

**Opening statement by Iryna Mudra,  
Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine  
at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Preparatory Meeting on an International Instrument to establish  
a Claims Commission for Ukraine  
The Hague | The Netherlands | 12-13 September 2024**

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

**Dear Mr. René Lefeber! Executive director of the RD4U!**

Our Last meeting started with a moment of silence for the victims of the Russian brutal attack on Ukraine. It was the day after one of the deadliest strikes on our capital Kyiv resulting in more than 33 people dead and more than 100 injured.

Russian Federation deliberately targeted children undergoing cancer treatment in our largest specialized hospital Okhmatdyt. They also bombed a prominent maternity hospital Isida. The attack was immediately followed by a large-scale psy-ops campaign aimed at forcing Ukraine to surrender.

This is a textbook case of a terrorist act — an attack against civilians with the purpose of intimidating the population or compelling a government to stop resisting the Russian invasion and succumbing to their genocidal occupation.

What was the reaction of the world? None. All talks, no actions. We heard a lot that Russia will face consequences, but justice hasn't been served yet.

So Russia continued its brutal attacks against our civilian population throughout the summer, culminating with the largest simultaneous bombing of civilian infrastructure since the end of World War II.

August 26th. Russia launched 236 missiles and drones at our critical infrastructure with the aim to deprive our civilian population of electricity and force emigration. We live in a horror that you can't comprehend, but you can help us destroy this sick cycle of losing our loved ones

September 1st. Russia launched a missile attack on a center for social and psychological rehabilitation of children and an orphanage in Ukraine's northeastern city of Sumy.

September 4th. Russia once again massively attacked Ukraine with drones, cruise and ballistic missiles. 7 people died under the rubble of their own homes, 64 were injured.

I want to mention just one story. This one is about the Bazylevych family from my home city of Lviv. September 4th has become the most tragic day for Yaroslav, the husband of his beloved wife and the father of his three lovely daughters. After Russia's attack, Yaroslav lost his entire family. His wife, Yevheniia and their children — Yaryna, aged 21, Daryna, aged 18, and Emilia, aged 7, — were killed in their own home while trying to find a shelter. The younger daughter will never be able to go to school anymore, and Yaroslav will remember the night when Russia took his family away from him for the rest of his life.

Yaroslav's unspeakable pain will remain forever among millions of other Ukrainians, who have lost their loved ones, homes and property to Russian genocidal aggression. I want you to know their names, see their faces every time you make decisions. Because it's the smallest they deserve.

Russia's shelling of Lviv has also damaged medical and educational institutions, as well as historical buildings. Lviv, a cultural jewel in western Ukraine, had become a relatively safe haven [хейвн] for those seeking refuge from Russian

attacks. Families, children, the elderly from the frontline territories — all had sought shelter in a city believed to be relatively safe from the reach of such violence. The attack on Lviv shatters that illusion and sends a message to every Ukrainian: there is no safe place within the borders of Ukraine. Every person, every aspect of human life, every building is under threat of destruction.

Every day, as missiles hit homes and families are torn apart, our mission becomes more urgent. Russia's ongoing terror campaign shows it believes it can act without consequences. And our efforts so far have been unable to produce the chilling effect to dissuade Russians from further atrocities. They still believe that they can get away. They are still confident in their impunity. And this causes more Ukrainian deaths. Each and every day, hundreds of Ukrainians die because the reaction of the world has not been strong enough to prevent these massacres.

Think about Putin's visit to Mongolia, a country that is party to the Rome Statute, and Mongolia's refusal to enforce the arrest warrant. This is a major further blow to international law, another success for Russia. How does Putin feel now? He feels absolutely untouchable. He feels shielded from consequences, he's above the law. This paves a path to more deaths, more injuries, more suffering, and more destruction. Not only in Ukraine, Syria, Georgia, Ichkeria, Moldova, and other states where Russians already have been and are committing atrocities now, but everywhere in the world - yes, including your countries.

The campaign to destroy international law by Russia and its axis is progressing, but we still have a possibility to stop it. This autumn and winter will determine in which world we and our children will live in the following decades.

We believe that this sense of impunity is an illusion we can break. Ukraine does not give up our strong belief in justice, equity, and the force of law. But international law is capable only if we make it capable. Recently, the Ukrainian Parliament has ratified the Rome Statute to the International Criminal Court, signaling our commitment to hold accountable those responsible for the most serious international crimes.

Yet, while criminal accountability is a crucial step towards justice, it is not enough on its own. Accountability must also encompass the restoration of rights and the compensation for harm suffered.

Creating the International Compensation Mechanism is a key pillar of our work on bringing back justice to those who suffered from Russia's internationally wrongful acts. It is essential — not just legally or diplomatically, but morally. It sends a message that we will not ignore the suffering of millions or let the destruction of a sovereign nation become a simple episode in history.

I want to extend thanks to the representatives of the countries that have joined our efforts. Your participation strengthens our shared pursuit of justice and keeps the global community united in holding Russia accountable for its atrocities.

I am happy to note the important progress within the Register since our meeting in July. The adoption of rules and claim forms for twelve new categories is a major step in broadening compensation claims. These categories cover losses such as the death and disappearance of immediate family members, involuntary internal displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure, and address some of the most profound losses endured by the Ukrainian people. The submission of claims related to the death and disappearance of immediate family members, involuntary internal displacement, and destruction of Ukraine's infrastructure will become available soon.

I also want to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the Register's Board, which met for the fourth time in The Hague earlier this month. In addition to the thirteen claim forms already adopted, the Board has made great strides in developing forms for sixteen new categories. These include serious personal injury, torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, sexual violence, deportation and forcible transfer of children and adults, loss of housing, loss of private enterprise, relocation of businesses, and others. These categories will soon be reviewed by the Conference of Participants for approval.

These developments underscore the Register's unwavering commitment to addressing the multifaceted consequences of Russia's war on Ukraine. Each of these steps brings us closer to comprehensive compensation for the damage inflicted on Ukrainians and Ukraine.

Each category reflects the vast suffering caused by the war. From the forced displacement of millions to the destruction of homes, businesses, and cultural sites, the scale of the damage is immense. These categories cover both the human and economic toll of the war, ensuring that every aspect of Russia's aggression will be accounted for.

While the Register of Damage is already operational and making significant strides, it is now crucial that we continue our work on establishing the Claims Commission — the second integral element of the International Compensation Mechanism.

The Claims Commission will be the body that transforms the comprehensive documentation of the Register into tangible justice for the victims of Russia's aggression. It will be tasked with the responsibility of reviewing claims, determining compensation, and ensuring that Russia is held financially accountable for the devastation it has wrought.

We must realize the magnitude of this task. The Claims Commission will not merely be processing documents; it will be processing the pain, loss, and stolen dreams of millions. It will be the instrument through which we begin to rebuild lives, restore communities, and reaffirm the principles of international law that have been so brutally violated.

I often talk about racing against time at meetings related to the Compensation Mechanism. As we gather today, we must remember a sobering truth: our next meeting may well begin again with reports of another Okhmatdyt, another Lviv, or worse.

How long will victims of daily Russian attacks wait for justice to prevail? We understand that international processes take significant time. Still, we must also

realize that not only we don't have this luxury, but we must also demonstrate real progress. The stakes could not be higher, and the cost of inaction is too great to bear.

Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital and the shattered streets of Lviv must serve not as reminders of our weakness but as catalysts for our determination. We have the power to change the course of history. To send a message that the international community will not stand in silence in the face of such blatant violations of international law and human dignity.

This is why we must accelerate our efforts. The goal of concluding an instrument on the Claims Commission in 2025 is not arbitrary — it is a deadline imposed on us by the relentless development of this barbaric war. This deadline is not just an ambitious goal, it is a critical necessity. Every day we delay is another day that justice is denied to those who have already lost so much.

Let us leave this meeting not just with hope — but with tangible results and a concrete plan of further action.

Thank you and all those who stand for freedom, liberty, and justice no matter how hard it may be. We all know that the right choice is not always the easiest, but this is the challenge for our values.

So, let's show who we are!