

Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE, 23 March 2022

Thank you Mr Chair. This statement is delivered under the topic raised by Ukraine and I request that this be accurately reflected in the Journal of the Day.

Mr Chair, it is with great regret that we have reached the appalling milestone that it is now a month since President Putin launched his unprovoked, premeditated and a barbaric attack on Ukraine. Throughout these terrible weeks we have seen the most reprehensible and horrific attacks conducted against Ukraine in which so many innocent people have lost their lives.

We have watched the biggest concentration of forces amassed since the Cold War roll into Ukraine where it has been frustrated by fierce Ukrainian resistance. The Russian invasion has largely stalled on all fronts. Russian forces have made minimal progress on land, sea or air in recent days and they continue to suffer heavy losses. Thousands of troops, hundreds of tanks, attack helicopters, and close air support have so far failed to yield results.

Mr Chair, Russia has unleashed a horrendous amount of violence on the Ukrainian people. Russian naval forces continue to blockade the Ukrainian coast and to launch missile strikes on targets across Ukraine. The blockade of Ukraine's coast is effectively isolating Ukraine from international maritime trade and is contributing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation Russia has created by preventing vital supplies reaching the Ukrainian population. This is exacerbated further with the attacks on Ukrainian ports and port cities, including the atrocious and indiscriminate destruction of Mariupol.

Bogged down and making minimal progress, frustrated Russian military commanders are trying to break the unbreakable – Ukrainian spirit and resolve. They are doing this in the most cowardly way, attacking urban and residential centres indiscriminately from distance using: Multi-launch Rocket Systems, Iskander Ballistic Missiles, artillery, cruise missiles, cluster munitions and thermobaric rockets.

This is not the art of war being conducted by an honourable and professional military of a Great Power. This is indiscriminate destruction. Those carrying out war crimes should know they cannot act with impunity. Indiscriminate attacks against innocent civilians amount to war crimes, for which those who are complicit, must be held accountable. The world is quite literally watching.

Our Russian colleagues have the privileged position to watch uncensored news

from around the world reporting the true horrors of President Putin's chosen path of bloodshed and destruction. But again and again, in the face of the overwhelming truth, they continue to peddle the Kremlin's blizzard of lies and disinformation. They have lost all credibility. It is shameful behaviour, disrespectful to this forum, everyone in this room and the diplomatic profession.

Mr Chair, one month in, and President Putin's so-called "Special Military Operation" is certainly not going to plan. We can only imagine how angry he must be. How infuriating it is to be lied to. How devastating the consequences. Russian soldiers are paying a high price for this deceit – they are fighting and dying for a lie.

In contrast, the Ukrainian people are fighting for their homeland. United and defiant. The world is witnessing displays of courage, determination, and resolve that will go down in history.

The United Kingdom, along with many others, repeatedly warned that any Russian military incursion into Ukraine would be a massive strategic mistake and would come at a severe cost. Last week, we updated this forum on our continued support to Ukraine, our friends, as they fight for the right to choose their own destiny.

This week, I would like to update that the UK Government has now taken the decision to donate Starstreak, a high velocity, man-portable anti air missile to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. With the accompanying training package, this defensive weapon system will allow the Armed Forces of Ukraine to better defend their skies from Russian military aircraft.

I would reiterate, all of our support to the democratic sovereign nation of Ukraine is defensive in nature and will help them defend themselves against this Russian war of aggression.

We will make the Russian government pay the price of its actions. The UK stands with the Ukrainian people in their fight for their homeland. We will work with our partners – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is restored.

Mr Chair, finally, I would again urge our Russian colleagues, to take a moment – to listen to the overwhelming condemnation ([141 countries at the UNGA](#)) and to listen to the truth. I urge them to consider their position, responsibilities and legacy as diplomats and citizens of Russia and stop their complicit propagation of President Putin's lies to their own people. Their actions and choices today will be ones they have to live with forever.

Thank you. And I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.