

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 31, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to encourage the Biden administration to work with like-minded member states of the Organization of American States (OAS) to revoke Russia's status as a Permanent Observer in response to its unprovoked, inhumane, and illegal invasion and occupation of Ukraine.

Nearly 30 years ago, the OAS granted Russia Permanent Observer status. That decision conferred international prestige on Russia and reflected the OAS' aspirations for the country to overcome more than 70 years of communist authoritarianism and take its place among other democratic and peaceful nations. Since then, Moscow's growing authoritarianism at home, aggression against Ukraine and several of its neighbors, and nefarious activities in our hemisphere call for a reassessment of Russia's engagement with the OAS.

In February, Vladimir Putin launched an unprovoked attack against Ukraine, which has resulted in thousands of innocent civilian casualties. The OAS General Secretariat immediately condemned the Russian invasion, and more than a dozen OAS member states issued a declaration reiterating these points. On March 25, more than two-thirds of OAS member countries adopted a resolution signaling the need to review Russia's adherence to its commitment to the OAS as a Permanent Observer. The time has come for Putin's Russia to no longer have a seat at the OAS.

Russia's record of aggression is incompatible with the principles and practices of the OAS, an organization that seeks to promote peace, sovereignty and internationally-recognized human rights in the Western Hemisphere. We encourage you to work with like-minded member states and the Permanent Council to promptly revoke Russia's status as a permanent observer to the OAS.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Antony Blinken

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Ranking Member



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United States Senator



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ROBERT MENENDEZ
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