



Statement by Ambassador Kristín A. Árnadóttir, Permanent Representative of Iceland, at the 1362nd Permanent Council Meeting, Vienna, 10 March 2022

Mr. Chair,

While Iceland aligns herself with the EU statement as well as ours the Women Ambassadors, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Two weeks have now passed since Russian authorities launched a brutal military attack on Ukraine, with the support of Belarus.

The humanitarian crisis that has since unfolded before our eyes is simply horrifying. Over 2 million people have already fled Ukraine, while hundreds of thousands are unable to move safely from besieged areas.

Innocent people, including children, are dying because of indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets. People are without water, electricity, medicine, and basic supplies.

The most vulnerable of the population - the elderly, children, and people with disabilities – are especially at risk. Women and girls are also exposed to the horrors of trafficking as well as gender-based and sexual violence.

We are extremely grateful for how individual countries demonstrate their solidarity and for the hospitality shown to Ukrainian refugees arriving in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova and elsewhere. Iceland stands in solidarity with Ukraine and is firmly committed to play its part in responding to the urgent requests and needs expressed by Ukraine, as well as welcoming Ukrainians in search of safety from Russian military aggression.

Mr. Chair,

Respect for international humanitarian law is not optional.

Targeting civilians and civilian objects is unacceptable and a fundamental violation of international law. Safe and orderly passage must be granted for those wanting to leave. The delivery of humanitarian assistance cannot be compromised.

Since the start of this war, the position of Russian authorities is that they are in full right to invade a sovereign country. We have had to listen to arrogant statements and false arguments - including here from the Russian delegation at the OSCE – arguments that are utterly removed from reality and completely void of any remorse or empathy.

This is deplorable.

Mr. Chair,

The only way to end this brutal war is through diplomatic efforts.

We call on Russia to withdraw its troops immediately, and stop inflicting further death, suffering and destruction in Ukraine.

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

I thank you.