



THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 23 June 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Norway is aligned with the statement made by the European Union but allow me to underscore two specific points in my national capacity.

Firstly, on Sunday we marked the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict. It is a pertinent reminder to us as millions of Ukrainians are suffering the consequences of Russia's brutal and unjustified war. Daily, we hear reports of sexual violence against women and girls, including rape, torture, trafficking, and sexual exploitation occurring in Ukraine.

I want to echo Secretary General Schmid in that this is completely unacceptable and must stop.

It is in our common interest that there is zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence, and trafficking, and no impunity for perpetrators. Accountability is vital to ensure justice for the survivors, and to deter, and prevent, future sexual and gender-based violations everywhere.

Secondly, on Monday we marked the World Refugee Day, recognizing all those who have been forced to flee their homelands.

In the last four months we have witnessed an unprecedented number of refugees fleeing Ukraine. Russia's brutal war in Ukraine is driving the fastest and one of the largest forced displacement crises since World War II. Families are torn apart, and the trauma of war will have a lasting impact on many of those forced to leave their homes. Women and children represent some 90 per cent of those forced to flee.

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According to UNHCR nearly one-third of Ukrainians have been forced from their homes. Millions of refugees from Ukraine have crossed borders into neighbouring countries (5 mill.), and many more have been forced to move inside the country (8 mill.). We acknowledge the profound hardships they have endured and reaffirm our commitment to protect and support them. We applaud the hospitality and solidarity extended especially by Ukraine's neighbours and recognize the strain such a sudden influx of refugees has put on housing, education, and health care systems. The response mounted by governments, civil society and international humanitarian organisations and their local partners has been crucial.

However, Russia bears full responsibility for the unspeakable human suffering and tragedies, the loss of so many lives, massive displacement, and destruction across Ukraine. To stop the suffering, we call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military actions and withdraw all its troops and equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, including the illegally annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Thank you.