



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International
Organizations in Vienna

Statement on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

As for delivery by Ambassador Yurii Vitrenko, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, to the 1515th meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council

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Mr. Chairperson,

On 11 of March Ukraine supported the US proposal for a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire.

The death and destruction could have been stopped three weeks ago.

Many prisoners of war, civilian detainees, and forcibly deported children could have been reunited with their families in Ukraine. Including three OSCE officials.

If only Russia had accepted this proposal as Ukraine has. Without false preconditions.

Instead, today is the 1134th day of this senseless war.

Moreover, as I mentioned last week, Russia has stepped up the attacks on peaceful Ukrainian cities. The figures speak for themselves.

On the night of 28 March, Russia attacked Ukraine with 163 drones; on 29 of March - with 172 drones; on 31 of March – 131 drones and two ballistic missiles; on 1 of April – with two air guided missiles; on 2 of April – with 74 drones, and on April 3 – with 39 drones.

And what could be worth for Moscow?

To admit that it is targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure and civilian systems that provide the population with services essential to its health and survival?

And by doing so, to admit that they want to deliberately inflict on the civilians conditions unfit for living. Especially given the level of destruction Russia has already caused to Ukraine's energy production.

As the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission reported last September, these "attacks have already caused additional population displacement and have disproportionately impacted groups in a situation of vulnerability, such as older persons, those with disabilities, households with lower incomes, and the internally displaced, with women particularly affected".

These actions clearly fall within the definition of the UN Genocide Convention.

Or to admit that their drone bombardment is a purely terrorist tactic aimed at killing as many civilians as possible and thereby breaking the will of the people to resist?

And this tactic is clearly a crime against humanity.

The truth is that Russia is actively using both tactics.

On 27 of March, Russia conducted a double-tap attack on Konotop, Sumy region. The rescuers were again a target.

The Russian drone strike on Dnipro on 28 March killed four people and injured more than 24 others, including a pregnant woman.

On 29 of March, Russia's missile attack on the city of Kryvyi Rih injured seven people.

It also attacked residential areas of Kharkiv, killing two people and injuring 55, including 5 children.

On 30 of March, Russia attacked the Cherkasy region with drones, the Kherson region – with artillery and drones; the Donetsk region – with glide aerial bombs, drones and artillery, Zaporizhzhia – with drones, the Dnipro region – with glide bombs and drones. The Sumy region – with bombs and drones, the Kharkiv region – with glide aerial bomb.

On the night of 2 April, Kharkiv was deliberately targeted with 14 drones. Three children were among the wounded. The Odesa and Sumy regions were also under attack. In one day, Russia dropped nearly 50 glide bombs on the Sumy region. And during the day, a ballistic attack on Kryvyi Rih claimed the lives of four people and injured 14 others, including children. An 8-year-old boy remains in a critical condition.

Energy facilities were again damaged. A substation in the Sumy region, and a power line in Nikopol, Dnipro region, were damaged. Nearly 4,000 consumers in two regions were left without electricity.

As of the end of March, strikes on Kherson, Poltava, and Kharkiv are other examples.

Namely, Russia targeted gas infrastructure in the Poltava region. In Kherson, Russia's artillery damaged the city's power infrastructure. In Kharkiv, too, the heating supply infrastructure was affected.

Overall, from 23 to 30 of March, Russia used 1,310 glide aerial bombs, over 1,000 attack drones – mostly Iranian Shaheds – and nine missiles of various types, including ballistic ones.

All of these Russia's attacks are not about peace and its intentions to act in good faith.

Esteemed colleagues,

As Minister Sybiha said: "Russian demands and ultimatums have remained unchanged over the years. [...] Moscow wants a weak, defenseless Ukraine. This is not about NATO or "security concerns". This is about Russia's ability to destroy the Ukrainian state at a later stage [...] It is worth noting that Moscow's rhetoric has escalated to the level of 2022".

These demands were repeated by the Russian delegation at the last PC meeting.

And today we remember very well Vladimir Putin's words, and I quote: "If Western arms supplies stop tomorrow, Ukraine will have a week to live".

The very next day after this chilling statement, the Ukrainian village of Hroza was attacked. A Russian missile killed almost the entire village.

That's why Ukraine will never accept anything that would make us weak or defenseless, that would restrict Ukraine's sovereign choices, whether internal or external, and that would leave people in the occupation at the mercy of the aggressor. For us, this will mean new tragedies and massacres, like in Bucha in 2022, but this time across the all of Ukraine.

Yet, this week Vladimir Putin was again very clear about his intentions. He believes that Russia could "finish off" the Defence Forces of Ukraine.

Against the backdrop of ongoing diplomatic processes, Russia's attempts to shift blame and discredit Ukraine speak volume. Moscow is looking for an excuse to continue the war.

Moreover, according to our intelligence, Russia is preparing for new offensives against the Sumy, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia regions.

There is no doubt that Putin's desire to prolong the war will bring new deaths, human suffering and destruction.

But these three years have taught us how to protect human life and the rule of law, and how to disrupt Moscow's plans.

By improving the air-defense system, we can effectively protect the Ukrainian peaceful cities, thus, making Russia's aerial terror futile.

By increasing military assistance to Ukraine, we can make the occupation of every single meter of the Ukrainian land too costly even for the Kremlin.

By enforcing a sanctions regime, we can seriously deplete Moscow's resources for its army and thus contribute to the peace process.

By working out strong and long-term guarantees, we can deter Vladimir Putin from challenging our common security again in the future.

By doing so, we can send a clear and strong message to Moscow's pariah partners, such as Iran or the DPRK, warning them against instigating new instability in the world.

In this context, we welcome the Joint Declaration adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the Weimer+. This is one of a number of recent steps demonstrating our shared and unwavering commitment to a just peace and to the prevention of further acts of aggression.

In conclusion, let me reiterate, that Ukraine will continue to work constructively with the American partners, with European allies, with all our partners from Ottawa to London to Tokyo, to Canberra on achieving a just and lasting peace based on the principles and norms of international law, in particular related to sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

As President Zelenskyy said at the Bucha Summit: "We all want to end this war as soon as possible, with guaranteed security, with lasting peace and with dignity. This means that Russia should neither profit from nor be rewarded for this war, and should not escape just accountability for what it has done. There can be no normalization of evil".

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.