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**STATEMENT BY  
COUNSELLOR KATHRYN POWERS AT THE 1555th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

26 February 2026

**The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, allow me to express Canada's solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Across the country, mutual support and civic resilience have enabled communities to persevere, earning them respect and admiration far beyond Ukraine's borders.

Russia seeks to sap the morale and erode the determination of Ukrainians through its relentless attacks, but despite everything, daily life continues to flourish in Ukraine as a powerful form of resistance. History shows that, all too often, invaders underestimate the people's moral strength and pride, to their own detriment.

Canada's commitment to protecting, restoring and rebuilding Ukraine is unwavering and rooted in the close and long-standing ties between our two countries. Our shared respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as for the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, cement this understanding between our two peoples.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation initiated this war seeking decisive political outcomes, including the subordination of Ukraine. Starting its fifth year, it is clear that these outcomes have not been realized and cannot be realized. Ukraine remains sovereign and its international partners continue their support.

However, despite its own battlefield failures, Russia continues to make maximalist demands, playing the diplomacy long game to either achieve what it could not through its illegal aggression or, hope that by refusing to agree to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, it will wear down Ukraine and its partners.

In this context, we recognize and welcome ongoing international efforts to advance a path toward peace. We are now at a critical juncture, where the possibility of peace is tangible. Canada stands ready to support a negotiated settlement that is just, lasting, and consistent with the UN Charter.

Canada will continue to offer multifaceted support to Ukraine and maintain and increase pressure on Russia.

Earlier this week, Canada announced new sanctions measures directed at 74 individuals and entities enabling Russia's war, 100 vessels in its shadow fleet, and a further lowering of the price cap for Russian crude oil to around 44 US dollars per barrel. These measures further increase the economic costs on Russia by restricting its energy revenues and financial enablers, as well as degrading its defence-industrial base.

Canada will continue to hold Russia accountable for the damage, destruction, and loss caused by its unprovoked aggression.

As my Prime Minister and other leaders noted earlier this week at the Coalition of the Willing meeting, Russia is failing economically, strategically, and militarily, four years into an unjustifiable, horrific war, for which it is solely responsible.

Russia's narratives of portraying Ukraine's defeat as inevitable is an attempt to frame the conflict on terms that serve its own objectives. We must not allow ourselves to be drawn into a framework designed and defined by Moscow. To do so would be to concede, implicitly or otherwise, that aggression can dictate the terms of peace. Diplomatic efforts must therefore proceed with clarity.

Mr. Chair,

We would like to acknowledge the situation of the Russian people, whose voices have been constrained and those who have questioned this war despite the dangers involved. Restricting access to news sites and platforms also impacts the degree to which Russians can access credible, objective news sources. We recognize the courage of individuals who have expressed solidarity or dissent at great personal risk. We are mindful that space for open discussion within Russia has significantly narrowed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, greatly limiting honest public debate about the war. Russia's assertions of strong public support for its illegal aggression, must be understood within this context.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

We hope that when we convene again next years, we will have been able to mark meaningful progress toward, and hopefully achieve, a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Ukrainians both seek and deserve such a peace. Several countries, notably the United States, are investing significant diplomatic efforts to bring an end to the bloodshed. Others, including Canada, are committed to supporting it. Institutions such as the OSCE stand ready to implement the arrangements necessary to sustain peace.

But meaningful progress will require serious, good-faith engagement from all sides. The Russian Federation is not engaging on that basis. It remains outside any credible path to a just and lasting resolution. We call upon the Russian Federation to change course.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.