

Russia's invasion of Ukraine: UK welcomes OSCE Moscow Mechanism independent expert report

Mr Chair, I wish to make a statement in my national capacity, to supplement the statement just delivered by Ambassador Stelian Stoian from Romania on behalf of [the 45 participating States, including the UK, that invoked the Moscow Mechanism, with the support of Ukraine](#).

I would like to welcome Professors Wolfgang Benedek, Veronika Bílková and Marco Sassòli to the Permanent Council today and thank them for their professional and meticulous work in preparing this report. We greatly appreciate that we have, collectively, been able to call on your expertise, and independence, in preparing this important report.

Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom strongly supported the joint decision to invoke the Moscow Mechanism. We did so because of our grave concerns about the humanitarian impacts of Russia's invasion and the potential for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since the invocation of the Mechanism on 3 March, we have spoken regularly in this Council about some of the truly shocking incidents that have come to light. We have spoken about the events in Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin, and Borodyanka. Earlier this week, [we expressed our horror about the tragic events in Kramatorsk](#): missile strikes on a crowd, reported to be over a thousand people, waiting for trains to escape Russia's onslaught. Over fifty people – innocent civilians – women, men, and children – reportedly killed in this barbaric attack, and over 100 injured.

The report presented today by Professors Benedek, Bílková and Sassòli makes clear that we, and the wider international community, were right to invoke the Moscow Mechanism in response to our concerns about Russia's invasion. We read in the report about the human impact directly caused by Russia's actions – in sections covering deportations, sieges and humanitarian corridors, on targeted attacks on individual civilians and civilian infrastructure, and on the impact on vulnerable groups. The sections on two specific attacks, against the Mariupol Maternity House and Childrens' hospital, and Mariupol Theatre, remind us in detail of the terror of what is still happening – today – to that city's inhabitants, and the cost of Russia's aggression.

Mr Chair,

The report covers incidents between 24 February and 1 April. It does not cover the most recent atrocities in Ukraine, although we note the authors' comments that Bucha "deserves and requires a serious international enquiry". This report, the first independent report under the auspices of an international organisation, is important. It confirms our concerns, including "clear patterns of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) violations by the

Russian forces in their conduct of hostilities.”

This report is just the first of likely many. We must, as an international community, hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities that have been committed in Ukraine, including military commanders and other individuals in the Putin regime. Soldiers and commanders who issue or follow illegal orders need to understand that their actions will be documented, and they will be held to account. Justice will be served.

Mr Chair, we may hear today from the Russian Delegation. If so, we can probably expect the usual distortions, denials and disinformation. But, as we have said before – facts matter. That is precisely why a large majority of participating States, with the support of Ukraine, asked for this fact finding mission. It is with the facts that we can ensure accountability for all those that violate International Humanitarian Law.

We call on Russia in the strongest possible terms to end its attacks on civilians in all their forms, to pull back their troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and to stop this war. The United Kingdom will remain resolute in our support for Ukraine’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and unity within its internationally recognised borders.