

Horrible evidence of Russia's atrocities in Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE, 7 April 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair. I would like to thank you for Poland's leadership as chair of our organisation in the wake of Russia's premeditated and unjustified invasion of Ukraine. In particular, I am grateful to you for calling a Special Permanent Council on Tuesday. It gave all delegations an important opportunity to discuss the latest horrible evidence of Russia's atrocities in Bucha, and other towns in the Kyiv region, and to pay our respects to the victims.

On Tuesday, [the UK also chaired an important discussion of the United Nations Security Council](#), where Council members heard directly from President Zelenskyy about the barbarity of Russian forces. His report on the torture of Ukrainian civilians by Russian forces was harrowing. He told the Council of people shot in the streets, of limbs cut off and tongues removed, and of women raped in front of their children.

Horribly, more and more reports are emerging of rape and sexual violence committed by Russian forces in Ukraine. Let me be very clear – the perpetration of sexual violence in armed conflict is a war crime.

I commend the immense courage of those speaking out after experiencing sexual violence at the hands of the Russian armed forces. Earlier this week on a visit to Poland, [my Foreign Minister was clear that the UK stands ready to support those affected by such violence](#).

Mr, Chair, I would like to pay tribute to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General for her determination and for her team's work to prepare the necessary legal evidence to ensure accountability. The UK will do all we can to bring the perpetrators of all war crimes to justice. That is why the UK will provide military, policing and financial support to help to uncover evidence of such crimes and ultimately seek justice. On 24 March, [we announced an additional £1 million of funding for the ICC](#) to help to uncover evidence of war crimes and we are providing UK experts to support the investigation.

I would also like to pay tribute to the professionalism and bravery of journalists who are working in Ukraine to expose the truth about President Putin's war and the barbaric treatment of civilians. The United Kingdom is a proud member of the OSCE Group of Friends on Safety of Journalists and I fully subscribe to the joint statement being delivered on behalf of that group today. Last week we also heard important testimony from Kakhovka journalist Oleg Baturin, who shared his story of being abducted and tortured by Russian forces. His captors told him that this was in revenge for his journalistic activity. Sadly, Mr Baturin's case is far from unique, as Russia attempts to hide evidence of its crimes from the world.

On this note, I would like to address the Russian delegation. The atrocities we have seen in Bucha, in Irpin, in Borodyanka and throughout Ukraine are appalling. They will forever be a moral stain upon the Russian army. But they will forever too be a moral stain on the Russian diplomatic service, whose denial and attempted justification of crimes by the Russian armed forces enables them. Look at what is being done in your name. Look at what it is you are unsuccessfully attempting to justify.

Mr Chair, human rights are being grossly violated in areas that remain under the control of Russian forces. We continue to be deeply concerned at reports of abductions, killings, torture and forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians. We also deplore the latest round of conscription of residents of Crimea into the Russian Armed Forces – drawing them into war against their compatriots.

Mr Chair, President Putin will never be able to break the spirit of Ukraine's people or conquer their homeland. His continued war of choice can achieve nothing but further suffering. We call on Russia in the strongest possible terms to end its attacks on civilians in all their forms, to pull back their troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and to stop this war. The United Kingdom will remain resolute in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity within its internationally recognised borders.

Thank you Mr Chair, and I request that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.