

Russia's continued war increases collective outrage: UK statement to the OSCE

Mr. Chair, today we should solely be celebrating with Ukraine as they mark 31 years of independence. Instead, we have also gathered here at this Special Council to once again condemn Russia's unprovoked, full-scale and illegal invasion of Ukraine. These have been six long, dark months. The Russian government anticipated a three-day war – it is fitting that exactly six months on, we celebrate the indomitable spirit of the proud nation of Ukraine that refuses to yield to President Putin's imperialism. We congratulate our Ukrainian colleagues and all the people of Ukraine on their national day, and look forward to many more to come.

Yesterday, politicians met for the International Crimea Platform. Since 2014, the people of Crimea have endured a brutal and systematic campaign of human rights abuses by the Russian authorities, including the persecution of the Tatars, arbitrary arrests, and the restriction of land ownership. Let us remember that the 24th February was an escalation in Putin's hostilities against Ukraine; not the beginning. It has never been more important to emphasise that Crimea is Ukraine.

We reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Ukraine, pay tribute to all those who have sacrificed their lives in the face of evil and tyranny, and express our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of the ongoing aggression against Ukraine. 6.5 million people have become refugees across Europe, with one third of Ukrainians forced from their homes. As of Monday, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 13,477 civilian casualties, of which over 5,500 are fatalities. Behind each of these numbers is a human being – with a name, a face and family and friends who love them. And the true figure is almost certainly significantly higher, rising every day as Russia continues to target civilians and critical infrastructure – including recent indiscriminate shelling in Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Dnipro and Donetsk.

Russia's disregard for international law, and its lack of humanity has appalled the international community. The world was horrified to learn of reports of war crimes and atrocities committed by Russian forces in places such as Irpin and Bucha. I and many of my colleagues here have repeatedly emphasised the callousness and blatant illegality of Russia's tactics. Tactics which include the exploitation of prisoners of war and civilian detainees for political purposes; we've heard reports of torture and mistreatment, and the use of sham trials – all in a clear breach of the Geneva conventions. By continuing to wage this war of brutality, Russia does not make us accustomed to its inhuman methods – it only increases our collective outrage. The UK is committed to ensuring that those who commit war crimes in Ukraine are brought to justice.

Having been humiliated militarily and failing in his initial war aims, President Putin has shown his true colours and resorted to the use of food and energy as weapons, threatening global food security and pushing some of the world's most vulnerable populations to the brink of famine. We remain gravely concerned about the implications of Russia's illegal invasion for nuclear safety and security. Since February, nuclear facilities in Ukraine have experienced significant disruptions to operations, posing a grave threat to the populations of Ukraine and wider Europe. Specifically, Russia must immediately restore full control of Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant to the competent Ukrainian authorities and ensure that the International Atomic Energy Agency has appropriate access to address critical safety, security and safeguard concerns. Failure to comply would be an exceptionally costly act of desperation. Though let us be clear – the quickest path to restoring nuclear safety and security in Ukraine is the immediate and complete withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Since the invasion started, the [UK has provided economic, humanitarian and military assistance totalling over £3 billion](#), including towards holding those responsible for war crimes to account and an unprecedented package of sanctions on those facilitating this invasion. We will continue to use all the tools available to ensure that Ukraine succeeds in the face of President Putin's unprovoked, premediated and unjustified war.

On this Ukrainian Independence Day, we resolutely reaffirm that we remain committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, extending to its territorial waters. Today, once again, we reiterate our demand for the immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, of all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from the territory of Ukraine. Ukraine – we stand with you.