

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 29 March 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a statement, on behalf of the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in relation to the Security Council meeting of 29 March 2022 on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rytis **Paulauskas**
Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 29 March 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Written statement by H.E. Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas on behalf of the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine

29 March 2022

On 24 March 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution entitled “Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine”, with the overwhelming support of 140 Member States, in which the international community expressed its grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation resulting from Russia’s aggression.

For the second time in under a month, the international community sent a strong and unequivocal signal to Russia demanding that it immediately stop its military aggression against Ukraine.

However, Russia, aided by its accomplice, Belarus, continues its war of aggression against Ukraine, grossly violating international law and causing massive loss of life and suffering to civilians. Russia is directing attacks against the civilian population and is targeting civilian objects, including residential buildings, hospitals, care homes, medical facilities, schools and shelters.

The Russian military is sieging a number of Ukrainian cities, denying humanitarian access. Hundreds of thousands of people trapped in Mariupol, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Sumy and the capital, Kyiv, and in areas close to the front lines, are exhausted and running out of the basics needed for human survival, coping with constant bombardment by living in basements without heating or water. The systematic bombardment of cities, towns, rural areas, hospitals, schools and shelters is terrorizing civilians and causing appalling human suffering.

These actions, which amount to war crimes and crimes against humanity, must stop immediately. Those responsible and their accomplices must be held accountable in accordance with international law. The siege of Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities and the denial of humanitarian access by the Russian military forces are unacceptable.

Russia must guarantee safe voluntary passage for civilians trapped in war zones to evacuate to a destination of their choice, as well as for humanitarian actors, including through humanitarian corridors. Russia also must ensure safe, timely and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance, including through immediate safe pathways, so that humanitarian aid can be delivered to Mariupol and other besieged cities. It must immediately release all hostages. The war has caused the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since World War II. To date, Russia’s aggression has resulted in the displacement of 10 million people, or one quarter of the Ukrainian population, including one in every two children. Furthermore, many women and girls now are facing a looming threat from human traffickers who are taking advantage of the displacement caused by Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. Over 3.8 million people have fled to neighbouring countries like Moldova, Romania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The Baltic States have also provided shelter for 74,100 people fleeing this war (33,300 in Lithuania, 9,800 in Latvia and 31,000 in Estonia). The Baltic States, among many others, have provided humanitarian aid, but the international community can still do more to address the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

The impact of Russia's war against Ukraine is reaching beyond Europe. Millions of people globally are already on the brink of famine as a result of increased food insecurity caused by the deliberate Russian aggression against Ukraine, one of the world's major grain exporters. We are deeply worried about the global impact of the invasion.

In an act of pure cynicism, Russia presented a draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine to the Security Council that lacked any context and sought to erase its role in its own barbaric war. It was a deplorable attempt to use international law and the Security Council as political cover for its unjustified and illegal aggression against Ukraine. It also reflects Russia's disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law, in its war against Ukraine.

We repeat that:

Russia must fully respect its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and abide by the recent order of the International Court of Justice. There will be accountability, including through internationally established courts – as affirmed by the order of the International Court of Justice on provisional measures, as well as the investigation opened by the International Criminal Court prosecutor.

Russia must immediately stop its unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders.

In conclusion, we once again express our admiration and deep solidarity with the heroic people of Ukraine, who are fighting not only for their country but for universal democratic values. Your courage is truly an inspiration for us all. We stand with you.
