

The President of the Security Council presents her compliments to the members of the Council and has the honour to transmit herewith, for their information, a copy of a **letter dated 17 March 2022 from the Permanent Representatives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the United Nations** addressed to the President of the Security Council, and its enclosure.

This letter and its enclosure will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/2022/241.

17 March 2022



PERMANENT MISSION
OF ESTONIA TO THE UN



Permanent Mission of Latvia
to the United Nations



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

New York, 17 March 2022, No 19.1-1/161

Excellency,

We have the honor to transmit a Joint Statement by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in relation to the Security Council's meeting "Threats to international peace and security" on March 17.

We would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Annex: as stated.

Sven Jürgenson

Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the
Republic of Estonia

Andrejs Pildegovičs

Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the
Republic of Latvia

Rytis Paulauskas

Ambassador, Permanent
Representative of the
Republic of Lithuania

Her Excellency Ms. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh
President of the UN Security Council
United Nations
New York

Statement by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in connection to the UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine, 17 March 2022

17 March, 2022

Mme President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia.

We thank the briefers for their clear and fact-based updates.

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Colleagues,

On 9 March the Russian Federation bombed a maternity hospital in Mariupol killing and wounding mothers and children.

On 16 March it bombed a theatre in Mariupol sheltering over a thousand civilians, potentially resulting in hundreds of casualties. This was not stopped by the white markings on the ground next to the theatre saying “children”.

On the same day the Russian forces killed 10 people waiting to collect bread in Chernigiv. The Russian Federation has bombed hospitals and medical facilities, schools, homes and churches. It has continued to shell peaceful, densely populated cities.

Some towns, like Volnovakha, are almost fully wiped off the surface of the earth.

OHCHR has confirmed credible reports of Russia’s use of cluster ammunition in populated areas. The use of thermobaric bombs has also been reported.

These are not standalone cases, but a reflection of the systematic manner in which Russia is waging its unjust and illegal war on Ukraine – against civilians. They are a reflection of Russia’s disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law, and the principles the UN is based on. They are also consistent with Russia’s persistent efforts to undermine this Council’s efforts to protect civilians, including women and children, in conflicts around the world, and with its previous actions, including in Syria, in particular the bombing of civilian targets and endangering access to humanitarian aid.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine continues despite the demand to end it by the overwhelming majority of UN membership at the General Assembly. Yesterday, the International Court of Justice explicitly ordered the Russian troops to suspend this so-called “military operation”. The General Assembly’s decision reflects the shared concern about the impact of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine on the very foundations of the UN, including respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, along with its broad-scale impact on global development, food security and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Russia started this war. Russia has the choice to stop this war, but remains indifferent to the calls to do so from around the world.

The Russian aggression caused and is driving the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Its actions, including indiscriminate attacks and targeted attacks against civilians, amount to violations of international law. The daily UN reporting reflects the unprecedented scale of the crisis, with thousands dead or wounded, stranded without basic necessities, under constant attack in their own cities, millions forced to flee and the systematic destruction of infrastructure.

More than 3 million people have fled Ukraine to neighbouring countries and more than 1.4 million of these are children. More than 2 million are internally displaced.

We condemn the detentions, enforced disappearances and reports of sexual violence in areas controlled by Russia.

We have seen reports about the kidnapping of the elected mayors of Melitopol and Dniprorudne as well as other Ukrainian cities. Plans are being made for a so-called “referendum” to be held at gunpoint in Kherson. We stand by the legitimately elected authorities of Ukraine.

The attacks have not spared journalists. Pierre Zakrewski and Alexandra Kuvshynova, working for Fox News, were killed on Tuesday near Kyiv. US reporter Brent Renaud was shot last Sunday in a frontline suburb of Kyiv. Ukrainian journalist Evgeny Sakun died in a strike on the Kyiv television tower and Viktor Dudar, another Ukrainian, died close to the southern port city of Mykolaiv.

The submission of the draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is a cynical attempt by Russia, the aggressor, to turn international law and the lives of civilians into a political cover, endorsed by the Security Council, of its unjustified and illegal war against Ukraine. It omits Russia’s role and responsibility as well as its recurrent violations of international humanitarian law. As such, it cannot be viewed as a credible call aimed at helping the people of Ukraine. The Council needs to do better.

Our calls are very simple:

- We need to ensure respect for international law, including international humanitarian law.
- We need to ensure the protection of civilians at all times wherever they may be.
- We need safe humanitarian passage for those who choose to leave voluntarily and protection for those who stay. We need the agreements for safe humanitarian passage honoured fully.
- We need safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

But first and foremost, we demand that Russia ends this war now.

We commend the work of the UN and other international organisations as well as the key role by the local organisations, including the Ukrainian Red Cross Society to help meet the needs of the civilian population despite the risks to their personnel. We underline the importance of their presence, and in this connection the need for the expansion of safe humanitarian space and quick release of resources.

We have responded and are contributing to the UN Humanitarian Flash Appeal and the Regional Refugee Response Plan. We have stepped up our multilateral and bilateral humanitarian assistance with a focus on the needs in the sectors of health care, shelter and food aid. This has been accompanied by active practical and financial support from individuals, NGOs and private enterprises.

We continue to receive thousands of Ukrainian people fleeing the war and welcome the solidarity shown by the neighbouring countries, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, which are hosting most of the refugees.

Mme President,

The heinous crimes committed in conflicts around the world have affirmed the importance of accountability in ending and preventing these crimes. We call for accountability for all violations of international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the course of the Russian aggression. In this regard, we welcome the order of ICJ on provisional measures on 16 March and the investigation opened by the ICC prosecutor. All those responsible for these crimes need to be brought to justice.

To conclude, I would like to reaffirm the unwavering support of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Ukraine and its people.

Thank you.