



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations**

Briefing on Ukraine

United Nations Security Council

**11 April 2022
New York**

Madam President,

The unjustified and unprovoked Russian aggression against Ukraine as a blatant violation of international law and principles of the UN Charter as the cornerstone of this universal organisation is unprecedented and outrageous.

We are deeply concerned by the number of targeted attacks by Russian military against children's homes, schools, hospitals and orphanages, clearly civilian objects under the rules of international humanitarian law. The information that emerged from the UNICEF report of 5 April 2022 that 130 children have been killed and 188 children have been wounded is appalling, but we are afraid that the reality is actually much worse.

The images from Bucha the world recently saw have reached the bottom of living hell following the Russian decision to start this senseless war. Acts of sexual violence perpetrated by the Russian forces, including gang rapes and rapes in front of children, belong to the most hideous violations of the laws of armed conflict.

The situation of vulnerable groups, including women and children, is particularly disturbing as they are facing multiple violations of their human rights, including the right to education. Disruptions to education in Ukraine due to ongoing Russian aggression are impacting 5.7 million children, and mothers in particular, who tend to take on the main responsibility for home-schooling their children. This is unacceptable mainly for the reason that the access to safe and quality education is the fundamental right of every child and the right to education as an enabling right is crucial for personal development, prosperity, responds to multiple needs of children and offers protection and hope for better future.

We are therefore pleased to see the activities of UN agencies aimed at providing those in need with humanitarian relief and essential services. Since 24 February, about 65 thousand children have been reached through recreational activities, psychosocial support and life skills education including provision of educational and recreational supplies. Slovakia in the long term pays its proper attention to the promotion and protection of children's rights, as well as

the long-term partnership and close cooperation with UNICEF, which is also marked by recent conclusion of MoU between Slovakia and UNICEF on mutual cooperation.

Slovakia as a neighbouring and thus substantially affected country is particularly alarmed by the refugee crisis as a result of the Russian aggression. Since the beginning of the aggression of the Russian Federation, about 318 thousand have entered Slovakia. According to OCHA reports, 90 per cent of those fleeing to neighbouring countries are women and children. Slovakia adopted numerous legislative measures in expedited manner facilitating the provision of temporary refuge and basic services for people crossing our border. In this regard, I would like to particularly mention that around 7 thousand children from Ukraine are provided with education in Slovak schools.

There is no doubt who the aggressor responsible for this horrible situation is. Slovakia calls for an immediate cessation of Russian military activities in Ukraine and unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops from the whole territory of Ukraine. Slovakia supports the negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation and calls for peaceful settlement of the conflict in compliance with the UN Charter.

In this regard, let me also reiterate that the call for a higher participation of women in peace and security processes has never been stronger. Women contribute to ending conflicts, restoring shattered communities and sustaining peace. It is therefore necessary to equip women with essential skills, including by providing them with relevant training, connect decision makers with women leaders and ensure full participation of women in all relevant decision-making processes.

The elimination of barriers for women has to be therefore on the top of the agenda and several concrete measures to strengthen the role of women could be taken. Active STRATCOM emphasizing role of women in peace and security processes, social media support and prevention of WPS advocates isolation from society and communities are in our view issues of paramount importance.

Thank you, Madam President.