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**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF CANADA TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1560th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 April 2026

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

Mr. Chairperson,

First and foremost, in the wake of the tragic incidents in Türkiye, I should like to express our sincere condolences; our thoughts are with the victims, their families and the Turkish people.

Over the past two weeks, the Russian Federation has carried out sustained and large-scale missile and drone strikes across Ukraine, hitting multiple regions, including areas far from the front lines. Recent reports confirm that the strikes carried out during this period targeted major population centres, notably Odesa, Kharkiv, Kyiv, and the Dnipropetrovsk region, resulting in deaths and injuries among the civilian population.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, attacks on Odesa and other urban areas disrupted electricity supplies to civilian neighbourhoods. On 10 April, the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine released information indicating a nationwide increase in civilian casualties, with civilians being affected both near the front lines and deep within Ukrainian territory.

Russian strikes on critical infrastructure are having a knock-on effect on access to electricity and basic services, compounding humanitarian needs and the risks for vulnerable populations in the short and long term.

Mister Chair,

Canada recalls that the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine constitutes a clear violation of the principles of the UN Charter and Helsinki Final Act, including respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of borders.

Against this backdrop, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on 12 April that disagreements between Kyiv and Moscow are limited to a few kilometres.

This characterization diminishes what is being demanded: that Ukraine accept the redrawing of its internationally recognized borders by force, legitimize attempted annexations of its territory, and surrender its sovereign right to determine its own political, security, and international alignments. Would any of us in this room accept these conditions?

The language of “kilometres” erases the human reality of this war, which is recognized in the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security. Each kilometre represents homes and communities whose inhabitants face displacement, insecurity, erasure of their identity, and a grim life under Russian occupation.

Therefore, calling it “just a few kilometres” amounts to nothing more than wishful thinking. This is an inventive fallback when more traditional options aimed at subjugating Ukraine have fallen short. However, international law does not recognize borders created by visualization.

Mister Chair,

In this context, Canada recalls that Ukraine is exercising its inherent right of self-defence, consistent with the UN Charter and international law.

Continued political, military, and practical assistance enables Ukraine to protect its population, sustain essential state functions, and mitigate humanitarian harm. It also reinforces the principles at the core of the OSCE’s comprehensive concept of security, which derive their strength from consistent defence, especially when they are most clearly violated.

Ukraine is a test for us all, including whether the OSCE remains a credible framework for cooperative security, or whether its core norms can be eroded through endurance and coercion. Our actions will shape the expectations of behaviour across the OSCE area for years to come.

For these reasons, Canada firmly believes that a just and lasting peace must rest on international law, as enshrined in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

Canada will continue providing multifaceted support to Ukraine in defending itself against attacks on the battlefield, in political and diplomatic fora, in the information space, and in efforts to document violations and promote accountability. This support reflects our conviction that assisting Ukraine is inseparable from defending the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and respect for international law that underpin our security.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.