



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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to the United Nations**

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

United Nations Security Council

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Mr. President,

I would like to start by thanking today's briefers for their presentations, which once again shed light on devastating impacts of the Russian war in Ukraine, this time specifically on children and their right to education.

As the UNICEF's Regional Advisor on Child Protection for Europe and Central Asia said in his press briefing on 6 May, hospitals, including nurseries, and schools continue to be impacted by strikes. Slovakia categorically condemns these attacks, including the most recent one in Bilohorivka in Luhansk region. This attack, together with all the attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure constitute flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, must be thoroughly investigated and justice served. We also concur with the Secretary-General that this attack is yet another reminder that in a war, civilians pay the highest price. And I add: children in particular.

According to the most recent UNICEF report and the update of OHCHR Monitoring Mission in Ukraine as of 11 May, more than 230 children have been killed, more than 340 children have been injured, approximately two thirds of Ukrainian children have been forced to flee their homes and all of them negatively affected. Instead of enjoying their childhood, millions of Ukraine's children are witnessing the horrors of war without bearing even the tiniest fraction of guilt for what is happening. They are being separated from their families and friends, directly exposed to blaring sirens, bomb explosions, physical and unfortunately also sexual violence causing them physical harm and enormous psychological traumas they will need months and years to cope with, if ever. They are stripped of their fundamental right of access to safe and quality education, which in many cases prompts their mothers to take on the main responsibility for home-schooling. This is a "special achievement" of the Russian "special military operation" - or in correct words - a child crisis of unprecedented proportions and one of the fastest large-scale displacement of children since World War II caused by the Russian unjustified, unprovoked and senseless aggression against Ukraine constituting a blatant violation of the UN Charter and International Law.

Mr. President,

Slovakia as a neighbouring and thus directly affected country is particularly alarmed by this crisis. Since the beginning of the February aggression of the Russian Federation, over 136 thousand children have entered Slovakia, and over 30 thousand have been granted a temporary protection. Children fleeing Ukraine are provided with a complex care, including psychological and social assistance, medical care and assistance in connecting or reuniting with their relatives and families. We have been able to enrol approximately 10 thousand children aged from 3 to 17 years in Slovak schools and we work hard to increase this number to provide all the child refugees staying in Slovakia with a proper education. I am pleased that the First Lady of the Presiding State of this Council could have seen our successful efforts on herself few days ago. Child refugees involved in the educational process are also entitled to a food subsidy. Together with our partners from UNICEF and UNHCR, we have agreed to develop a joint child protection capacity building plan for implementing partners and other stakeholders in child protection, inclusion and education. Slovakia continues to stand in solidarity with Ukraine, and as a close friend and good neighbour, we do and will do our utmost to help relieve suffering of their people.

Slovakia also appreciates the work of international organizations and institutions aiming to improve the humanitarian situation, including of children in Ukraine. For these purposes, the Prime Minister of Slovakia Mr. Eduard Heger announced in Warsaw last week additional financial contribution of 540 thousand EUR, which includes, among others, a contribution of 130 thousand EUR for the relevant UNICEF programs and projects.

To conclude, Madam President, Slovakia once again calls on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its hostilities against Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all its troops from the whole territory of Ukraine. This is the only way to stop children from suffering.

I thank you.