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Delegation of Canada

**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF CANADA TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1557th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

12 March 2026

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

Mister Chair,

Since our last meeting, the Russian Federation has, again, demonstrated the stark brutality of its conduct.

On the night of 7 March, according to Ukrainian authorities, the Russian Federation launched approximately 480 drones and 29 missiles across Ukraine in a single coordinated barrage.

The city of Kharkiv was among the hardest hit. A ballistic missile struck a residential building, killing 11 people, including two children, and injuring many more.

Civilians continue to be put in harm's way and, the human toll continues to mount. The Russian Federation is solely responsible for launching this war and for inflicting this suffering.

Ukraine continues to demonstrate clear determination and near Zaporizhzhia, their forces disrupted logistics and forced Russian troops to scale back operations.

Canada firmly supports Ukraine's legitimate right to self-defence, in line with the UN Charter.

The news that Russia released approximately 500 Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians as part of a negotiated exchange was encouraging. Prisoner exchanges are vital humanitarian tools, and every life returned is meaningful.

At the same time, these developments remind us of those who remain unjustly detained, in inhumane conditions, not in line with Russia's international obligations with regards human rights and the treatment of PoWs.

We must also continue to draw attention to the three former OSCE Special Monitoring Mission staff members who are unlawfully detained by the Russian Federation. In 2025, Maxim Petrov and Dmitry Shabanov were transferred from a penal colony in the Luhansk region to remote areas of Russia.

As discussions advance regarding potential future monitoring arrangements in Ukraine, we must not forget that three OSCE staff members remain behind bars. Their release should not be a matter for bargaining.

Mr. Chairperson,

Canada continues to support efforts aimed at establishing a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Ukraine continues to demonstrate its commitment to attaining that result in a constructive, sustained and dedicated manner. We call upon the Russian Federation to do the same.

The outcome of this war has repercussions that extend far beyond Ukraine's borders. It is an outcome that is of fundamental importance for the security of our entire region and for our partners around the world, who set great store by a stable and predictable international environment. If borders can be redrawn by force, if civilians' lives can be endangered with impunity and if commitments can be disregarded at will, then no State can feel genuinely secure.

It is of the utmost importance that this war should not end in a way that increases insecurity in our region or encourages further aggression.

Thank you.