

Humanitarian situation in Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Madam Ambassador.

Over seven months since its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's actions have had terrible consequences for the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. Over 14,000 civilian casualties have been reported to date. Within Ukraine, 17.7 million are in humanitarian need. Approximately 7 million are displaced and 7.4 million have registered as refugees across Europe. Schools, hospitals and other medical facilities in Ukraine have been attacked. The sheer level of destruction means that humanitarian need will increase as winter approaches.

The [second Moscow Mechanism report](#) was an important step in attempting to establish the scale of the suffering resulting from Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine so far. It noted concern over "clear patterns of serious violations of international humanitarian law attributable mostly to the Russian armed forces", including the magnitude and frequency of the indiscriminate attacks carried out against civilians and civilian objects. The report detailed horrifying accounts of civilians reporting torture, rape, unlawful detention, enforced disappearances and the targeting of critical civilian infrastructure.

Last week's sham referenda conducted under considerable fear and harassment were neither free nor fair. The UK will never recognize the supposed results. And we will never recognize Russian attempts to illegally annex Ukrainian sovereign territory.

And it is not only civilians suffering. There is mounting evidence that Russia has failed to abide by its obligations under the third Geneva Convention – that all prisoners of war should be treated humanely, afforded appropriate medical treatment and basic necessities, and be protected from humiliating and degrading treatment. As we have already heard this morning, wars have rules and these prohibit a detaining power from prosecuting prisoners of war for having participated in hostilities, or for lawful acts of war committed in the course of armed conflict. The sham trials – including of foreign nationals serving in the Ukrainian Armed Forces – by an unrecognised court was a clear violation of international humanitarian law (IHL). We will hold Russia accountable for these violations.

Every day since the 24 February, we have seen the tragic consequences in Ukraine of Russia's aggression, but every day we have also been reminded of the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people. The United Kingdom will continue to do everything we can to support Ukraine, including through economic, diplomatic and humanitarian measures. And we will continue to call on Russia to withdraw from the territory of Ukraine, and put an end to the suffering. Ukraine deserves peace.