



United States Mission to the OSCE

The Russian Federation's Ongoing Aggression Against Ukraine

As delivered by by Charge d'Affaires Courtney Austrian
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
February 9, 2023

Russia's relentless use of large-scale missile and kamikaze drone attacks in its war of aggression against Ukraine continues to demand our attention and condemnation. Since its savage assault began, Russia has reportedly fired 13 such missile salvos and deployed 15 waves of drone attacks in its ongoing attempts to cripple Ukraine. We have all seen the death and destruction caused by these attacks.

At the same time, Russia's daily assaults have brought constant chaos into the lives of the people of Ukraine. Kherson oblast provides a tragic number of examples. Last Thursday, Russian Federation armed forces attacked the oblast 65 times, killing two and wounding nine. The next day, on Friday, Russia's troops fired 47 times on populated areas, reportedly damaging a school, a shopping center, a village council building, and several homes. These attacks killed one and injured three. Then on Saturday, Russia's forces carried out over 60 attacks on the oblast using mortars and rocket artillery. These attacks killed one person, injured another, and forced 98 people, including 20 children, to evacuate Ukraine-liberated areas of Kherson. All this in just three days in only one of Ukraine's oblasts.

This is the kind of brutality that has reportedly led to 2,638 educational institutions being damaged with another 437 completely destroyed. The kind of brutality that has led to over eighty percent of the Holy Mountains National Nature Park being ruined. The kind of brutality that has contributed to the damage and destruction of at least 238 of Ukraine's cultural sites, including 105 religious sites, 18 museums, 85 historical buildings, 19 monuments, and 11 libraries.

And yet, Mr. Chair, it appears the Kremlin's leaders still do not have the humanity to cease their attacks wreaking havoc on civilians, nor do they have the humility to admit that their ruthless war of choice is not succeeding, and that it will never succeed no matter how many lives it needlessly costs – including the lives of Russia's own soldiers. Reports now estimate Russia's forces have sustained almost 200,000 casualties in its war. Putin appears not to understand that he has failed, and will continue to fail, in his efforts to erase sovereign, independent Ukraine from the map and to subjugate its people to the will of Russia. These new casualty numbers also reflect just how desperate the Kremlin is for any sign of military progress in Ukraine. Putin still does not seem to understand the fundamental fact that Ukraine is not going to simply surrender

its independence and its sovereignty, and the international community is not going to cease support for Ukraine.

As President Biden has said, “winning the war in Ukraine is to get Russia out of Ukraine completely. Recognize Ukraine’s sovereignty and independence.” In pursuit of this goal, we recently announced two new security assistance packages to help Ukraine continue to defend itself against Russia’s brutal war. These packages include critical air defense and counter-drone capabilities to help Ukraine defend its people, as well as armored infantry vehicles and more of the equipment that Ukraine is already using so effectively, including Javelin anti-tank missiles, artillery ammunition, and conventional and long-range rockets for U.S.-provided HIMARS.

Earlier today my Russian counterpart noted that I referred to Russia 16 times in my first intervention. I have to admit I had not counted. But, I assure you if Russia hadn’t launched an unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine- another OSCE participating State- this wouldn’t have been necessary.

Mr. Chair, we all know Russia could end its unprovoked war today if it chose to do so. And it should. Russia should also release the SMM staff it is detaining and return the OSCE vehicles that we all paid for and which it has illegally taken. No matter what outlandish lies the Kremlin and its disinformation machine come up with to justify its naked neo-imperial aggression – and the Kremlin’s absurd narratives keep shifting because none of them make any sense – the United States will continue to rally the world to support Ukraine. We applaud the more than 50 countries who have come together in solidarity with Ukraine. We will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. Ukraine must be able to continue to defend itself in order to be in the strongest possible position at the negotiating table when the time comes.

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