

The real legacy of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine will be death and destruction: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Chair. As we look ahead to the OSCE Ministerial Council in Lodz next week, Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine – supported by the Belarusian regime – will rightly be a central focus. The Russian Government's repressive actions externally in Ukraine and internally within Russia have struck at the heart of the OSCE's core principles; principles we have all committed to for our collective security, and for a more peaceful, just and stable future. Through its actions, the Kremlin has demonstrated that it prefers war over peace; death over life; chaos over stability; and isolation over cooperation.

Just yesterday, missile strikes on Ukraine plummeted Ukrainian cities into darkness and caused massive blackouts in Moldova. As other colleagues have mentioned, a new-born baby was killed in a missile strike on a maternity unit in the southern Zaporizhzhia region. This baby is but one life amongst thousands of lives lost, because of the decisions of one man, President Putin. [At the UN Security Council Session last night](#), we reiterated the message – Russia's systematic attacks on Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure are unacceptable and must end.

And what has Russia achieved in return? The past nine months have been testament to the grave miscalculation Putin made when he chose to invade a sovereign neighbour. Not only has Russia achieved none of the strategic objectives of his invasion, Putin has underestimated the unwavering bravery and resilience of the Ukrainian people, and the resolve of the international community at every turn.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Kherson. When Putin sent his forces into Ukraine, he thought Kyiv would fall in a matter of days. Whilst his military was being driven back by Ukrainian forces, he declared Kherson part of Russia 'forever'. Ukraine has shattered Putin's delusional belief that he could seize Ukrainian sovereign land, and be welcomed by those he sought to subjugate.

Mr Chair, President Putin would have the world believe Russia is liberating Ukraine. However, the real legacy of his illegal war – what his war of choice has actually achieved – will be nothing but death and destruction:

- So far there are more than 16,700 civilian casualties, including over 6,500 killed;
- 17.7 million in need of humanitarian assistance;
- over 7.8 million refugees;
- 6.5 million internally displaced people; and
- We have just heard from our Ukrainian colleague about the millions who have been left without electricity, water or heating as temperatures

have begun to drop below zero.

The Kremlin can continue to try to distract and deny responsibility for the atrocities committed by its military forces, however no lie, no disinformation, no false truths can erase the memories of the countless Ukrainians subjected to atrocities and war crimes. Putin cannot defend robbing Ukraine's 5.7 million school-age children of a safe and stable education.

And the repercussions of Russia's war are not only being felt in Ukraine, but worldwide. Global food markets have been severely disrupted, hitting the poorest the hardest, accompanied by an eightfold increase in global energy prices caused by Russia turning off their gas taps. Almost every corner of the world has been impacted by Putin's war in some way; the economic aftershocks will be felt for years to come.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has unleashed a Pandora's Box of suffering, pain, death and devastation on Ukraine and the wider world – but Russia can bring it to an end. Russia needs to cease hostilities, withdraw from within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, and adhere to its international obligations and commitments – without conditions.

[Last week's guilty verdict, convicting 3 individuals of murder in relation to the downing of MH14, was an important step in securing justice for the families of the victims.](#)

Mr Chair, the UK is proud to have stood with Ukraine from the very beginning of this barbaric war. We will continue to do so. We are humbled by the strength and determination shown by Ukraine in defence of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Next week, as we gather in Poland, we call on participating States to champion the OSCE commitments that underpin our collective security; to defend and uphold international law; and to hold those responsible for atrocities to account. We cannot and will not allow Russia's behaviour to go unimpeded.