

Russia's approach to the Easter ceasefire demonstrates its contempt for peace: UK statement to the OSCE

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Ambassador Holland says Russia's approach to the Easter ceasefire demonstrates its contempt for peace, highlighting thousands of ceasefire violations and attempts to distort the narrative. Ukraine made a good faith commitment to a ceasefire and demonstrated its readiness to engage constructively. Russia made a different choice.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

Since this Council last met, Russia has further intensified its war against Ukraine. Its actions once again demonstrate contempt for international law, for civilian life, and for the conditions required to achieve a just and lasting peace.

In March, Russia launched an average of over 200 drones per day against Ukraine – a wartime high. Early indications suggest April is on course to match that grim record.

This relentless increase stands in contrast to Ukraine's consistent call for a permanent ceasefire. A call the Kremlin continues to reject. In the absence of any credible signal from Russia that it was prepared to change its stance on this issue, on 31 March President Zelenskyy proposed a ceasefire over the Easter period. This was a serious offer, made in good faith, and intended to reduce harm to civilians and create space for dialogue.

Russia's initial response was dismissive and deliberately vague. In the days that followed, the Kremlin sought to reframe the narrative, belatedly attempting to present the ceasefire as its own initiative. This manoeuvre was revealing and not just for its pettiness. Had Russia been serious about peace, it would have engaged constructively with Ukraine's proposal from the outset. Instead, presumably to avoid being seen to acknowledge Ukraine's approach as being constructive, it chose performance over substance, seeking to deflect scrutiny.

During the so-called "truce" period, there were thousands of violations reported, including shelling and short-range drone launches. At the same time, it is right to acknowledge one limited but notable development: the absence of long-range strike activity during the ceasefire. This should not be overstated. Regrettably, in the hours after the ceasefire ended, Russia fired nearly 100 drones. But it does underline an important point. Intensification of these attacks is a choice, and so too is restraint.

Even this limited pause demonstrates that reducing violence and creating conditions more conducive to negotiations is possible, if the political will exists. Ukraine has shown that it is prepared to take such steps. It has signalled readiness for a ceasefire that could serve as a foundation for wider talks. We urge Russia to step up and match this willingness.

For now, though, Russia, continues to reject peace, regardless of rhetoric. While speaking of negotiations, it has intensified attacks. While gesturing towards ceasefire concepts, it has violated them repeatedly. While attempting to claim the language of restraint, it has intensified its attacks on the ground. This contradiction cannot be ignored. It raises serious questions about Russia's intentions and its credibility as a negotiating partner.

Ukraine's position remains consistent and principled. It seeks a cessation of hostilities not as an end in itself, but as a pathway towards a broader settlement that upholds international law and secures its sovereignty. Ukraine has demonstrated readiness to engage constructively. Russia has so far made a different choice.

The path to peace begins with an immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for international law, and genuine engagement in good faith. Ukraine is ready. At present, Russia is not.

Thank you.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russias-approach-to-the-easter-ceasefire-demonstrates-its-contempt-for-peace-uk-statement-to-the-osce>