

Putin stands alone on the international stage: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. Russia's actions in Ukraine in recent weeks have dropped to new lows. The increased tempo of long-range strikes, including the use of Shahed-136 drones, against Ukraine's civilian population and infrastructure have resulted in further tragic loss of life. And extensive areas of Ukraine have been left without power supply ahead of winter. Mr Chair, this cruelty has no excuse. It only reflects one man's desperation – Vladimir Putin – desperate as he is losing the war and desperate as he wishes to distract from what is happening on the battlefield. And – as a result – civilians are paying the highest price.

Since this Council last met, the Belarusian regime announced that 70,000 Belarusian troops would be part of a regional "group of forces" created under the false guise of "protecting" its border from external threats. This regional military grouping, which includes thousands of Russian troops, is a further attempt at distraction and misdirection – misjudged actions which only serve to strengthen the international community's opposition to Putin's illegal war in Ukraine and further isolate Russia and Belarus.

Mr Chair – I want to focus this week's intervention on [the recent vote at the UN General Assembly](#), the UN Charter and OSCE principles and commitments.

The strength of the international community's resolve was recently demonstrated at the United Nations General Assembly on 12 October when, in the face of President Putin's unprovoked aggression, 143 nations across the globe came together in defence of the UN Charter and in solidarity with Ukraine. The UN General Assembly vote is a powerful demonstration of condemnation of Russia's outrageous and illegal attempts to annex the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

The vote was an important show of international unity against an aggressor that seeks to destabilise the international norms that protect us all. It is indisputable evidence of what we have known for some time – Putin stands alone on the international stage and his actions are driving his country further into self-inflicted isolation. It also demonstrates that the world will not stand by as Russia tramples on the obligations enshrined in the UN Charter, including that no threat or use of force shall be made against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Yesterday, President Putin made another announcement – this time declaring martial law in those areas under temporary Russia control within Ukraine. Martial law will mean further ruthless attempts to enforce control in territory to which Russia has no right, and over people who have already suffered heavily at the hands of Russian forces. Despite what the Kremlin tells us, these moves highlight Russia's increasing desperation in the midst

of its failing invasion. On Kherson, Russia's plans to forcibly deport Ukrainian civilians are deeply concerning. We remind Russia that any danger posed to civilians is a direct result of its illegal invasion.

On OSCE principles and commitments – we must not allow Russia to disregard what we have all signed up to in this Forum. Putin has contravened the principles and commitments made by all OSCE participating States in the [1975 Helsinki Final Act](#) time and time again. To name but a few – (i) sovereign equality and respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty; (ii) refraining from the threat or use of force; (iii) the inviolability of frontiers; (iv) territorial integrity of states; (v) respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – the list goes on.

The real-world repercussions for Ukraine of such blatant disregard for OSCE principles can be seen in the recent reports by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):

- Over seven and a half million Ukrainian refugees across Europe;
- Seven million displaced people within Ukraine;
- 6,306 civilian deaths, including 397 children; and
- 9,602 civilian injuries, including 723 children.

The true numbers are thought to be much higher and they are rising. According to the UN, most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects, including shelling from heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems, missiles and air strikes. Russia's barbaric and callous tactics are a throwback to a history which should have been learned from and never repeated again.

Russia should end this war. It should cease its assault on Ukraine and it should withdraw its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine. The targeting of civilians and of civilian infrastructure may cause blackouts, but – as we are seeing – Russia's assaults are not breaking the steadfast resolve of the people of Ukraine, nor the UK, nor the international community's absolute and unwavering support of them. We will continue to defend what is right. We will continue to champion democracy. We will continue to uphold Ukraine's right to sovereignty, independence and freedom. Until and after Ukraine prevails.