

PACE President Statement at the Special Ceremony to mark one year of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

Parvis of the Palais de l'Europe

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One year ago, we have all woken up shocked and terrified to learn that the Russian Federation launched an unprovoked full scale aggression against Ukraine.

As a result, tens of thousands have been killed or wounded in the past year, millions had to leave their homes and often even their country.

On behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, I wish to pay tribute to all of them.

Vital infrastructure is under constant attack by the aggressor and fundamental rights and freedoms of Ukrainian citizens are at stake.

The moment when the Russian army crossed Ukraine's borders, Russia also crossed the red lines of the Council of Europe.

Russia's membership of Europe's oldest and broadest treaty-based organisation was suspended within a day and ended within 3 weeks.

By acting in this way, for the first time ever, the 46 remaining member States made it completely clear that going into war is in no way compatible with a member State's solemn commitment to protect and promote peace in Europe.

Russia's devastating war of aggression against the state and citizens of Ukraine should never have started and now must end immediately.

Every day Russia does not end the war, it continues violating international law and harming the lives and future of the citizens of Ukraine.

Today I call on the citizens of Russia to do whatever is in their power to make their president, government, parliament and army immediately end this war of aggression. Those who want to end the war, can count on our solidarity and support.

Those who are involved in the continuation of this war of aggression have to be aware that in the end there will be no impunity.

Our Assembly has unanimously demanded the setting up of a special international criminal tribunal in The Hague to prosecute Russian and Belarusian political and military leaders who “planned, prepared, initiated or executed” this war of aggression.

Today we, representing 700 million citizens of Europe, stand in solidarity with the people of our member State Ukraine.

We will continue to support Ukraine as long as it takes, and we will not allow ourselves to get used to this war and to start perceiving it as a normality.

Every single day people of Ukraine suffer and die in this war. Let us therefore strengthen our commitment to make everything possible to restore peace in Ukraine and to ensure that justice will be done.

Dear Ukrainians, we will do our utmost to regain all your fundamental rights and freedoms, to restore Ukraine’s territorial integrity and national sovereignty within internationally recognised borders and to rebuild and strengthen Ukraine based on the respect for the rule of law, human rights and democracy.

People of Ukraine,

You shall overcome! You are not alone.

Let there be peace in Ukraine.