
United Nations Security Council

-- Speech by President Charles Michel --

6 June 2022

Version: 6 June; 10:00

Dear Mr. President,

- I was born in Belgium in the 1970s.
- At school, we studied the great European artists.
- Names like Hugo, da Vinci, Shakespeare, Picasso, Goethe ...
- But we also studied masterpieces by names like Dostoevsky, Kandinsky, Tchaikovsky, Tolstoy, and others ...
- Great Russian artists ... from Russia's great culture.
- But today ... Russia's savagery stands in stark contrast to the heritage of these brilliant artists.

No Impunity

- A few months ago, I was in Borodyanka ... where atrocities were committed. Crimes against humanity.
- These crimes must be punished.
- To hold accountable, we need evidence. That's why we are now helping to collect the evidence of these crimes. Impunity is not an option.
- *[We welcome the International Court of Justice's provisional measures ordering Russia to suspend military operations immediately.]*
- *We fully support the investigation of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the work of the independent Commission of Inquiry.*
- *And the European Union is assisting the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and Civil Society to collect the evidence of war crimes.]*

Sexual violence perpetrated in Ukraine

Ladies and gentlemen,

- Women, Peace and Security ... this is a critical and timely subject.
- Two years ago, Secretary General Guterres called to end violence ... both on the battlefield and in homes.
- Yet, as we speak, we hear reports of Russian forces wielding sexual violence as a weapon of war.
- Sexual violence is a war crime. A crime against humanity.
- A tactic of torture, terror, and repression.
- Shameful acts ... in a shameful war.
- These must be exposed to the light of day. And prosecuted ... without impunity.

Refugees

- This war has also caused millions to flee their homes and seek refuge outside Ukraine, mostly women and children. I met many of them when I travelled to Ukraine, Poland and Moldova.
- They are particularly vulnerable to human traffickers.
- We, the EU, are committed to protecting them. To keeping them safe. Without any discrimination.
- And to providing education, health, and access to the labour market.
- We also working to eradicate trafficking ... to protect people fleeing the war.
- Sadly, sexual and gender based violence is a global threat ... used as a weapon of war ... and faced by women and girls across the world.
- Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, Myanmar, South Sudan, Yemen, and other countries.

- That's why I will host, together with UN Women, Dr. Mukwege Foundation, and Nadia's Initiative, a second conference on *Women in Conflict* in just a few days, in Brussels.
- I sincerely hope we can build momentum ... and step up our collective efforts to address this critical issue.

Food security

Mr Ambassador of the Russian Federation,

- Let us be honest. The Kremlin is using food supplies as a stealth missile against developing countries.
- The dramatic consequences of Russia's war are spilling over across the globe.
- This is driving up food prices, pushing people into poverty, and destabilising entire regions.
- Russia is solely responsible for this looming food crisis. Russia alone.
- Despite the Kremlin's campaign of lies and disinformation.

- I have seen it with my own eyes, a few weeks ago, in Odessa. Millions of tons of grain and wheat stuck in containers and ships.
- Because of Russian warships in the Black Sea ...
- And because of Russia's attacks on transport infrastructure.
- And it is Russia's tanks, bombs and mines that are preventing Ukraine from planting and harvesting.
- The Kremlin is also targeting grain storages ... and stealing grain from areas it has occupied ... while shifting the blame on others.

This is cowardly. This is propaganda. Pure and simple. Propaganda.

- Let's get to the facts...
- The EU has no sanctions on the agricultural sector in Russia. Zero.
- And even our sanctions on the Russian transport sector do not go beyond our EU borders.
- They do not prevent Russian flagged vessels from carrying grain, food, or fertilisers to developing countries.

- The EU, on the contrary, is doing all we can to help Ukraine's agricultural exports.
- And to support Ukraine's agricultural sector for the coming season.
- Global food security is a top priority for the European Union.
- We will do everything we can to help solve this challenge.
- To do this, we need to unlock the Black Sea.
- So we fully support Secretary General Guterres' efforts to find solutions to reopen maritime routes for Ukraine's exports.
- And we will actively contribute to the work of the Global Crisis Response Group to deal with the global social and economic effects of the war, together with the African Union.

War waged by a permanent member of the UNSC

Ladies and gentlemen,

- The Kremlin may prohibit and prosecute the use of the word "war", but that does not change the heart-breaking reality.
- Thousands of dead Ukrainian women, children, and men. Countless Ukrainian cities bombed into rubble.
- This is a war ... a barbaric war waged by a permanent member of this Council.

Mr. Ambassador of Ukraine,

- We will continue to back Ukraine.
- And we will continue to pressure Russia ... and to confront Russia with the truth.
- Russia is attacking one country ... one people. Ukraine.
- But Russia is also attacking the values and principles of this house ...

- Human dignity, tolerance, multilateral cooperation, and international law.
- These are our shared values. The bedrock of this house.
- So this is more than a war against one nation.
- It is a war against all that have built over generations since World War Two.
- The European Union's commitment to the UN Charter is unwavering.
- The European Union is a reliable, loyal, and respectful partner.
- And we will continue to cooperate on the global stage ... to build a safer, freer, and more prosperous world.

Thank you.