

RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

On Friday, 25 February 2022, Antigua and Barbuda and Guatemala drafted, proposed and negotiated a Declaration condemning the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. The Declaration was introduced in the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States and was supported by 25 of the 33 member states.

Sir Ronald Sanders' statement at the Permanent Council of the Organisation of American States February 25th 2022 The Situation in Ukraine

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation thanks you for accommodating this Special Meeting and we thank the other 19 countries that have joined Guatemala and Antigua and Barbuda in co-sponsoring this urgent declaration.

Antigua and Barbuda is a co-sponsor of this Declaration for many good reasons.

Not least among those reasons is that what we have witnessed are violations of international law and the Charter of the United Nations by the Russian Federation.

Ukraine has been an independent state since 1991 with clearly defined borders.

This unlawful and unprovoked incursion into Ukraine violates the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, the Charter of the OAS and global peace and security.

Mr. Chairman, small and military powerless states, such as yours and mine, depend upon adherence and respect to the agreed and settled principles that are set out in the UN Charter and in international law.

When these principles are flouted and international law is violated, small states are obliged to speak out loudly in our own interest as much as in the interest of nations that are the actual victims of aggression.

My government recognizes that the Government of the Russian Federation believes that the security of Russia is threatened.

In this connection, we hold the view that the Government of the Russian Federation has every right to voice its fears and concerns, and to seek convincing assurances and mechanisms concerning its security.

But, as the international community has made clear in the United Nations and in many regional organizations, including the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), seeking resolution by military aggression and violations of international law, are not - and cannot be - acceptable, and must be fully rejected.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has made it clear in other fora that sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination and the pacific resolution of disputes are the bedrock of international relations and that these principles must be upheld everywhere.

I reiterate that position today, particularly because Antigua and Barbuda along with the rest of the global community will pay a high price for Russia's violation of these principles of international law.

Antigua and Barbuda has every right to be deeply concerned.

Our region, the Caribbean, whose economies are still reeling from the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic, will not be immune from the negative impact on the global economy that is already obvious because of the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Just as in every region of the world, the Caribbean will experience harmful effects.

No sector of any of our economies will be spared.

We expect increases in the costs of oil and gas and shortages and high costs of food.

Especially affected will be our tourism industry which is already under siege from the harmful effects of climate change and from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, stated in the meeting of the UN general Assembly on Ukraine, earlier this week, this conflict can trigger for all humanity "a scale and severity of need unseen for many years".

Mr Chairman, while our small states in the Caribbean are strong in their national cohesion, they are militarily powerless against larger and powerful states.

In this context, Russian attempts to annex parts of Ukraine by recognizing break-away regions would have grave repercussions for our region and other regions around the world, by emboldening other governments, which claim the territory of their neighbours, to act in similar fashion.

Antigua and Barbuda fears that the consequence of this would be to create hostilities and instability in almost every region of the world.

My delegation laments the loss of life, displacement and human suffering inflicted on innocent civilians of Ukraine.

This must end in the name of humanity.

Antigua and Barbuda reaffirms its adherence to the fundamental principles of international law and joins all peace loving countries in calling for the immediate cessation of Russian aggression in the Ukraine.

Mr Chairman, this Permanent Council could not sit muted in the face of an unprovoked aggression by one of its permanent observer states against another permanent observer

state, especially as the member states of the Organization are each guided by Article 3 of the OAS Charter which states clearly that the American States condemn war of aggression.

We urge a return to multilateralism and to diplomacy that will leave Ukrainian territory and its borders intact while assuring all parties, including the Russian Federation, of their security.

Thank you.