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Delegation of Canada

**STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR VÉRONIQUE PEPIN-HALLÉ, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CANADA TO THE OSCE, AT THE 1540th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

30 October 2025

The Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

Last week in this Council, as in so many meetings before, the Russian Federation continued to deny responsibility for the war of aggression it unleashed against its sovereign neighbour, Ukraine. It also denied the consequences of its relentless attacks on civilians and civilian objects.

In both this Council and the Forum for Security Cooperation, Russian denials reached new depths with the baseless claim that the destruction of a Ukrainian kindergarten on October 22nd was a staged event. These are not isolated remarks. They are part of a systematic disinformation campaign – the same machinery that denied Russia's invasions of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk in 2014, and its atrocities in Bucha and Mariupol.

Deny. Deflect. Minimize. Blame others. This is the Russian playbook.

But the truth cannot be silenced. Independent sources continue to document the real situation on the ground.

The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine reported that at least 214 civilians were killed and nearly 1,000 injured across Ukraine in September 2025 – a devastating toll, especially in frontline communities. Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure have intensified, compounding the suffering.

The latest report of the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine examined short-range drone strikes in a 300 km area across Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, and Mykolaiv oblasts. Russian drone strikes have killed and injured civilians, caused widespread destruction, disrupted essential services, and created a coercive environment that has forced thousands to flee. The Commission concluded that these drone attacks constitute the crimes against humanity of murder and of forcible transfer of population.

Russia's disinformation cannot erase their actions nor obscure their true intentions.

Despite repeated calls for peace, Russia has shown no willingness to agree to an immediate ceasefire. They repeatedly justify their continued aggression by referring to their own supposed security concerns and so-called root causes – but they also reveal again and again what they really want.

They want Ukraine to capitulate; they want “regime-change” to ensure a compliant, undemocratic, pro-Russian regime in Kyiv; and they want to erase the Ukrainian language, culture and national identity.

Let us be clear. Russia’s conduct is antithetical to this organization and its principles.

The Kremlin 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. It disregards human rights both within its own borders and in the occupied territory of Ukraine, and it flouts international humanitarian law.

Madam Chairperson,

Ukraine has committed itself to an unconditional ceasefire. Russia must do the same.

Any negotiated agreement must begin with the complete withdrawal of Russian forces and guarantee Ukraine’s long-term security and sovereignty.

Only then can we begin to restore security in our region, not on the basis of coercion, but on the solid foundations of international law and OSCE principles.

Because a just peace in Ukraine is not only a matter for Ukraine; it is also a matter of respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the defence of the principles of the Helsinki Final Act. It is a matter for us all.

Thank you.