



**Statement by Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iceland,
Helga Hauksdóttir, at the 1437 Special Meeting of the
OSCE Permanent Council, 24 August 2023**

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

While Iceland aligns with the statement of the European Union, I would like to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the Chairpersonship of North Macedonia for convening this Special Session of the Permanent Council.

Today, we congratulate the people of Ukraine and our esteemed Ukrainian Colleagues on their 32nd Independence Day, with many more to come.

It is devastating that again, the Independence Day of Ukraine is commemorated in the midst of the Russian Federation's ongoing brutal, illegal, and unprovoked war of aggression. Today, Reykjavik raises the Ukrainian flag in solidarity and support to Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

For the last 18 months, Russia has blatantly disregarded the most fundamental rules and principles of international law, including the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act.

Russia's war has shaken the European security architecture to its core and challenged the rule-based multilateral system. It has undermined the security and stability of the OSCE region as well as of the world.

At the same time, we have witnessed the power of multilateralism, as the majority of the world's nations resolutely stand united with Ukraine and in defence of international law and our fundamental principles and values.

And in their courageous defence of their country, steadfastly exercising their right to self-defence, the Ukrainian nation continues to demonstrate that democracy, rule of law, freedom, and human rights are values worth fighting for.

Iceland will continue to support them, for as long as it takes.

Mr. Chair,

Russia's military aggression has caused tragic loss of life, immense human suffering, the forced displacement of millions, and environmental and cultural destruction. Iceland condemns Russia's missile attack on the historical centre of the city of Chernihiv a few days ago.

Iceland strongly condemns Russia's continued violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including their indiscriminate attacks, forced transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children, and targeting of cultural heritage sites.

We cannot but continue to demand that Russia abide by its obligations under international law and uphold the principles and commitments of the OSCE. Russia can and must stop its war of choice, immediately. And to completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

There can be no impunity. Russia will be held accountable for its aggression, as well as the damage, destruction, and loss of life it has caused, in accordance with international law. Iceland will continue to support international efforts to ensure justice and accountability, including the Council of Europe Register of Damage established at the Reykjavík Summit.

Iceland deplores Russia's decision to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and we strongly condemn Russia's attempts to block international routes in the Black Sea and its attacks on Ukrainian ports and grain facilities.

We urge Russia to resume the Black Sea Grain Initiative, cease its weaponization of food, and respect freedom of navigation.

Mr. Chair,

Yesterday, the President of Iceland participated in the Third Summit of the International Crimea Platform reaffirming that Iceland stands united with Ukraine and its people.

To conclude, allow me to reiterate Iceland's deep and unwavering solidarity and support to the Ukrainian nation and the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.