

Russia's invasion has injured thousands and deprived them of treatment: UK statement to the OSCE

Mr. Chair, [only two weeks ago in this Council](#), we reminded Russia of its obligations, under international law, to protect civilians, civilian infrastructure and those seeking medical care, including combatants. We also reminded Russia of the consequences of turning its back on these obligations. However, once again, we are presented with yet more evidence of Russia's callous disregard for life in the pursuit of its illegal invasion.

The [second Moscow Mechanism report](#) made for sobering reading, detailing Russia's continued targeting of healthcare facilities and personnel in direct contravention of International Humanitarian Law. According to the WHO, Russian forces have repeatedly attacked Ukrainian medical facilities, striking hospitals, ambulances, medics, patients, and even newborns. At least 395 attacks have been reported since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, particularly impacting the most at-risk and marginalised groups in Ukraine such as women, children, minority groups, the disabled and the elderly. We will not let these actions go unanswered.

Russia's invasion has injured thousands, mentally as well as physically, and then deprived them of treatment and care when they needed it the most. It is heartless and unforgivable. As well as those who have been injured as a direct result of the Russian government's actions, many more are at risk of ill-health due to reduced access to routine and preventative healthcare, including pharmacy services; sexual and reproductive health care; and vaccination for diseases such as COVID-19 and polio. In addition, organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and UNICEF have reported on the devastating effects of the invasion on mental health, particularly amongst children who have been injured, witnessed acts of violence and displaced from the familiarity of their homes. The UK is the largest donor to the UN Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, providing life-saving assistance, however we are concerned that this will not reach all those who so desperately need it.

The Moscow Mechanism report highlighted the 'catastrophic' conditions in areas under temporary Russian control. Major cities such as Kherson are likely to face a humanitarian crisis due to a shortage of medicines, yet humanitarian aid organisations are being denied access to deliver urgently needed supplies and medical expertise. The WHO have warned of a lack of antibiotics for battlefield injuries, patients unable to receive early diagnosis and treatment for cancer; people unable to receive medications for hypertension; and diabetics who cannot access insulin, resulting in worsening illness and preventable deaths.

We have also heard the horrific reports of 'filtration camps', disappearances, and illegal detentions in these areas. We were shocked and

appalled to learn of the reported death of British National Paul Urey, whilst in the custody of Russian proxies in eastern Ukraine. Mr. Urey was a civilian who was detained whilst undertaking humanitarian work in Ukraine. [I reiterate the words of my Foreign Secretary](#), “the Russian government and its proxies are continuing to commit atrocities. Those responsible will be held to account.”

Russia must bear full responsibility for Mr. Urey’s death. Just as Russia must bear full responsibility for the countless other deaths of those illegally detained and tortured; of those targeted at medical facilities and hospitals when at their most vulnerable; for the heroic and selfless medical staff who only wanted to help and heal; for four year old Liza Dmitrieva on the way home from her speech therapy session in Vinnytsia. The list tragically goes on. We will ensure that justice is delivered for Liza, for all those who have suffered and for those who have lost their lives at the hands of President Putin. As has been said many times, he alone can stop this horror and bloodshed, he simply chooses not to.

Through humanitarian assistance, and our commitments on military aid, economic assistance, sanctions and accountability, we will support and stand by Ukraine in their fight against Russia’s tyranny. On many fronts, Russia has already lost. It must end this illegal war now, withdraw its troops from the whole of Ukraine, and take responsibility for its actions.