

Statement
by H.E. Ms. Yevheniia Filipenko, Permanent Representative
of Ukraine on a.i. 3 “General debate” of the 73rd session
of the UNHCR Executive Committee

(Wednesday, 12 October 2022)

Mr. Chair,

The delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of the European Union.

We would also like to congratulate Mr. Filippo Grandi on his well-deserved re-election as United Nations High Commissioner and assure him of Ukraine’s full support.

We are meeting amidst one of the most rapid and largest displacement crises in the world. Crisis which was caused by Russia’s full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine.

Entering its eighth month now, Russia’s war uprooted some 14 million Ukrainians – or one-third of the population. About 6.2 million our citizens have been displaced within Ukraine and more than 7.5 million have been seeking safety abroad.

Russia has been systematically violating the norms of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine.

As we speak now, Ukraine is mourning the victims of Russia’s horrendous missile attacks on the city of Zaporizhzhya, which took place on 9 October, leaving more than 100 civilian persons dead and wounded, including 12 children.

On 10 October in the rush hour, Russia hit the capital city of Kyiv and 12 other regions with 87 cruise missiles, which damaged residential buildings, university, museums, and premises of diplomatic missions in Kyiv. These attacks led to at least 19 people being killed and 105 injured. As a result, critical civilian infrastructure, particularly energy facilities, were destroyed, cutting people in 15 regions of Ukraine from electricity, heating, and water.

I would like to ask all of you how we can qualify these atrocities with the harsh winter season fast approaching and about 18 million people being in need of humanitarian assistance? This is nothing less than the war of genocide, the war aimed at destructing the people of Ukraine at its core.

There is only one way to stop this barbarity. Ending impunity. Restraining the aggressor state. Holding it to account. If we cave in now, Russia’s sense of impunity has the potential of developing into something disastrous for all of us.

In the next hours there will be an important momentum for the international community to stand up in defense of the world order based on the UN Charter, when the UN General Assembly at its emergency special session in New York will consider the draft resolution “Territorial Integrity of Ukraine: Defending the Principles of the UN Charter”. This will be a vote for the UN Charter, for each country, for each of our citizens, for justice, a vote which will define the future of the UN and the world. I urge you to stay reunited and vote in favour of this resolution.

Distinguished colleagues,

Russia’s war of aggression has thrown the world into a multifaceted crisis, as the consequences of this crime are felt in the entire world.

Russia demonstrated its readiness to put millions of people across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East at the risk of hunger - simply to achieve its imperialist goals.

The resumption of Ukrainian grain exports has tamed food prices and allowed to ease the acute food insecurity, especially for those most vulnerable.

Despite our own dire situation, the Government of Ukraine decided to extend its helping hand to our friends in Ethiopia and Somalia with 50 thousand tons of grain.

Russia’s bet on violence suggests that refugees, despite their sincere will, are unlikely to return to Ukraine quickly and the refugee crisis in Europe may become protracted leading to a more permanent displacement.

Of serious concern is a situation of about 1,6 million Ukrainians who have been forcibly transferred or deported by aggressor state to its territory in violation of international humanitarian law. These people went through the system of filtration camps and were resettled in Russia thousands of kilometers away from their motherland without means of livelihood.

Thousands of Ukrainian children have been illegally transferred to Russia for adoption and indoctrination.

As we meet now, Russia is plotting to transfer about 30 thousand people from the occupied part of the Kherson region into the occupied Crimea.

No matter how hard Russia would try to portray these people as refugees, under international humanitarian law they are *victims of deportation/forcible transfers*, committed by the occupying power.

Ukraine urges Russia to provide the UNHCR, other humanitarian and human rights organizations with an access to the Ukrainians forcibly transferred by Russia to its territory in order to facilitate their safe return to Ukraine or to the territory of states that have launched Ukrainian refugee support programmes.

Recently Russia provoked yet another displacement crisis, prompting hundreds of thousands of Russians to flee to neighboring countries from mobilization due to well-founded fear of being persecuted for their refusal to kill Ukrainians.

Mr. Chair,

We commend the UNHCR who has been working side by side with Ukraine to help people affected by war. It is noteworthy that in extremely difficult humanitarian setting more than 2 million Ukrainians have now been reached with UNHCR humanitarian assistance and protection services.

Ukraine greatly appreciates the EU unprecedented decision to offer Temporary protection to refugees fleeing Russia's war as well as its recent extension for another year. We also commend our neighbours and other countries throughout the world who have hosted Ukrainians. You have shown what it means to be truly human and humanitarian.

Your support is viewed as the recognition of the efforts Ukraine is putting to protect not only its own land, but also global peace, universal values, and sacred right of every nation to determine their own future.

In conclusion, I would like to invite all of you to the *Side event on Collective winter response and challenges in Ukraine*, which will be held on Friday, 14 October from 08:30 to 09:45 and feature the address by Ms. Iryna Vereshchuk, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine.

I thank you.