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**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International  
Organizations in Vienna

**Statement by the Delegation of Ukraine  
in response to the UNHCR Assistant  
High Commissioner for Protection  
Ms Gillian Triggs**

As for delivery by Ambassador Yevhenii Tsymbaliuk,  
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna,  
to the 1411<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
16 February 2023

**Mr Chairperson,**

The Delegation of Ukraine warmly welcomes to the Permanent Council meeting Ms Gillian Triggs, the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection and thanks her for the comprehensive presentation.

Ukraine appreciates attention and support to Ukrainian refugees forced to flee Ukraine due to russia's war of aggression.

**Ms Triggs,**

russia's full-scale invasion of my country has forced over 14 million people from their homes as refugees and IDPs, which represents around one-third of Ukrainian population, and makes it currently the largest human displacement crisis in the world.

We are grateful to all international partners who provide the necessary assistance and support to Ukrainian refugees, most of whom are women and children. Their vulnerable situation puts them at various risks, including exploitation and trafficking. There is a need in further improving measures aimed at preventing trafficking in persons.

**Ms Triggs,**

Let me draw your special attention to the issues of filtration and forcible deportation.

As you are aware, russia forcibly places thousands of Ukrainians to "filtration camps" and widely uses them as hostages. In these "filtration camps" people are violently interrogated. There are many reports of ill-treatment, torture, intimidation, rape, separation of children from their parents.

Thousands of Ukrainians, including many children, are forcibly deported by the aggressor state from the invaded territories to russia's remote regions. Among those children there are also unaccompanied minors and minors in institutions, as well as children whose parents died as a result of russia's military aggression.

In russia they face intimidation, poverty and violence. Women and children are subjected to abuse, labour and sexual exploitation, trafficking in persons. Moreover, by coercing Ukrainian children to abandon usage of their mother tongue and learn russian, the occupying country implements forceful assimilation of Ukrainian people.

With the aim to permanently separate Ukrainian children from their homeland, russia imposed special so-called "simplified" procedures for adoption and obtaining russian citizenship for deported Ukrainian children. In fact, russia resorts to abduction and trafficking in children at the state level.

Let me stress that the relocation of Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to russia and their subsequent adoption by russian citizens grossly violate Ukrainian legislation and international law, including the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, which provides for the obligation of the occupying power not to change the personal status of children. It also violates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989.

I wish to emphasize that under international law russia's actions can also be qualified as the forcible transfer of children from one human group to another, which falls under the UN Convention on the crime of genocide.

We underline the need for the UNHCR to pay special attention to the fate of all those forcibly illegally deported Ukrainians, especially children, in flagrant breach of international humanitarian law, as well as to help ensuring their immediate and safe return to Ukraine.

Ukraine counts on your continued support and looks forward to enhancing our cooperation in the areas belonging to your mandate.

**Thank you, Mr Chairperson.**