

Therefore, we have to do everything possible to pull Russia out from all Ukraine's territories. To deprive it of any means to sustain its war machine. To bring all responsible to account. And to do everything that brings the defeat of Russian terrorists closer with more air defense for Ukraine, more artillery, and more long-range weapons.

As stated by the President of Ukraine, "the recipe for ending the war is obvious: everything depends on the unity and determination of all those who value freedom, culture and life".

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.