# Russia launched a war of aggression against Ukraine yet seeks to cast itself as the victim: UK statement to the OSCE

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**Ambassador Holland condemns Russia's ongoing attacks on Ukrainian cities and its attempts to portray itself as the victim while continuing its war of aggression. He highlights rising civilian casualties, Russia's refusal to engage seriously in diplomacy, and reaffirms the UK's support for Ukraine's self defence and a just, lasting peace.**

Thank you, Mr Chair.

It has become routine for Russia to denounce Ukraine's legitimate efforts at self-defence while continuing its own bombardment of Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure. Week after week, the state that launched this war of aggression seeks to cast itself as the victim and to blame those supporting a sovereign state under attack in its defence. Colleagues should be clear-eyed about this inversion of reality.

Any loss of civilian life on either side is deeply regrettable. And the human cost of Russia's war remains stark: UN reporting for 2025 indicates that civilian casualties in Ukraine rose by 31 per cent compared with the previous year. These figures speak to a well-documented pattern of strikes across populated areas with predictable humanitarian consequences.

The last few days have again shown how far this pattern extends. In the early hours of 14 March, Russia launched a combined assault of 430 drones and 64 missiles, killing at least 7 civilians and injuring 46 others. This was the largest missile strike since the mass attack on the 2-3rd February, and one of the largest since 2024. This mass attack comes amid a relentless daily bombardment, with Russia having already fired over 3,000 drones and nearly 100 missiles at Ukrainian cities in March alone.

Mr Chair, Russia's projection cannot obscure the fundamental truth: Russia launched this illegal and unprovoked war against a sovereign neighbour. It could end it today by withdrawing its forces from all Ukrainian territory. Instead, it entrenches its attempted illegal annexations and imposes control through coercion and the systematic erasure of Ukrainian identity in the areas that it occupies.

The Kremlin alleges that Ukraine and its partners are obstructing diplomacy. But it has now been more than one year since the United States and Ukraine jointly proposed an immediate and unconditional ceasefire – an offer which Russia declined. Russia has turned up to talks but refused to move one inch from its maximalist positions. This is performance, not negotiation.

Ukraine has repeatedly demonstrated its seriousness about achieving a just and lasting peace. The UK, the US and many partners have consistently supported immediate ceasefire proposals and continue to do so. But negotiations require good faith from all parties. Russia has shown no credible shift, no de-escalatory intent, and no willingness to take even the smallest step that would indicate genuine commitment. Its attempts to portray others as the obstacle to peace only underline its own lack of seriousness.

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom will continue to stand with Ukraine as it exercises its inherent right

to self-defence under the UN Charter, and to support efforts that can deliver a comprehensive, just and durable peace - one that ends this war, restores Ukraine's territorial integrity, and strengthens European security for us all.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russia-launched-a-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-yet-seeks-to-cast-itself-as-the-victim-uk-statement-to-the-osce