



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Opening statement by Iryna Mudra,
Deputy Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine
at the 1st Preparatory Meeting on an International Instrument to
establish a Claims Commission for Ukraine
The Hague | The Netherlands | 9-10 July 2024**

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

Dear Mr. René Lefeber! Executive director of the RoD4U!

Yesterday, the Russian federation has launched 38 missiles at civilian targets in Ukraine, killing 44 and wounding 196 civilians.

Two of those missiles were deliberately aimed at one of the world's biggest National specialized children`s hospital "OHMATDYT" and a maternity institution. There were no and there have never been any military objectives near those objects. It was a clear attack on our most vulnerable – children undergoing treatment and pregnant women.

Bodies of a 9-year-old girl, an 11-year-old boy, and their mother brought out of the rubble of collapsed apartment building; children with cancer who sit on the pavement in their parents' arms; a burnt-down kindergarten – these photos and videos that pierced the Internet yesterday are part of a horrid kaleidoscope of tragedies that Russia causes in Ukraine every day. It is only when we look beyond the cold numbers of statistics of casualties that we see atrocities done on a magnitude that is impossible to comprehend.

There are only two things that keep the Russians from invading you and slaying your civilians like ours – the bravery of hundreds of thousands of us, Ukrainians, who selflessly sacrifice their lives in defence of their people from genocide, and the determination of Ukrainian partners to support our fight for survival. Without either of these, Ukraine would be overrun and the Russian army would very soon invade their



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

next victim in their conquest to resurrect the Russian empire – would it be Moldova, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Finland, Georgia, Armenia or Kazakhstan? We don't know specifically, but we all know that Russia will not stop if they conquer Ukraine.

Escalation management, delays and insufficient military support to Ukraine has allowed Russia to adapt, mobilise and muster a new army after we have defeated their initial invasion force. Russian economy has learned to circumvent the current sanction regime, their military-industrial complex continues to procure Western components for advanced weapons systems, they successfully mobilise thousands of Russians to serve as meat waves. What makes you think they will just call it a victory and go home if they conquer us? Despite deep internal problems, Russians are confident in the success of their conquests because the response of the free world has not been strong enough. They crave the resurrection of the empire; they are ready to struggle on and they will not stop as long as they believe they can do it.

And, just in case you had any doubts, within a few weeks of Ukraine's first Peace Summit and an announcement that we are ready to hold a second Peace Summit by the end of the year, with Russia on it, Russia launches one of their most brutal and inhuman attacks on our capital.

With this attack Russia sends a clear message to the world – it is not interested in peace. It only understands brutal "arguments" of force – and with support to Ukraine gradually fading, it is more confident than ever that it will succeed - by disrupting the unity of Ukrainian allies and attacking the integrity of the free world.

Russian war against Ukraine, now in its eleventh year, has resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and injuries, millions displaced, entire communities and regions destroyed, catastrophic destruction of infrastructure, as well as widespread, long-term and severe damage to the environment, and systematic looting and destruction of cultural heritage.

This is what we, Ukrainians, face every single day, this is what we cannot address alone. And we are grateful for all the support you have been providing us so far.

For more than ten years now Ukraine is fighting for its survival. But not only our fate depends on the outcome of this war. If we fall, the world order, based on the rules of international law, will suffer a critical blow. If the aggressor receives any territorial or political gains as a result of its conquest, not a single state in the world would be able to feel safe anymore – this will be a clear message that the law of force prevails over the force of law and anything is possible if your army is big enough.



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The struggle for justice is an integral part of the quest to end this war, as there cannot be sustainable peace without restoration of justice, namely holding accountable those responsible for atrocities and compensation for damage caused as a result of the aggression against Ukraine. History has clearly demonstrated that imputability for previous crimes unlocks the path for the new ones. Russia has never faced any responsibility for its aggressions and atrocities – in Moldova, Chechnya, Georgia, Ukrainian Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Syria. They also think that they can get away with their genocidal aggression against Ukraine of these past years.

I have to admit – the collective efforts of the international community to restoration of justice have been significant, especially if we compare them to the lack of any reaction in the previous cases, even though a lot of work is still ahead. One of the most crucial steps we have taken is the establishment of the Register of Damage for Ukraine, as the first element of a comprehensive international compensation mechanism.

The Register of Damage began its operations only three months ago, but as of now, several thousands of claims have already been submitted, although so far only the first category related to the damage and destruction of residential immovable property is open.

Each claim reminds us why our work is so essential and drives us to ensure that the Register's database does not stay just a repository of information.

Of course, the damage caused by Russian aggression extends far beyond residential property. Soon, the Register will put in place additional categories of claims, including those related to the death and disappearance of immediate family members, involuntary internal displacement, and various other types of property damage and destruction.

Ultimately, the Register will cover more than 40 categories, ensuring comprehensive documentation for all affected individuals, entities, and the state of Ukraine.

But as Russians clearly demonstrated to us yesterday – these efforts are not sufficient. While we dispute over self-imposed red lines and attempt to manage escalation, Russians laugh in our faces while killing children. They are confident in their immunities. They are sure that they will find a way to escape responsibility – by seeding doubt, by sowing distrust, by promoting “Ukraine fatigue”, using a sophisticated complex of propaganda, lies, influence operations, sabotage and assassination in order to stagger our efforts to maintain a collective response.



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Today... is a now or never moment for the community of states, who value peace and international law. To save succeeding generations from the scourge of wars, which have brought untold sorrow to mankind, the nations of the world have united to build a safe, secure, and prosperous international community and agreed upon rules to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained. Today this world – the one in which you all have thrived and prospered – is under a mortal threat.

Depending on the outcome, today's meeting may represent another significant step forward in addressing the hopes of the victims of the Russian aggression. I want to emphasize that true justice will only be achieved when the victims receive tangible compensation. The claims recorded by the Register of Damage must be met with actual reimbursement. In this regard, the Register is only the first step. Two more are needed: a claims commission and a compensation fund. We cannot afford to get stuck on the beginning of the way, and I trust that we will not.

Our purpose today is to reach an agreement about the general terms on the establishment of the claims commission, a vital step in our common journey toward justice. It is essential that our work on the commission proceeds with the same urgency and efficiency as our efforts on the Register. Any delays, slowdowns, or pauses are unacceptable – they will be perceived by Russians as a sign of our weakness and inability to take action.

I must stress that there are no political, legal or any other obstacles to establishing the claims commission. The compensation mechanism has all the necessary international legitimacy, as it is based on international law and the UN General Assembly resolution of 14 November 2022 “Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine”, supported by 94 countries. The resolution explicitly recognized the need for the establishment of an international mechanism for reparation, and it is our common duty to implement it.

I would also like to bring to your attention the fact that the full launch of the compensation mechanism is essential not only for restoring justice, but also for Ukraine's economic recovery and sustainability. The ongoing conflict has devastated our critical infrastructure, our businesses, and our economy, and enable Ukrainian long-term sustainability and resilience.

I came from Kyiv, a capital that now endures blackouts, like almost every city and village in Ukraine. This situation is a direct result of the systematic destruction of our energy infrastructure by Russian forces. Russia has already destroyed over 80% of thermal and over 40% of Ukrainian hydroelectric power plants. According to recent



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IMF data, Russia's full-scale invasion has caused USD 56.5 billion in damage and losses to Ukraine's energy sector.

The destruction of our energy infrastructure is more than an economic issue; it is also a humanitarian one. Energy is essential for heating, healthcare, communication, and every aspect of daily life. Without reliable energy, the very fabric of our society is at risk. We must act quickly to start rebuilding our energy infrastructure to prevent a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, and it is Russia that must bear the financial responsibility for this reconstruction. This risks one of the worst refugee crises since the Second World War – millions of Ukrainians may have to flee from a cold winter without heating and electricity. The destruction of energy infrastructure also kills Ukrainian private sector, especially small and medium enterprises, without which no economic recovery is possible.

We are not talking only about the energy sector. Hundreds of public healthcare facilities, hundreds of enterprises, thousands of educational institutions, tens of thousands of homes have been damaged or completely destroyed. Billions in damage to the cultural sphere, tens of billions to the agricultural sector, tens of billions to the environment. Just the war crime of destruction of Kakhovka dam alone inundated over 80 settlements, displaced thousands of residents, and caused extensive damage to homes, infrastructure, and agricultural lands. The ecological impact was profound, with significant disruption to local habitats, contamination of water bodies, and long-term adverse effects on the region's flora and fauna. Economically, the destruction impaired agricultural production, disrupted local economies, and caused substantial financial losses due to the damage to infrastructure and the cost of reconstruction and relief efforts.

Every day Ukrainian farmers work the fields, riddled with landmines and unexploded shells. At least 170 farmers have exploded on them so far – a fifth of total civilian landmine and UXO deaths.

They risk their lives only to discover that they won't have the necessary electricity to process the grain – it will rot in storage while people in other corners of the world starve to death.

The only answer to this devastation is the international compensation mechanism that we are creating together with you. We have no time to waste. We must move as fast as we can to ensure that for every Russian atrocity, every Russian attack, there is a fair compensation and responsibility.



Ministry of
Foreign Affairs
of Ukraine



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Today we will discuss modalities of the international instrument to establish a claims commission, as well as its possible structure and governance. We all know that international processes take a long time. But time is not on our side, and we must double our efforts. That is why I urge you to actively work on completing all the preparatory work on the legal instrument on the claims commission by the end of this year, so that it can be launched in 2025. We must ensure that the commission is established promptly and begins its work without delay.

As we move forward, we must remember the human destinies behind the statistics and reports. Each claim submitted to the Register of Damage represents a person, a family, a community that has suffered damage or loss and is seeking justice. Their stories are a constant reminder of why our work is so crucial. They are a testament to the resilience and strength of the Ukrainian people and a call to action for the international community.

Ladies and gentlemen, our efforts today will determine the future not only of millions of Ukrainians who look to us for justice and hope today. It will also shape the world we will be living in the coming decades. It depends entirely on us: whether we will be able to unite and swiftly create the next crucial element for the compensation mechanism – or let our fear of action and indecisiveness stagger the process, thus showing that international law is weak, impunity is real, and the world order can be changed by brutal force.

Let us seize this opportunity to create a robust, effective, and just mechanism that will not only address the immediate needs of those affected but also set a precedent for international solidarity and accountability.

I look forward to our productive discussions and to the concrete outcomes that will emerge from this meeting.

Remember – united we stand, divided – we fall!