

Russia's veto doesn't change the facts: UK statement at the UN Security Council vote to condemn illegal referenda in Ukraine

President, yet again, Russia has abused its veto to defend its illegal actions.

Council members have voted in different ways. But one thing is clear. Not a single other member of this Council recognises Russia's attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory. Russia's veto doesn't change that fact.

The announcement by President Putin today of the accession of the Ukrainian regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk and Donetsk into the Russian Federation has no legal effect. It is a fantasy.

Russia's invasion needs to end. The world has made this clear for 7 months. Yet Russia's response has been further escalation, further mobilisation, nuclear threats, and today another callous attack on a civilian convoy in Zaporizhzhya.

The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is under attack. The international system is being assaulted in front of our eyes. Russia will not succeed in this illegal imperialist war. The only question is how much damage they do, how many lives they waste, before they realise that.

Colleagues, Russia's annexations further jeopardise the prospects for peace, and fundamentally undermine the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations.

The area Russia is claiming to annex is more than 90,000 square km. This is the largest forcible annexation since the Second World War.

There is no middle ground on this. It is in the end a very simple question of principle, as the Secretary General has said.

As members of the Security Council with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security and upholding the UN Charter, we must condemn Russia's actions, and vote in favour of this resolution.