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REMARKS**

**The Honourable Robert Oliphant
Parliamentary Secretary
to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of CANADA**

**National Statement
Plenary of the 32nd Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council**

**December 4, 2025
Vienna, Austria**

Madam Chair,

I would begin by thanking Finland for their leadership this year and their commitment to upholding the Helsinki Principles. I also thank Austria for hosting this Ministerial Council, and welcome Switzerland as incoming Chair. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Fifty years ago, at the height of the Cold War, states with diverse world views came together to sign the Helsinki Final Act—the foundational document of this organization.

Despite deep ideological differences, they agreed on a set of principles including respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

These principles provided a clear basis for security in Europe.

For five decades, they have remained our touchstone as the OSCE developed a comprehensive approach to security based on the intrinsic link between security, economic development and human rights.

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But now, peace and stability in the OSCE region have been shattered by Russia's unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine.

This war has inflicted terrible, unnecessary suffering on the people of Ukraine.

Russia's war has displaced millions, disrupted global food and energy security, renewed fears of nuclear escalation, eroded conventional arms control and caused devastating harm to the environment. Women and girls and children have been disproportionately affected.

Moscow tries to justify its aggression by citing supposed security concerns and so-called root causes—but their true objectives are clear.

For Russia, this war is about subjugating Ukraine. It wants a compliant, undemocratic pro-Russian regime in Kyiv. And it wants to erase Ukrainian self-determination, language, culture and national identity.

Let us be clear: Russia's conduct is incompatible with the aims of this organization and its principles.

Russia wants to solve disputes through war, to redraw borders through force and to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbours to serve its own interests.

Russia has violated human rights both within its own borders and in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and it faces countless allegations of sexual and gender-based violence, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Russia has unlawfully deported and forcibly transferred thousands of Ukrainian children to its territory and from temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine.

A majority of these children remain separated from their families and communities. Many of them are being indoctrinated—even prepared for military service—to fight against their own country, their own families.

For those who argue that Russia's malign influence will stop with Ukraine, let us be clear: they are already working to destabilize our region.

Russia has undermined the sovereignty of Georgia, and seeks to undermine Moldova's sovereignty as well, most recently, by interfering in Moldova's democratic elections.

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Russia has also recklessly violated NATO airspace over Poland, Romania and Estonia. Debris from its drones has washed up in Latvia and Bulgaria, showing flagrant disregard for sovereignty and for its OSCE commitments.

Madame la Présidente,

Aujourd’hui, ce n’est pas cette organisation qui a failli à sa mission, mais plutôt la Russie qui n’a pas respecté ses engagements. La Russie a trahi l’OSCE et tous les États participants.

Malgré cela, le Canada, l’un des États fondateurs, continue de croire aux outils et à l’expertise uniques de l’OSCE dans les trois dimensions et, en fin de compte, au soutien de l’architecture de sécurité européenne.

Nous sommes également déterminés à moderniser stratégiquement l’OSCE, en adoptant une approche financière pragmatique afin de veiller à ce que l’organisation soit efficace, rentable et à la hauteur de sa mission.

Le Canada continue de croire fermement au système multilatéral et à l’ordre international fondé sur des règles, dont l’Acte final d’Helsinki fait partie intégrante.

Madam Chair,

Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians.

We commend the ongoing U.S.-led peace efforts, which seek to bring us closer to an end to this war. We must do everything possible to ensure a peace settlement is just and lasting, and that Ukraine remains sovereign and secure.

Fifty years on, our principles remain clear.

We therefore call on Russia to withdraw its forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine, including Crimea.

We call on Russia to immediately return Ukrainian children. This must remain a shared international priority.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all unlawfully detained Ukrainian civilians, including the three OSCE officials: Vadym Golda, Maksym Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov.

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We call for the release of all Ukrainian prisoners of war in accordance with international humanitarian law.

There must be accountability for serious violations of international law.

Russia started this war; Russia can end it.

Until then, Canada will stand firmly with Ukraine.

Thank you,