



PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S ONGOING AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 9 June 2022

Thank you,

Let me start with thanking the Mr. Oleksandr Samilenko, Chairman of Kherson Regional Council, for his unreserved testimony of the current situation in his city and the ordeal the citizens of Kherson have had to endure in the face of brutal Russian forces.

Norway is aligned with the statement made by the European Union but allow me to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Millions of Ukrainians are suffering the consequences of Russia's brutal and unjustified war. We reiterate our demand that civilians must be protected, and international humanitarian law fully respected and implemented.

We are appalled by the forced deportations of Ukrainian citizens, including children, to Russia, Russian-controlled territories, and Belarus. We call for the restoration of family links, the immediate release of Ukrainian citizens, and their relocation to safety in government-held areas of Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

The conflict has a gendered impact – it affects women and men, girls and boys, and members of the LGBTI community differently.

Let me highlight just three out of many issues of great concern in this regard:

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- First, attacks on healthcare institutions and staff are denying people - including women who are pregnant or in labour - safe access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Second, we remain concerned by the great number of survivor- and witness accounts of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence. There will be children born of war. The rights and wellbeing of these children and their mothers must be ensured.
- And third, the high risk of trafficking as displaced people seek safety across borders.

These violations and risks must be addressed. We underline the importance of gender and age differentiated responses, to meet the needs of the civilian population, including Ukrainian IDPs and refugees. This must include access to mental health and psychosocial support, and sexual and reproductive health services for *all* – regardless of the gender indicated in their passport.

Unaccompanied Ukrainian children are in a particularly vulnerable situation, and child protection services must also be ensured. But first and foremost, we must take steps to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, including trafficking, from happening.

We therefore welcome the agreed 'Framework for cooperation between Ukraine and the UN' on the prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence.

Engaging and supporting women human rights defenders and civil society in our responses is also key – especially to strengthen further prevention.

Finally, Mr. Chair,

Atrocities must be investigated, and those responsible held accountable.

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, in Ukraine, but also everywhere else.

Thank you