



Delegation of Canada  
to the OSCE

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auprès de l'OSCE

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR JOCELYN KINNEAR  
ON THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE  
1473<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**16 May 2024**

Madam Chair,

I would like to start by expressing our thanks to our Slovak colleague. Dear Peter, thank you for sharing the update on the condition of Prime Minister Fico – it is a relief to hear that his condition has stabilized overnight. Please know, as my Prime Minister said last night, that our thoughts are with Prime Minister Fico and his loved ones, and with the people of Slovakia, as her recovers from this horrible attack. We wish him a swift and complete recovery.

Madam Chair,

Eighty years ago, the Soviet Union deported some 200,000 Crimean Tatars from their ancestral homeland in Crimea.

This mass deportation of the Crimean Tatars led to thousands of deaths through starvation, disease and abuses, robbing them of their freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement, as well as of their private property.

The Canadian Parliament has recognized the deportation of Crimean Tatars as an act of genocide and designated the 18th of May as the Crimean Tatar Deportation Memorial Day in Canada.

The deportation of Crimean Tatars from their ancestral home caused immeasurable loss and suffering to the entire Tatar people. The Crimean Tatars were only permitted to return to Crimea beginning in 1989, with no restitution made by the Soviet authorities who had been responsible for their deportation.

In 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea after staging a military invasion of Ukraine, which is an act that Canada considers illegal under international law.

Crimean Tatars face renewed persecution at the hands of Russia, including the forced disappearances of activists, attacks on their freedom of religion, freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, and their dispossession of private property by the occupying authorities of the Russian Federation.

Additionally, Moscow is once again attempting to change the ethnic makeup of Crimea by restricting education in Ukrainian and Tatar languages, stifling culture, and outlawing representative institutions like the Mejlis.

We solemnly remember those who have perished, those who carry the painful scars of loss, and pay tribute to the resilience of this community, whose peaceful acts of resistance against Russian illegal annexation we fully support.

Madam Chair,

The Russian Federation glorifies the Soviet and Tsarist regimes and has taken illegal actions to replay its imperial past, exemplified by the full-scale illegal aggression against Ukraine.

Russia's pseudo-historical and selective recollection of the past as justification for the aggression against Ukraine indicates there is no tangible threat to Russia from Ukraine – only a desire to reinstate its influence over its neighbours by force and with brutality, and for nothing more than its own benefit to the detriment of that of its neighbours.

The commemoration of 80 years since the deportation of Crimean Tatars is a somber reminder of the injustice that continues to this day. Canada remains deeply concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation on the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula.

We continue to denounce Russia's banning of the Mejlis, the self-governing body of the Crimean Tatars, and call on Russia to cease its aggressive actions in the region. We call for the release of all arbitrarily detained Crimean Tatars, including Nariman Dzhelal, the First Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People.

Madam Chair,

In a phone call earlier this week, Prime Minister Trudeau informed President Zelenskyy he would attend the global peace summit to be held on June 15-16, 2024, in Switzerland.

Canada supports in words and deeds Ukraine's right to defend itself from Russian aggression, and we support peace in Ukraine on Ukraine's terms. As co-lead on Working Group 4 of Ukraine's 10-Point Peace Formula, together with Norway and Ukraine, Canada is dedicated to supporting the release of all prisoners and the return of deported and forcibly transferred Ukrainian children back to their families.

In this vein, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally release the three SMM employees that remain in unlawful detention in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories – Vadym Golda, Maxim Petrov and Dmytro Shabanov.

Thank you, Madam Chair.