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ORAL STATEMENT

The Human Rights Council Should Support a Comprehensive and Ambitious Approach to Long-term Accountability in Ukraine

UN Human Rights Council
34th Special Session
12 May 2022

Mr. President,

Last week our Secretary General and other Amnesty International experts and partners joined me, as head of Amnesty Ukraine, in Kyiv and Lviv, to meet with victims of crimes under international law and their families, human rights defenders, and senior Ukrainian government officials. We presented our most recent findings on war crimes committed by Russian forces in northwest Kyiv and expressed our solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

What is clear from our mission: Ukraine is facing a catastrophic human rights crisis and Russia must stop its aggression, which is also having devastating implications on the human rights of those far beyond Ukraine. This is about war crimes, including torture and extrajudicial executions in villages and towns like Bucha, Andriivka, Zdvyzhivka and Vorzel. It is about the devastation of neighbourhoods, through disproportionate and indiscriminate attacks, in places like Borodyanka, which leave thousands of people homeless. This is also about the erosion of global food chains and high energy prices, compounding challenges at a time where we should be focused on Covid recovery.

Ultimately, this is about victims and survivors, whose lives have been changed forever because of the Russian invasion and who must be urgently supported, protected, and empowered. Victims, whose rights to justice and reparations must be at the forefront of any international and domestic responses.

The Ukraine crisis deserves broad global solidarity: both to respond to devastation and displacement, but also to ensure broad international support for international justice responses, which should be properly resourced to achieve meaningful and comprehensive accountability.

The International Criminal Court and domestic accountability processes offer key avenues for early case building; and these must be complemented by international mechanisms, including those which have a mandate to collect and preserve information and evidence for future investigations and prosecutions. In this regard, we welcome efforts to ensure that the Commission of Inquiry created by this Council has the mandate, expert capacity, and resources needed to support a comprehensive and ambitious approach to long-term accountability.

Thank you.