



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Minister Counsellor Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 30 March 2023

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Norway has aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. In my national capacity, though, I would like to make a few remarks.

Mr. Chair,

Since 24 February last year, more than 400 children have been killed in Ukraine. Many more have been wounded. The reports of children internally or externally displaced amounts to several hundred thousand. Furthermore, Ukrainian children in a variety of categories, including orphans, children of prisoners of war, and others, have been forcibly relocated by Russian authorities since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. The true figures are unknown, but according to the Ukrainian Prosecutor's Office at least sixteen thousand children are reported as forcibly transferred to Russia or occupied territories.

The war severely reduces the ability of families and communities to protect their children at a time when they need it the most. Ukrainian children now experience reduced educational possibilities and access to health care. They are subjected to a heightened risk of trafficking, loss of family and loved ones, and trauma. Children have greater physical and psychological vulnerability and suffer disproportionately the consequences of modern warfare. With every attack on homes, schools, hospitals, food and water systems, roads and other civilian objects, children's prospects for the future diminish.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and other human rights law, International Humanitarian Law, and Refugee Law should all protect children affected by armed conflict. The international obligations are in place. We welcome all efforts made at ensuring protection for those who are consistently most vulnerable to harm during conflict,

including children. At the same time, we condemn Russia's neglect of almost all the international laws, rules and commitments it has signed up to.

Mr. Chair,

On 16 March, the UN-backed Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine released a report stating that Russian authorities have committed a wide range of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law since the start of the invasion of Ukraine, including the unlawful deportation of children.

On 17 March, the Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court issued warrants of arrest for two Russian individuals in the context of the war in Ukraine. The Chamber considers that there are reasonable grounds to believe that each of the two suspects, Mr. Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, and Ms. Maria Lvova-Belova, bears responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation, and that of unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children. This is indeed a landmark decision made by the ICC.

Tomorrow, we mark one year since the liberation of Bucha. The liberation of the town disclosed what may amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian military. In this regard, we welcome the Bucha Summit on Russia's accountability for crimes in Ukraine, which will take place tomorrow. We believe the Summit will be important in order to showcase the importance of accountability for planning and carrying out war crimes.

We also believe it is important because ensuring accountability is an important contribution to restore justice and prevent future incidents around the world similar to what happened in Bucha.

Thank you.