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Delegation of Canada

**STATEMENT BY  
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF CANADA TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1539th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

23 October 2025

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

First let me express Canada's outrage on a Russian strike that hit a kindergarten in Ukraine. We condemn this attack and any attacks on Ukrainian civilians.

Madam Chairperson,

At every meeting of this Council, we are confronted with the same stark contrast: on the one hand, the Russian Federation's rhetoric in this room; on the other hand, the daily reality of Russia's unjustified aggression towards the territory and people of Ukraine. A twisting of reality and an upending of logic are reflected in the contrast between what Russia says and what it is doing in Ukraine. Here, Russia is seeking to get people to question our world rather than contesting its version of the facts.

But the facts are clear: Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not in response to a threat. It is unjustified and brutal aggression by Russian forces aimed at gaining territory that is not theirs and erasing Ukrainian identity. What is more, the methods employed are unspeakably cruel and directed towards civilian targets which should be protected by the humanitarian law that the Russian Federation claims to defend. The most recent example occurred on 14 October 2025, when a United Nations humanitarian convoy was attacked in the Kherson region. A truck clearly marked with the United Nations logo was hit and destroyed by a first-person view drone. The operators of these drones are piloting them from a first-person perspective and can clearly see their targets. They knew they were targeting humanitarian workers, whose convoy was identified as such. The drone operator's video feed posted on social media proves that it was a clearly identified convoy and that no mistake was possible. We can only conclude that it was a deliberate act.

And this is not an isolated case. Throughout Ukraine, the Russian forces are using such drones to hunt down civilians as they go about their daily business, be it cycling, gardening or walking to work. In one of the deadliest incidents over the past year, a Russian drone hit a bus carrying miners to their workplace.

As established by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, these drone attacks are widespread, systematic and carried out as part of an organizational policy. The Commission found no information to suggest that the Russian military and civilian authorities had taken any steps to

prevent or put a stop to these crimes, and it thus concluded that the killings constituted a crime against humanity.

The cruelty of these acts is intensified and compounded by the dissemination on social media of videos of the attacks, often accompanied by celebratory or threatening captions. These are not military operations, but acts of terror aimed at dehumanizing an entire population.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, we continue to hear claims in this room that what we are dealing with is somehow a war against “Nazism”.

That is, plain and simple, an invention by Russia and its President to conceal their aggression under the cloak of morality.

This manipulation is a deliberate act to distort perceptions, reassign guilt and muddy the waters.

It is a propaganda tool straight out of the toolbox of Soviet strategy.

Madam Chairperson,

Russia must fully live up to its responsibilities and honour its obligations under international law, with which it has to comply. We are determined to ensure that Russia is made to answer for its conduct and made to pay for the consequences of its flagrant violations of international law. We will continue to hold Russia accountable for its actions. This is a legitimate demand, on our part and on the part of this Council, vis-à-vis Russia.

Furthermore, the Russian Federation continues to hold three staff members of our Organization in arbitrary detention. Their trials were a charade. We call upon Russia to live up to its responsibilities towards this Organization and to release them immediately.

Thank you.