

Russia's war in Ukraine is also an attack on the security and freedom of Europe: UK statement to the OSCE, 6 April 2022

Thank you Mr Chair. Usually, the Closing session of a Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) is a time for reflection. A time to consider our work as a forum for security cooperation, our discussions, our challenges but also our progress. Unfortunately that is not possible today.

Ambassador, when we met for the Opening Session, we recognised that you assumed the FSC Chair at a critical time for Euro-Atlantic Security. As we watched Russia amass the large concentration of military force along Ukraine's borders and in illegally annexed Crimea we feared the worst and the worst came true. Russia's unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack on Ukraine and its peaceful civilians has horrified the world.

Ukraine has taken up the fight to defend their homeland and shown the world the meaning of bravery and courage. An out-manoeuvred and out-classed Russian military has taken its frustrations out on civilians, unleashing horrendous amounts of violence. In recent days we have watched in horror as reports have emerged of men, women and children killed and mutilated. This is a great moral stain upon the Russian military, and one which will never be forgotten.

Mr Chair, the Russian government's attempt to redraw the map of Europe in blood, and conquer an independent and democratic state by force of arms is an attack on the security and freedom of Europe. It is also an attack on the Euro-Atlantic Security Architecture that was designed to increase security and stability in the region and, through trust, help prevent such appalling acts.

For their part, our Russian colleagues have "weaponised" the OSCE confidence and security building mechanisms which underpin this organisation and have lied to this forum, and indeed continue to lie to this forum. They have shattered the trust and the belief that all of us in this room seek a secure and stable region in respect of one and other – that we work in good faith for a mutual goal.

Trust is a hard thing to rebuild. It is clear that normal business cannot resume whilst President Putin wages his horrific and barbaric war of choice on our Ukrainian friends. Our primary focus must remain to work together – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is restored. The UK stands with and will continue to support the Ukrainian people in their fight for their homeland.

Against all of this, we must do our utmost to ensure the integrity of this

Forum, such that it is able to fulfil its mandate. In this regard we trust it will continue to be stewarded in a professional and proper manner.

May I conclude by thanking you Ambassador and your team for your forbearance as Chair of the FSC in these unprecedented times. We also thank our Austrian colleagues who leave the troika and welcome our Belgium ones.

Slava Ukraini!

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