

OSCE meeting on Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine: UK statement, 10 March 2022

Thank you Mr Chairman.

Your Excellencies, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the United Kingdom today. And in doing so talk about Russia's flagrant disregard for their commitments to the OSCE and its principles.

The unprovoked, premeditated and illegal invasion of Ukraine is, simply put, a disgrace.

In particular, I would like to focus on the people affected by President Putin's war. His war of choice.

Mr Chairman, we have been following, all of us, with growing horror, the news from Mariupol. The airstrike by Russia on a maternity hospital was abhorrent. It was reckless. It was appalling. It underscores the terrible toll this war is exacting on Ukrainian families. While Russia's representatives spout fiction about threats from Ukraine, it is UNICEF that has reported that at least 37 children have been killed 50 injured.

This follows evidence of Russian forces targeting evacuation corridors earlier this week, with whole families cut down as they attempted to run for safety.

Russia's use of indiscriminate force against innocent civilians, against children, is clear for all to see. It is right that it must, it must be investigated and those responsible must be held to account.

And that is why the [UK joined 37 other countries in referring these atrocities to the International Criminal Court](#).

It is also why [we joined 44 other countries in launching the Moscow Mechanism](#) to investigate Russia's human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law in Ukraine.

And as we've just heard from Martin Griffiths, as he's outlined today, the conflict is having a terrible humanitarian impact.

Many towns and cities in Ukraine have faced over a week of persistent shelling. Thousands upon thousands of people are without water, heat or electricity. There are critical shortages of food, shortages of medicine. The World Health Organisation has reported 18 attacks on healthcare providers. This must stop.

Two million people have fled Ukraine so far. Hundreds of thousands more are displaced within the country.

Russia's actions have a massive human cost, and I am grateful to Liliana Palihovici, for rightly drawing attention to this.

Sadly, we can expect a disproportionately severe impact on women, girls and the most vulnerable and excluded.

We must protect them from sexual violence and other forms of exploitation, as a central requirement of international humanitarian law.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting Ukrainian women and girls, recognising the critical contribution women are making on the frontline and in communities affected directly by Russia's aggression.

The determination shown by Ukrainians in the face of such adversity is, simply put, incredible. From the inspirational leadership of President Zelenskyy and his ministerial team, to the courage of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and others defending their homeland in any way they can, and of course to the unity, the unity of Ukrainian society rallying to support those in need.

Their bravery, in the face of Russia's relentless onslaught, is quite humbling. They fight to defend the values, the very values we all share.

Mr Chairman, we also commend the bravery of those Russian people demonstrating against President Putin's appalling war. And to those people in Russia I would say, we know that this is not done in your name.

We are deeply concerned at the arrest of thousands of peaceful protesters and the crackdown on the independent media as Mr Putin tries to hide the reality of his actions from his people.

We know too that many people in Belarus do not support Mr Lukashenko's complicity in this illegal war.

We condemn Belarus' facilitation of the Russian invasion by hosting Russian military forces and assets and providing access through its territory.

And today, on this day, I would like to draw the Russian Ambassador's attention to the opening words of the [UN Charter](#):

"We the peoples of the United Nations, determine to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind... to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small... and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for...treaties and... international law can be maintained".

I understand that not so long ago these were the very words he expressed Russia's commitment to that Charter in this very hall.

May I suggest he might draw the attention of his government to it once again.

Its principles have inspired millions around the world. Even now in Minsk and

Moscow, people gather to demonstrate their support for Ukraine and their opposition to this war.

141 countries from all over the globe voted in favour of a UN resolution condemning the Russian government's actions.

The demands are simple – Mr Putin, stop the attacks on civilians. Stop this war of choice. Stop this war now. Pull out your troops from Ukraine and respect international law.

And, Mr Chairman, he would be wise to listen. President Putin has badly misjudged the strength, the unity, the resilience of the Ukrainian people.

By continuing his so-called “special operation” all President Putin achieves is more bloodshed and more suffering – not only amongst Ukrainians, but also amongst the Russian people.

For our part, the United Kingdom will continue providing humanitarian aid and defensive military equipment. We are ratcheting up our sanctions to tighten the economic vice and cut funding to Mr Putin's war machine.

We will continue to call out Russia's actions in every multilateral forum. We, the United Kingdom, will stand by Ukraine, in the determined support of their sovereignty, will stand with Ukraine for their unity, will stand with Ukraine for their independence and territorial integrity, today, tomorrow, and for as long as it takes.

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