



Statement of Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1361th Special Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 7 March 2022.

Mr. Chair

While Iceland aligns with the EU statement please allow me to make a few additional remarks in my own capacity.

Mr. Chair, dear colleagues.

As so many others, we have strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and expressed our full support to the Ukrainian people.

Not only is Russia's war in violation of the fundamental principle of sovereignty and self-determination of nations, but as we have seen so clearly in the past days, its conduct is also in grave violation of international humanitarian law.

The current situation is that Russia is targeting and killing civilians. Homes, schools, and health facilities are being attacked. Ukrainians wanting to flee to safer areas cannot safely do so – with Russia violating agreements granting safe passage.

And all of this is happening right before our eyes.

The Russian Government is fully conscient of its grave violations and has resorted to desperate measures to withhold information from their own citizens, doubling down on media freedom, freedom of peaceful assembly, and the freedom of opinion and expression.

Respect for international human rights law and international humanitarian law is not optional. Civilians, humanitarian and medical workers can never be a target. Every precaution must be taken to ensure and guarantee their safety, including safe passage. Unhindered humanitarian access, including freedom of movement, must be guaranteed.

We are horrified by the humanitarian crisis already shaping the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and the ever-growing number of refugees and internally displaced Ukrainian people, forced to flee their homes to seek safety from bombing and Russian military aggression.

We call on the Russian Federation to respect international humanitarian law and cease immediately all targeting of civilians, civilian infrastructure and objects.

I also don't need to reiterate the extensive work and discussions here at the OSCE and elsewhere about the critical importance of the Women Peace and Security agenda in situations like these. This we must not forget.

Slava Ukraini

Mr. Chair

I kindly ask that my statement be attached to the journal of the day.

I thank you.