

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
10 January 2024

Original: English

Letter dated 10 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a joint statement by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in connection with the Security Council briefing on 10 January 2024 under the agenda item entitled “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine” (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rein **Tammsaar**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 10 January 2024 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement by the Republic of Estonia on behalf of the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania

**Security Council briefing on the maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine
New York, 10 January 2024**

Mister/Madame President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic countries – Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. We also align ourselves with the Statement of the European Union.

Thank you for convening today's Security Council briefing. I thank the briefers for their valuable insight. I would also like to use this opportunity to welcome all new members of the Security Council.

Mister/Madame President,

Unsurprisingly, Russia has started 2024 where it left off last year – with waves of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine, unleashing death and destruction. There has been an ongoing increase of attacks on homes, schools, water systems and hospitals. Since the beginning of the war, over 1,300 attacks on health care facilities have been reported by World Health Organization (WHO) in Ukraine, which is equal to over 50 per cent of global health-care-related attacks.

On 29 December, Russia initiated what could be considered the most extensive missile and drone strike against Ukraine since the onset of the large-scale war. Over the course of five days, Russia deployed a total of 500 missiles and drones, majority of which were successfully intercepted by the Ukrainian armed forces. Regrettably, a significant number managed to reach their intended targets, causing substantial harm to Ukrainian civilians and resulting in the destruction of residential buildings, maternity homes, hospitals, houses of worship, schools, shops, and commercial warehouses. This recent heinous and calculated assault on civilian and critical infrastructure reveals a shocking disregard for human life and the principles of decency. The scale of destruction and loss of innocent lives caused by Russia's actions is reprehensible and requires an immediate and forceful response from the global community.

The Russian representative tries very hard to come up with absurd claims by stating that the damage is caused by the Ukrainian air defense systems. At the same time, he repeatedly fails to address why Russia even launches missiles which threaten lives of innocent civilians of another sovereign country in the first place?

Mister/Madame President,

Russia's war strategy has followed the scenario everybody predicted. Cold winter has arrived, Russia's deliberate attacks against energy infrastructure have increased, as has the shelling of civilians. These attacks severely violate international humanitarian law and constitute a war crime. Russian aggression has also made Ukraine the largest minefield in the world. Humanitarian access to those in areas under Russia's occupation remains virtually non-existent.

We condemn Iran and the DPRK who are providing weapons and ammunition to Russia in its indiscriminate war against Ukraine. In light of the recent reports of

Russia's purchase and use of close-range ballistic missiles from Iran and the DPRK, we once again reiterate our call for a UN investigation on the weapons transfers and a report to the UN Security Council. In this regard, we support the Joint Statement condemning Russia and the DPRK's flagrant violations of the UN Security Council resolutions.

Mister/Madame President,

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have altogether contributed over 100 million US dollars' worth of humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine and we will continue to support Ukraine until the aggressor is defeated. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of Ms. Denise Brown, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine and her leadership on the Winter Response Plan.

In conclusion, the sharp increase of Russian airstrikes demonstrates that Russia's criminal goals have remained unchanged. Instead of prolonging this unnecessary war of choice, we call upon Russia to respect the calls of the international community which voiced its position in relevant General Assembly resolutions calling for immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

I thank you.
