

Russia's horrendous attacks on civilians continue: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. Since commencing its illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, the Russian military have demonstrated a complete disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL). President Putin and his Russian military leaders have consistently planned and authorised operations which clearly breach the principles and substantive protections of the law of armed conflict. Ukrainian towns and cities reduced to rubble and the horrendous number of civilian casualties are the shocking consequences of this reprehensible and cowardly approach.

Over the past week, as Putin's ill-conceived invasion continues to falter on the battlefield, Russia has resorted to employing Iranian-provided Shaed-136 UAVs (or "Kamikaze drones") against civilians, residential buildings and civilian infrastructure in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. They cause yet more unnecessary suffering and spread terror among the civilian population – another reprehensible breach of IHL.

I ask our Russian colleague directly, to explain to the participating States here: how they can justify such callous attacks? They are in clear breach of international humanitarian law. As a diplomat, to condone these attacks on civilians would be nothing short of disgraceful. To advocate and justify them as part of the so-called "Special Military Operation" infers complicity in the atrocities committed.

Mr Chair, these horrendous attacks on civilians are another terrible example of the increasingly desperate and vindictive decision making from Putin and his military leadership. We condemn Iran's decision to supply drones and training to Russia. Iran's supply of drones to Russia is inconsistent with UN Security Council resolution 2231.

Russia's indiscriminate attacks against Ukrainian cities and residential areas seek to distract from the enduring poor performance of the Russian military on the battlefield. In southern Ukraine, Russia faces significant challenges supporting its already strained forces in Kherson. Their acute logistical issues are exacerbated by the damage caused to the Kerch Bridge on 8 October. Now, as mobilised Russian reservists are deployed into Ukraine, it is also evident that their issued equipment is of a lower level than that of the already poorly equipped professional forces. Badly trained, badly equipped and badly led, demoralised professional soldiers are being reinforced by even more poorly trained and equipped amateurs.

Mr Chair, the announced "counter terrorist operation" in Belarus in response to contrived threats on its borders appears to be nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt at distraction and misdirection ordered by the Kremlin. Lukashenko said that 70,000 Belarusian troops would be involved in the

“Grouping of Forces”, along with 10,000-15,000 Russians. However, Russia is unlikely to be able to generate combat ready formations of this size because of the number of forces it has committed in Ukraine. In truth, this Russian/Belarusian “Group of Forces” are unlikely to be combat capable and are probably an attempt to convince Ukraine to divert forces to guard their northern border – a tactic we also saw the Belarusian regime attempt earlier this year.

We also note the announcement on 16 October by the Belarusian Ministry of Defence which updated that “just under 9000 Russian troops” would be stationed in Belarus as part of the “regional grouping”. The apparent coincidence that the [Vienna Document](#) notification threshold of the arrival or concentration of troops in the zone of application is “at least 9000 troops” is also noted – as is Belarus’ recent but solid history of Vienna Document tokenism. In this regard, we would also remind our Belarusian colleagues that providing briefings to accredited military attaches in Minsk is not a substitute for their obligation to provide necessary transparency to this Forum for Security Cooperation.

Mr Chair, we call on the Belarusian regime to desist from supporting Russia’s attempts to stoke further instability in the region and to stop its active support of Russia’s illegal invasion, which itself constitutes a breach of international law. Since 24 February, it has been overwhelmingly clear to the world from which side of the Belarusian/Ukrainian border the threat is emanating – and it is not from Ukraine.

Mr Chair, as Putin’s miscalculations continue to mount, he and the Russian military leadership are resorting to new depths of depravity against the Ukrainian people. But they continue to underestimate the determination and courage of the Ukrainian military and civilians to defend their homeland from a barbaric invader. The escalation to the horrendous drone attacks this week only strengthens our resolve to support our brave and resolute Ukrainian friends. We remain steadfast – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is fully restored. Thank you.

[Teenager has sentence increased after killing one man and seriously wounding another in a revenge attack](#)

News story

A teenager who took part in a revenge attack which resulted in the death of one man and serious wounding of another has received an increased sentence

after the case was referred to the Court of Appeal.



A teenager who took part in a revenge attack which resulted in the death of one man and serious wounding of another has received an increased sentence after the case was referred to the Court of Appeal.

Following an altercation in Bradford City Centre involving Sheryar Khan's brother, Khan now aged 17 returned with his brother and others armed with knives and machetes. Khan chased and fatally stabbed Kian Tordoff before chasing and stabbing Matthew Page, who survived the attack.

On 15 July 2022 Khan was sentenced to a minimum of 16 years' detention at Her Majesty's Pleasure for the murder of Kian Tordoff. Khan was also ordered to serve a concurrent sentence of 8 years' detention for wounding Matthew Page with intent. The sentencing took place at Bradford Crown Court.

Khan's sentence was then referred to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

On 19 October, the Court of Appeal found Khan's original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to a minimum of 19 years' detention at His Majesty's Pleasure (less time spent on remand).

Speaking after the hearing, HM Attorney General Rt Hon Michael Ellis KC MP said:

"Today my thoughts are with the family of Kian Tordoff, who tragically lost his life during Sheryar Khan's senseless and brutal attack, and also with Michael Page, who was badly injured in the attack and has been left absolutely devastated by the loss of his best friend.

"I welcome the decision of the Court of Appeal to increase the sentence which better reflects the severity of Khan's atrocious crimes."

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Environment is yet another casualty of Russia's war: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. Good morning from London. I would like to thank the Secretary General and the three panellists for their interventions. It is right that the OSCE continues to focus on this topic. Climate change remains an existential threat to our shared environment.

Mr Chair, as Mr Fedorenko, the Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources has so eloquently set out, the environment is yet another casualty of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have seen appalling environmental damage to Ukraine, such as degradation and pollution of land and water, which will take decades to remedy. Russia's reckless attacks on nuclear facilities risk a catastrophe that could cause continent-wide contamination.

Russia is weaponising energy to support its illegal war and we cannot let it succeed. Energy should never be used as a tool of political coercion. Many countries have now recognised Russia as an unreliable supplier and are limiting their consumption of Russian hydrocarbons which are helping to fund Putin's war machine. This is why the UK plans to phase out imports of Russian oil by the end of this year. Reducing our collective dependence on Putin's oil and gas has a practical as well as moral imperative.

Russian forces have destroyed city after city in Ukraine. Helping to rebuild the country and its natural environment will be one of the great tasks for our generation. The UK and our allies will continue to make substantial financial and economic support available to Ukraine to strengthen the resilience of its economy. The UK calls upon the international community to put the principles of environmental protection and sustainable, low carbon development at the heart of this reconstruction effort.

Mr Chair, the brutal attacks in Ukraine have shown the environmental damage that militaries can do. But even militaries at peace can have significant environmental impact. In the UK for example, defence accounts for 50% of central government emissions. In future, our armed forces will embrace the green energy transition, trialling new types of vehicles, fuels standards, and energy storage. Our defence ministry's [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach report](#) sets out how we will do this.

Mr. Chair, I wish to conclude by highlighting again the importance of this topic. As we have seen in our own region, including recently in Central Asia, climate-related disruptions risk straining existing international security arrangements, creating new geostrategic flashpoints, and raising the potential for further inter-state military competition and conflict.

Finally, we once again call on Russia to cease all hostilities and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from all of Ukraine. Wars not only damage the environment

but they also divert attention and resources away from addressing existential climate challenges and break down the cooperation needed to address them.

Proposals to increase fishing licence prices

The Environment Agency has today announced proposals to increase fishing licence prices from 1 April 2023 to provide vital funds to improve England's fisheries.

The increase, set to come into force incrementally over three years, has received support from the Angling Trust, Angling Trades Association, Canal and River Trust and key fisheries stakeholders within the England Fisheries Group. It follows feedback from anglers all over England and is the first fishing licence price increase in six years.

An annual two rod coarse and non-migratory trout licence will rise from £30 to £33 from 1 April 2023. This will increase to £35.80 from the next year, with a final increase to £36.60 from 1 April 2025.

The additional income generated will be invested directly into England's fisheries, improving the experience for anglers. This includes:

- Maintaining a good quality environment to ensure healthy fish stocks and habitats;
- Conducting enforcement activity to deter illegal fishing and protect fish stocks;
- Investing in partnership working, including attracting match funding to maximise rod licence income;
- Encouraging more people to get involved in angling;
- Modernising systems such as our continuous payment system and digital licencing.

Heidi Stone, Environment and Business, Partnerships Manager from the Environment Agency said:

“Securing income to fund our fisheries service is one of our highest priorities and we reinvest 100% of fishing licence income to improve fisheries for people, the environment and angling.

“This small increase will be the first for six years and ensures we can continue to undertake our statutory duties to maintain, develop and improve freshwater and migratory fisheries to the level that the fisheries community and our customers expect.”

Jamie Cook, Angling Trust CEO, said:

“Nobody likes to see prices rise, especially in these tough times, but it is important that our rod licence income is protected for vital fisheries work.

These modest increases – the first for six years – are necessary to ensure that angling continues to receive professional support from the Environment Agency.”

The full list of proposed prices and details of how to support or object the change in prices has been published by [The Gazette](#) and Angling Times.

Fishing licences are a legal requirement for anyone who wants to fish with a rod and line in freshwater. It is now possible to receive a digital licence via email or text message, making it easier to have your licence to hand.

The digital buying journey makes it easier and quicker to obtain a licence, while also saving administration costs to ensure maximum investment in our fisheries from fishing licence income.

Get a fishing licence on [GOV.UK](#) and help us invest more into fishing and improving the environment.

[£1 million available for innovations to help the Commando Force safely get from ship to shore](#)

- DASA has launched a new Themed Competition: Novel Amphibious Craft
- Funded by the Defence Innovation Unit
- Up to £1 million available for innovations to help develop capabilities that can deliver Commando Force Strike Teams and equipment to coastal access points, safely and rapidly

The [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) is pleased to launch a new Themed Competition, [Novel Amphibious Craft](#). Run on behalf of the Defence Innovation Unit, this competition seeks innovative technologies which can feed into the development of a Novel Amphibious Craft concept to enable Commando Force to safely and rapidly insert themselves into high-threat environments. The future craft needs to:

1. travel at sustained high speed over a long range
2. provide the ability to deliver personnel and light vehicles to a coastal access point with limited or no impact on operational speed/capability
3. relaunch from the coastal access point
4. operate with low signature across all spectrums (thermal, radar, visual,

acoustic, etc.) to reduce the probability of detection

Key dates and funding

£1 million (Exc. VAT) funding is available for this Themed Competition. DASA expects to fund several proposals between £100K – 350K.

The deadline to submit a proposal is midday 10 January 2023 (GMT).

New capability requirements for amphibious assault

The Commando Force needs the ability to insert troops and equipment that are fit to fight into high-threat environments safely. However, advances in coastal defences mean that an amphibious assault relying on outdated technology and concepts can be deterred, disrupted, and defeated.

A bold new approach is required to overcome these modern threats. Innovative technologies will enable the Commando Force to reach further, move faster, and strike decisively without being detected.

This competition aims to investigate and accelerate innovative solutions that will help meet operational requirements and achieve mission success, including feeding into the development of a Novel Amphibious Craft. DASA is seeking to address the following challenges:

- how to reduce the signature across multiple spectrums (thermal, radar, visual, acoustic, etc.)
- how to deliver the Commando Force (Troops and Vehicles) across the water gap and minimise the requirement for wading
- how to routinely land onto/retract from an unprepared coastal access point
- how to sustain speeds of at least 25kts in the fully loaded condition, in Sea State 2

For a more detailed breakdown of the platform specifications and requirements, [read the full competition document](#).

Novel Amphibious Craft: Themes

This competition has two themes. Innovators can apply for funding in either theme.

Theme 1: Priority Challenges

Theme 1 aims to address the following technical challenges faced by the

capability:

- Theme 1a: How to reduce the signature across multiple spectrums (thermal, radar, visual, acoustic etc.)
- Theme 1b: How to deliver the Commando Force (troops and vehicles) across the water gap and minimise the requirement for wading
- Theme 1c: How to land onto/retract from an unprepared coastal access point

Theme 2: Capability Design

Theme 2 aims to design a craft capable of delivering the complete capability defined above. This is a lower Technology Readiness Level (TRL) theme up to [TRL 4](#).

To learn more about the themes of the competition, [read the full competition document](#).

Webinars

This competition will feature a series of 20 minute one-to-one teleconference sessions, providing innovators the opportunity to ask competition organisers specific questions. Register below.

[3 November 2022](#)

[8 November 2022](#)

Submit a proposal

Do you have an innovation that will help contribute to the development of a novel amphibious craft, capable of delivering Commando Force Strike Teams and equipment to coastal access points?

[Submit your idea](#) and help enable the Commando Force to safely and rapidly insert themselves into high-threat environments.

[Learn more and submit a proposal](#).