



Delegation of Canada
to the OSCE

Délégation du Canada
auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE
1469th MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

18 April 2024

Madam Chair,

"We are getting dangerously close to a nuclear accident" warned the Director General of the IAEA on 15 April in his address to the Security Council.

He further warned that the five principles for nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant have been repeatedly violated in the last months due to direct attacks on the plant, which he qualified as a "step-change increase" in risk to nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

His assessment of the situation is chilling. The potential consequences of a nuclear accident are unfathomable and cannot be risked for Russia's brutal war effort.

As Canada stated at the extraordinary Board of Governors meeting of the IAEA last week, drone attacks on the facility on 7 and 8 April are the latest example of the persistent and increasingly serious threats facing the ZNPP since Russia's illegal military attack on, and seizure of, the facility in March 2022. We unequivocally reject any attempts by Russia to assert its illegitimate and illegal ownership claims over ZNPP.

The IAEA Board of Governors has adopted four resolutions calling on Russia to cease its attacks against nuclear facilities in Ukraine and to withdraw its military and other unauthorized personnel from the ZNPP. Sadly, these resolutions continue to go unheeded by Russia in a familiar pattern of complete disregard for international law or political commitments, which we witness regularly at the OSCE as well.

The best way to ensure nuclear safety and security at the ZNPP is for Russia to withdraw from the plant and for the site to be returned to the competent Ukrainian authorities. Russia's reckless actions continue to place Ukraine and the rest of the international community at grave risk, and they must stop.

Madam Chair,

We reiterate our grave concern at the increase of double tap strikes by the Russian Federation in Ukraine. Double tap strikes deliberately target first responders which rush to the scene of an attack to provide lifesaving first aid to civilians.

Russia continues to use this tactic, which may amount to a war crime, in an increasingly desperate strategy of terrorizing Ukraine, seemingly without any regard to the lives of civilians and international law. These attacks have killed many first responders so far, including emergency service workers, policemen, nurses, and firefighters. They have injured civilians, including journalists.

These attacks are despicable and immoral and may amount to a violation of international law. Yet Russia uses them now in Ukraine, after having done the same for years in Syria. It's become a pattern of Russian military strategy to deliberately seek to inflict the maximum amount of punishment and suffering on civilians, to terrorize them into submission and undermine their support for their chosen leadership. It has helped the Assad regime accomplish the same and is on a familiar path of destruction in Ukraine, as evidenced in places like Bucha, Irpin, Kramatorsk and Mariupol, to name a few.

And to deflect blame, Russia resorts to tired conspiracy theories which are easily debunked with simple facts.

We call on Russia to cease targeting first responders.

Madam Chair,

Russia's targeting of critical civilian infrastructure has significantly increased without any indication of restraint being shown.

For Russia, seemingly everything in Ukraine is a legitimate military target because the entire country is resisting Russia's aggression and occupation. Clearly this blanket approach is not justifiable, and the sheer volume of attacks of civilian infrastructure, especially energy infrastructure, reveal Russia's true intentions to destroy Ukraine itself. The recent attack on Chernihiv, which killed 18 and injured over 70 civilians and damaged a hotel, hospital and education institution is case and point.

We call on Russia to withdraw its troops and equipment from the sovereign territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, where they are neither wanted nor warranted.

Finally, Madam Chair,

It will be two years this month since Russia detained three members of the OSCE who were serving this organization and executing the will of all participating States. We call for the immediate release of the three detained SMM members, without any further delay.

Thank you, Madam Chair.