

Statement
by H.E. Ms. Yevheniia Filipenko, Permanent Representative
of Ukraine, on a.i. 3 “High-level segment on statelessness and general debate” of
the 75th session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
(16 October 2024, Geneva)

Thank you, Chair,

The delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the EU statement and would like to make these additional remarks in its national capacity.

This is the first time Ukraine participates in the session of the Executive Committee as its member. My country is proud to join ExCom membership and committed to playing its part in strengthening international protection and supporting UNHCR’s mission.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the UNHCR’s work in Ukraine. We are grateful to the High Commissioner and its Office for all the assistance and support provided to Ukraine, particularly in these trying times of war, and look forward to our continued partnership.

With Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine in its third year, a large-scale humanitarian and displacement crisis it provoked has become increasingly protracted.

More than 11 million Ukrainians remain displaced, including about 4.7 million within Ukraine and a further 6.7 million who have been seeking safety abroad.

Humanitarian outlook has worsened recently with Russia’s systematic attacks on critical infrastructure. In full contempt of international humanitarian law, Russia deliberately destroyed at least half of Ukraine’s power generation, disrupting access to electricity, heating, water and sanitation for millions of people.

We commend High Commissioner’s visit to Ukraine in July 2024 and preparation of the UNHCR Winter Response Plan. As my country braces for its third winter of war, we call upon all partners to continue supporting UNHCR life-saving assistance and protection activities in Ukraine.

We welcome the EU’s recent decision to extend until March 2026 the temporary protection for more than 4 million Ukrainians who fled Russia’s war. Continued hospitality and solidarity shown in the EU Member States and other hosting countries towards displaced Ukrainians is very much appreciated.

For its part, Ukraine will continue fostering an enabling socio-economic environment for safe and voluntary return of all Ukrainians temporarily displaced abroad.

Ukraine acknowledges the progress made towards ending statelessness in the world since the launch of the #IBelong campaign.

Ukraine has recently strengthened its legislative and policy frameworks which led to enhanced protection for stateless persons. The establishment of statelessness determination procedure helped identify more than 1,1 thousand stateless persons.

We emphasize the need for renewed action to address statelessness in the world and welcome the launch of the Global Alliance to End Statelessness. Ukraine supports the vision and mission of the Alliance and will consider joining it.

Worryingly, our collective efforts to realize a world where no one is denied nationality are undermined by Russia`s harmful policies and practices in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine aimed to destroy Ukrainians as a national group.

As confirmed by the Human Rights Committee, the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship on citizens of Ukraine in the occupied Crimea constituted discrimination on the grounds of national origin.

Moreover, in violation of its obligations as the Occupying Power, the Russian Federation continues pursuing its shameless campaign of imposing Russian citizenship in the occupied parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine.

Residents without Russian passports have increasingly experienced pressure and discrimination in the enjoyment of their rights to employment and social security, property rights, liberty of movement and in their access to health care and public services.

We are deeply disturbed by Russia`s malicious intention to declare Ukrainians refusing to obtain Russian passports “foreigners” or stateless persons after 31 December 2024 and subject them to deportations.

We resolutely condemn forced imposition of the Russian citizenship in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, which constitutes serious violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Unlawful decisions and actions of the Russian Federation will have no legal consequences for the citizens of Ukraine living under occupation.

Finally, let me reiterate Ukraine`s strong support for the UNHCR`s vital work to address the protection and assistance needs of vulnerable displaced persons worldwide.

I thank you.