Russia’s war against Ukraine and threats to OSCE security: UK statement to the OSCE

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Ambassador Holland condemned Russia’s illegal war against Ukraine, denounced recent Russian threats and intimidation at the OSCE, reaffirmed the UK’s continued military support for Ukraine, and called for the immediate and unconditional release of unlawfully detained OSCE Special Monitoring Mission members.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The UK remains steadfast in its condemnation of Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine, and of the broader pattern of behaviour that continues to undermine security, stability, and the principles on which this Organisation is founded.

Firstly I want to join my colleagues in condemning the threats made by the Russian Federation at last week’s meeting. This reflects a familiar attempt to intimidate and deter those who support Ukraine’s right to defend itself against an illegal and unprovoked invasion. It will not work.

The Russian state characterises international support for Ukraine’s defence against its deadly attacks as an escalation of the conflict – a claim that is unfounded and aimed at deflecting from its own actions. Our support for Ukraine, and readiness to defend ourselves, is lawful and necessary in response to Russia’s continued aggression. And in this regard I wish to associate the UK with the statement delivered by my French colleague today in its entirety.

Our common security is best protected not through threats, but through adherence to the shared principles set out in the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act — respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. The UK and our partners stand firmly behind those principles. It is Russia that is violating them, systematically and flagrantly, through its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

The UK will not be deterred. The UK will continue to provide the military assistance Ukraine needs, for as long as it needs it.

Mr Chair, Russia’s disregard for agreed rules and commitments is also evident in its continued treatment of this Organisation and its personnel. This month marks four years since our colleagues from the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine – Dmytro Shabanov, Vadym Golda and Maxim Petrov – were unlawfully detained by Russia and its proxies. They were detained while carrying out duties mandated by this Council, under a mission established by consensus, including by the Russian Federation. Their continued detention remains a clear breach of OSCE commitments.

Once again, the UK calls for their immediate and unconditional release. Their detention is not a marginal issue. It forms part of a broader pattern of obstructing independent observation, rejecting accountability, and weakening the institutions designed to reduce risk and build security across the OSCE area.

The OSCE exists to promote security through transparency, restraint and respect for agreed rules. Russia’s actions towards this Organisation run directly counter to those principles. And until Russia chooses compliance over obstruction and accountability over denial, its actions will continue to undermine trust in this Council and in the commitments we have all undertaken.

Thank you.

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/russias-war-against-ukraine-and-threats-to-osce-security-uk-statement-to-the-osce