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Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE**

1445th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL

5 October 2023

Mr. Chair,

Shortly after we convened for our Permanent Council meeting last week, the IAEA held its General Conference just a short distance from the Hofburg, where member States elected Ukraine to the Board of Governors for the 2023-2025 period.

We congratulate Ukraine on its election, and we look forward to continuing our close working relationship on nuclear safety and security.

At the same meeting, IAEA member States once again raised concerns about the Russian Federation's seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.

Canada is one of many member States deeply worried by the nuclear safety and security risks at Zaporizhzhya caused by Russia's military presence.

We call on Russia, as we did last week with our resolution at the IAEA general conference, to immediately cease all actions against and at nuclear facilities in Ukraine and withdraw its military and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant.

Zaporizhzhya is a Ukrainian nuclear facility, and the safest option is to return the full control of the facility to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

Russia's threat of use of weapons of mass destruction in Ukraine is not only disreputable, but extremely dangerous to the world. If Russia has decided to continue its path of self-destruction, it should not drag the world with it.

Nor is Russia's aggression, Mr. Chair, bound within Ukraine's territorial borders. Russia's actions continue to cause suffering for the wider world. We draw the Council's attention to the following statistic: in September alone, Russian forces conducted 521 drone strikes – a record number – on Ukrainian grain and port infrastructure. This demonstrates an astonishing absence of scruples in conducting warfare – even the world's poorest people, those who depend on aid for their daily meal, are points of leverage for Russia. Tragically, it seems that for Russia, anything may be weaponized, and everyone and anything is a target.

Civilian grain and port infrastructure is sadly only one of many examples.

Three days ago, Ukraine's largest commercial energy company reported that the Russian military attacked its warehouse housing spare parts, which, according to the company, were to be used to maintain critical civilian infrastructure.

With the winter approaching, Russia is once again aiming to leave Ukraine in the cold, and the dark. Critical civilian infrastructure is not a lawful military target.

President Zelenskyy and Prime Minister Trudeau witnessed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding during President Zelenskyy's recent visit to Canada. The MoU expresses the intent of Ukrainian and Canadian companies to cooperate in the construction of hydroelectric power plants in Ukraine.

Mr. Chair, rebuilding infrastructure is just one example of our strong commitment to Ukraine's freedom and prosperity. We are with Ukraine now, and we will continue supporting Ukraine beyond victory.

Russia will not wear down our support nor wait us out. In our support to Ukraine, there is fortitude, not fatigue.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

On September 29 and 30, 1941, police units under German Nazi command murdered over 34 thousand Jewish women, men and children in just two days at the Babyn Yar ravine, just outside of Kyiv. The killings continued in the subsequent years of the war, and included Soviet prisoners of war, non-Jewish Ukrainians, and many, many other civilians. In total, over 100 000 people perished at the hands of the Nazi regime just at Babyn Yar alone.

The Nazis tried to cover up their crime by burning the heaps of bodies that were lying there. But the desecration of Babyn Yar did not stop there. In March 2022, in the early days of Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian forces fired a missile at the Babyn Yar site, killing five individuals and damaging this important monument.

I repeat what I said earlier: tragically, it seems that for Russia, anything – including history itself – may be weaponized and everyone and anything is a target.

As we remember the victims of Babyn Yar, we are reminded of the dangers of totalitarianism and where it can lead us. This is all the more chilling in the context of Russia's invasion. The United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has raised the alarm that the rhetoric transmitted through Russian state and other media may constitute incitement to genocide.

This is why Canada will not stay idle in the face of Russia's aggression. Our support for Ukraine continues, unabatedly and unequivocally.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.