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Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1458th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 January 2024

I wish to start by thanking Malta, as Chair-in-Office, for rightfully keeping Russia's aggression against Ukraine on the Council's agenda, and for calling the Council to a special meeting on this topic.

President Putin's determination to undermine Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, at any cost, is the biggest threat to the security and stability our region. It deserves continued and resolute attention by this Council.

We must continue to support Ukraine by condemning Russia's aggression and their violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law.

A strong Ukraine is an antidote to war, insecurity, aggression, and impunity. This is why Canada's support continues unabated, as conveyed by Prime Minister Trudeau to President Zelenskyy in a phone call on January 1 of this year.

Madam Chair,

Shortly before the end of 2023, Russian forces launched an aerial barrage lasting almost an entire day and targeting all four corners of Ukraine. On 29 December, Russian forces launched 36 drones and over 120 missiles of various sizes at Kyiv, Kharkiv, Lviv, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, and Odesa cities, and at Sumy, Cherkasy, and Mykolaiv oblasts. The attacks killed 40 and injured over a hundred and twenty civilians. The numbers are mind-boggling.

Residential homes, a school, a shopping mall, and metro station were hit, and a maternity hospital in Dnipro was extensively damaged.

We regret the loss of life, especially of children, wherever it occurs, and we hold Russia fully responsible for starting an illegal and unprovoked war that endangers the lives of its people.

In the waning hours of 2023, Russia struck Kharkiv city, hitting a hotel popular with journalists, residential buildings and houses, and a kindergarten. Over twenty people were injured.

Russia claims to only target military objects, but we fail to see the military value in kindergartens. We fail to see the military threat that pregnant women and newborns pose to the Russian state. We underline again that the targeting of civilians and civilian objects is a violation of international humanitarian law.

On the first day of the New Year, Russia launched a barrage of drones across Ukraine, killing one and injuring three people.

On the second day of the New Year, Russia launched a mass attack at Kyiv and oblast and Kharkiv, killing 5 and injuring nearly 130 people. The attack left 260,000 Kyiv residents without power.

A similar attack using a combination of drones and various missiles was recorded again on January 8, killing four people, and injuring 35.

For 701 days of President Putin's "Three-Day-War", Ukraine has been attacked every single day.

Only three days ago, 18 people died and 130 were injured when Russian missiles hit Kharkiv and Kyiv. The attack damaged homes and other civilian infrastructure.

We condemn Russia's illegal war in the strongest possible terms and call on Russia to cease its aggression immediately and withdraw all its troops and military equipment from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, including the temporarily occupied territories.

Madam Chair,

President Putin recently signed a decree making it easier to grant Russian citizenship to Ukrainian children who have been illegally deported to Russia by forces under Russia's control.

Russia's conduct in Ukraine with regard to children is unconscionable.

We have seen pregnant women and children – from newborns to teenagers – killed by Russian bombardment. Maternity hospitals, kindergarten, schools, and children's libraries have been damaged. Children's education has been interrupted and they have been forced to hide, fearing for their lives, in bomb shelters and basements. Children have been separated from their parents, guardians and loved ones, and, in far too many instances, illegally deported and subject to efforts to erase their identity, their language, their history and their culture.

We will support Ukraine every step of the way to bring their children back. Impunity will not triumph.

Thank you, Madam Chair.