



Security Council

Arria-Formula Meeting

Ensuring accountability for atrocities committed in Ukraine

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Statement by Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl,
Permanent Representative of Switzerland

Madam President,

Switzerland thanks Albania and France for organizing this meeting and the speakers for their contributions. We also refer to the statement of the Group of Friends of Accountability Following the Aggression against Ukraine.

The images are horrifying. A children's hospital hit by an airstrike. The shelling of schools and residential apartments. Critical infrastructure struck by missiles. And mass graves of civilians. The High Commissioner of Human Rights recently warned that "over these eight weeks, international humanitarian law has not merely been ignored but seemingly tossed aside".

The recent experts' report within the framework of the OSCE fact-finding mechanism identified patterns of violations of international humanitarian law and evidence of violations of international human rights law. Switzerland strongly condemns all violations of IHL and human rights law. We must ensure accountability because impunity encourages further violations, which we need to prevent. Moreover, all victims have a right to justice. We all have a role to play in ensuring that crimes are investigated and prosecuted, no matter who committed them.

First, international efforts to document and prosecute war crimes must be strengthened. For this reason, Switzerland referred the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court together with 40 other states. Moreover, we supported the establishment of multilateral mechanisms that collect evidence for the most serious crimes and make them available to national and international criminal prosecutions, for example the Commission of Inquiry of the Human Rights Council and the experts' mission within the fact-finding mechanism of the OSCE.

Secondly, Switzerland promotes cooperation and coordination among the existing accountability mechanisms dealing with the situation in Ukraine. This is important to avoid duplication of efforts and potential blockages between these mechanisms, and to prevent further injustice to victims and their families. This is one of the main reasons why we joined the Group of Friends of Accountability.

Finally, the voice of civil society should be heard. We welcome the valuable inputs of these organizations at this briefing. Civil society representatives are often the first to respond to crises, they have their ears and eyes on the ground. Therefore they play a key role in efforts to document and monitor violations of

human rights and IHL and to ensure participation of victims in those processes. Through this work, they build and strengthen the cases for accountability.

In sum, we must strive for strong, well-coordinated international mechanisms to ensure accountability. By doing so, we can bring justice to the victims of Russia's ongoing military aggression and strengthen the message that international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be strictly respected. We owe this to the people of Ukraine.

Thank you.