



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Henrik Malvik at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 2 June 2022

Thank you,

Norway is aligned with the statement made by the European Union and stands fully behind its content but allow me some remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

The ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine demonstrates the essential role of the press in providing information and reporting on possible violations of international humanitarian law as well as human rights violations and abuses.

Thus far, at least eight journalists, Ukrainian and international, have been killed while covering the war and documenting the atrocities committed by Russian forces in Ukraine. The French journalist Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff is the latest reported victim.

Reports say Mr. Leclerc-Imhoff was killed on Monday this week, covering an evacuation operation on the outskirts of the city of Sievierodonetsk. Mr. Chairman, we feel compelled to remind that journalists are civilians under international humanitarian law and as such entitled to protection in situations of armed conflict.

Adding to that, every attack on media workers is an attack on the fundamental right to freedom of expression. Protecting the lives of journalists, photographers and support staff means protecting our right to information. Not least in situations of armed conflict, where public access to factual and reliable information is critical.

In this connection, we must also remember the crackdown on independent media in Russia. The Russian government is doing its best to spread disinformation and hinder factual and objective journalism in its own country. Independent journalism is essential to counter the spread of disinformation and propaganda. Disinformation and propaganda, on the other hand, only reinforce insecurity, mistrust, and hostility – preventing a basis for dialogue and peace.

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Mr. Chair,

Again, we want to underscore the need for accountability for atrocities committed in Ukraine following Russia's invasion.

In this regard, we refer to accountability in a wide sense, including the responsibility of states for violations of international law, as well as accountability for those individuals who may be responsible for war crimes. We also find political accountability important, for example accountability for conduct in multilateral forums.

Together, as an international community, we have already put in place significant international mechanisms and initiatives to ensure accountability. We look to the ICJ adjudicating cases between states, the ICC prosecuting individuals, and the Human Rights Council's fact finding, and special procedure mechanisms.

We welcome the European Council conclusions on Ukraine of May 30th, commending all those helping to gather evidence and to investigate any acts that may amount to war crimes and the other most serious crimes, underlining its support to the intensive work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the work being carried out by Ukraine's Prosecutor General. We applaud the establishment of a Joint Investigation Team coordinated by Eurojust and the ongoing operational support provided by Europol.

Mr. Chair,

International law obligations are not optional. Therefore, ensuring accountability for violations of international law in Ukraine is vital to ensure justice for the victims, and to deter - and prevent - future violations. It is also crucial for the re-establishment of long-term international peace and security.

Thank you.