



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council 1425 Vienna, 1 June 2023

EU Statement on the Russian Federation's ongoing aggression against Ukraine

1. Russia has been waging its illegal, imperialistic and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people for more than 15 months. Yesterday, at least three people, including a child, were killed after Russia launched another wave of ballistic missile strikes on Kyiv overnight. Another twelve civilians, including a child, were reportedly injured. Failing to achieve any significant gains on the battlefield and failing to break Ukraine's resolve to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion, the Kremlin continues its abhorrent attempts to terrorise Ukrainian civilians. On 26 May, Russia attacked a medical facility in Dnipro, killing four civilians and injuring more than thirty, including at least eight doctors. On 28 May, Russia attempted to mar Kyiv's founding day with the largest drone attack since the beginning of its illegal war, using a total of 54 Shahed drones on Ukraine's capital. On 29 and 30 May, Russia once again targeted Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, launching over 40 cruise and ballistic missiles and 66 Shahed drones in total. Tragically, at least one civilian was killed and at least four others were injured. In just the last month of May, Kyiv has been targeted eighteen times.
2. The EU echoes the OSCE leaders in their strong condemnation of this senseless violence and calls on the Russian Federation to immediately cease these atrocious acts, respect international law, and uphold the principles and commitments of the OSCE. We share the Ukrainian leadership's determination to overcome this reprehensible conduct. We remain firmly committed to holding all those responsible to account.

3. Today, on 1 June, as the world observes the International Day for the Protection of Children, our thoughts are with the Ukrainian children that continue to suffer the devastating consequences of Russia's war of aggression against their homeland. According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the death of at least 483 Ukrainian children, with at least 986 injured and 394 reported missing. Moreover, there have been 19,484 confirmed cases of deported children, of which 12,936 have been located and 371 have been returned home. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's actions deliberately targeting Ukrainian children, including their forcible transfer within parts of Ukraine's territory temporarily occupied by Russia and/or their unlawful deportation to Russia, as well as attempts to impose a so-called "re-education", as evidenced in the recent Moscow Mechanism report. This apparently systematic practice may amount to a crime against humanity. Reports about forcible transfers of Ukrainian children to Belarus should also be investigated and any perpetrators must be brought to justice. We demand that Russia ceases these illegal activities immediately, and ensures the safe return of all Ukrainian children to their homes or legal guardians in Ukraine. In this context, we reiterate our support to the investigations by the ICC Prosecutor in Ukraine and call for full cooperation by all State Parties. The perpetrators of war crimes or crimes against humanity, as well as any responsible State officials and military leaders, must be and will be held accountable according to international law.
4. The EU is appalled by the reports that two Ukrainian minors, Tihran Ohannisian and Mykyta Khanhanov, were detained and subjected to torture in the illegally occupied Ukrainian city of Berdiansk by Russia, and now face severe sentences ranging from 10 to 20 years in prison. We demand their immediate and unconditional release. Furthermore, we call on Russia to immediately cease its systematic mistreatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian hostages in the temporarily and illegally occupied territory of Ukraine and in Russia, and demand the immediate release of all individuals unlawfully deprived of their liberty, including the three unlawfully detained

OSCE staff members. Russia must ensure that all Ukrainians in Russian captivity are treated in full compliance with international humanitarian law.

5. We will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes for Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression and restore Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. To that end, we will continue providing Ukraine with long-term political, financial, economic, humanitarian, legal and military support. We stand ready to support the expansion of OSCE programmatic activities on the ground in Ukraine in line with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, which is the organisation's unique strength.
6. The EU reaffirms its support for President Zelenskyy's initiative for a just peace, and we will continue working with Ukraine on the 10-point peace plan. We emphasise once again that any diplomatic solution to end Russia's illegal war of aggression must be based on full respect for the rules, principles and norms of international law, including those enshrined in the UN Charter, and the founding documents of the OSCE, including the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter.
7. With its war, Russia is flagrantly violating the most fundamental rules, principles and norms of international law, including those enshrined in the UN Charter and the founding documents of the OSCE. The Belarusian regime is an accomplice in Russia's illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. We call on the Belarusian authorities to put an immediate end to their support of Russia's war, and reverse decisions that can only contribute to heightening tensions in the region, and undermine Belarus' sovereignty. Any attempt to further escalate the situation will be met by a strong and coordinated reaction.
8. The EU reiterates its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We demand that Russia ceases its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and immediately withdraws all its military forces, proxies,

and equipment, unconditionally and entirely, from the whole territory of Ukraine.

The Candidate Countries NORTH MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, ALBANIA*, UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, and BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA*, the Potential Candidate Country GEORGIA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND, LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as ANDORRA, MONACO and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

* North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.