

Russia's needless war has inflicted suffering on too many: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. The Special Permanent Council on Tuesday 11 October denounced Russia's ongoing and indefensible attacks against civilians across Ukraine. Later that day, G7 leaders "condemned these attacks in the strongest possible terms".

Again – yesterday, we heard reports of further Russian missile attacks, including on a market in Avdiivka, killing at least seven people and injuring eight.

We mourn with Ukraine for all those impacted by these unspeakable acts across Ukraine. We will not allow these individuals to be forgotten. Individuals such as Dr Oksana Leontieva. On Monday morning, Oksana woke up, got her five year old son ready for school, then drove to her job at one of Kyiv's children's hospitals. She took the same short route as every week – but on this day, she unknowingly drove straight into the worst missile attack on her country in months – where she was sadly killed. Oksana specialised in treating childhood cancer. Her hospital described her as "a true professional and supporter of her patients and colleagues". Her son is now an orphan.

Mr Chair, Oksana and her son are but two innocent victims of Russia's continued intense barrage of missile attacks on Kyiv and across Ukraine. More civilian infrastructure has been severely impacted in the latest attacks. There have continued to be multiple power blackouts, with areas cut off from water supply and communications. Let us recall: deliberate attacks on innocent civilian populations constitute a war crime. Russia must end its invasion and withdraw all of its forces from Ukraine now.

We condemn Russia's continued actions at Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant and the pressure exerted on the personnel of the facility. This is a further irresponsible escalation and we will hold Russia responsible for any incident caused by their actions. The safety, security and safeguards of the nuclear facility are paramount and we support the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts in this regard.

Mr Chair, as the [latest Moscow Mechanism report](#) made clear – internal repression and external aggression are two sides of the same coin. I want to spotlight the incredible bravery of those who have stood up in defence of human rights and democracy – many of whom have been detained or 'disappeared', notably in Russia and Belarus. We commend the Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine, Ales Bialiatski in Belarus and Memorial in Russia for being awarded the Nobel Prize – three of the seven recipients of the OSCE Democracy Defenders Award are now Nobel Peace Prize laureates. We are proud to have spearheaded the OSCE award with a group of States championing democracy and supporting human rights defenders at the OSCE. The role of

these human rights defenders is as important as it ever has been in our region.

The UK also commends Vladimir Kara-Murza for being awarded the Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize. He has continued to champion human rights and freedom in the face of Russian state aggression. Vladimir Kara-Murza remains in detention on politically-motivated charges; he should be released without delay. But he is not alone. During the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference earlier this month, we heard directly from the courageous wives, mothers and sisters of Ukrainian political prisoners, detained civilians, and those forcibly disappeared. Many remain detained and missing to this day, their families resolutely searching for scraps of information on their whereabouts. We urge Russia to engage with and provide access to international humanitarian organisations. These families deserve answers. We will continue to raise cases until political prisoners are free and the whereabouts of those forcibly disappeared are revealed.

Mr Chair, [143 countries stand united in condemnation of Putin's illegal attempts to annex four regions of Ukraine, as reflected by the UNGA vote yesterday](#). The UK calls on Russia to cease all hostilities and "immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from Ukraine". [As the G7 leaders have said](#) "we are undeterred and steadfast in our commitment to providing the support Ukraine needs to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will continue to provide financial, humanitarian, military, diplomatic and legal support and will stand firmly with Ukraine for as long as it takes". This needless war has inflicted suffering on too many. Those responsible will be held to account and will serve justice. We are committed. We are in this for the long run. We will not forget.