



**Statement by Elinor Hammarskjöld, Director General for Legal Affairs**

**Restoring Justice for Ukraine, 2 april 2024, The Hague, Netherlands**

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to thank the Government of the Netherlands for hosting, together with Ukraine and the European Commission, this important event. It is a great honor to be present here today.

Report after report from independent mechanisms such as the Commission of Inquiry, the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, and the experts of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism, have concluded that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine – a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter – is marked by war crimes, grave violations of international human rights law, and that certain actions by the Russian forces may constitute crimes against humanity.

Those responsible must be held to account – and they will be. This is not just a matter of upholding the respect for international law that concerns all of us around the world. It is about the dignity and justice for the countless victims of this aggression: the civilians in Irpin, Bucha, Mariupol and the many other places in Ukraine that have become synonymous with Russian atrocities.

Today we therefore reaffirm our commitment to pursuing accountability for international crimes committed in and against Ukraine and throughout the world.

The wheels of justice may turn slowly, but they are grinding. The road towards justice for Ukraine will be long, but important steps have already been taken by Ukraine and its international partners.

We salute the hard work being carried out by Ukrainian authorities on the ground in cooperation with partners such as the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) and others, including civil society organisations, in addition to the Eurojust role of supporting the coordination of investigations and prosecution efforts between Ukraine, Member States and the International Criminal Court.

We encourage Ukraine to ratify the Rome Statute and bring all national legislation in line with international standards so that the ICC can use its full potential.

Sweden is a longstanding partner to Ukraine and is actively contributing to the ongoing initiatives, with support to Ukrainian authorities investigating international crimes and civil society organizations documenting violations, financial support and un-earmarked secondments to the ICC as well as financial support to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Sweden was among the founding members of the Register of Damage as a first step towards an international compensation mechanism. We are also one of the original members of the Core Group to establish a tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Sweden has also joined the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, to support the safe return of Ukrainian children who have been unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred by Russia, and to ensure those responsible face consequences.

We also remain strongly committed to the processes of implementing President Zelensky's Peace Formula. Sweden will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Impunity is not an option. Russia cannot reap any fruits from its war of aggression and will be held to account.

I thank you.