

Dignity and Support for Survivors of Sexual Violence in the Russian War against Ukraine

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party convening in Stockholm, Sweden on 26-28 May 2023:

Recalling:

- the framework of provisions of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- the Council of Europe Convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention;
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008);
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000);
- the ALDE Party resolution 'Justice, rehabilitation, and compensation for the victims of wartime sexual violence in Ukraine' adopted in December 2022.

Notes that:

- Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have now registered over 80,000 war crimes and crimes of aggression committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine since the full-scale invasion of February 24, 2022 [1];
- The Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, as of 27 March 2023, is investigating 175 cases of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), among which 40 of those who have experienced it were men, and 13 were minors, including a boy [2];
- documented cases of rape, gang rape, forced nudity and forced public stripping, sexual torture, and sexual abuse; also, in the context of detention, survivors' accounts, their age groups, and their vulnerable status point to the nature of sexual violence committed by Russian forces as demonstratively cruel, prolonged in time, and torturous, adding to its history of use as a weapon of Russia's war against Ukraine since 2014;
- sexual violence can be qualified as a war crime, a crime against humanity, and an element of genocide according to international law, and sexual violence committed by the Russian Federation in Ukraine must be qualified to the fullest extent in response to the genocidal atrocities Russian forces and their leadership have committed and displayed the intent for. The international community has a direct obligation to prosecute such crimes.

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Believes that:

- it is the duty not only of all Europeans but all states of the world to ensure that no perpetrator of CRSV feels safe from justice anywhere, and their crimes will have no expiration date;
- because of our legal and moral commitment to the Rule of Law, the international community is obliged to assist Ukrainian authorities and law enforcement agencies in dealing with tremendous amounts of work that transcend the responsibility of any single entity and are required to bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice as soon as possible;
- international justice is unavoidable but could take years, while survivors of CRSV have the right to preserve their dignity now and receive urgent care and compensation;
- the response to CRSV in Ukraine must unite Europe and provide an example of how we defend our values and build a resilient and transferable mechanism for dealing with CRSV around the globe.

Calls for the ALDE Party and its member organisations to:

- influence their national governments to ensure that the Core International Crimes Evidence Database established by Eurojust is continuously updated with evidence in cooperation with Ukrainian authorities so that war crime and crime against humanity perpetrators can be liable based on the principle of universal jurisdiction, powerful enough to lead to arrests of even the highest political leadership of the Russian Federation;
- as conflict-related sexual violence would not happen without a crime of aggression first, provide expertise and resources to guarantee that a Special Tribunal is set up as the international legal mechanism to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine;
- ensure the establishment of financing programmes, aimed to help the Ukrainian government disburse urgent aid specifically to all eligible survivors of CRSV under the administrative procedure already before this winter;
- address the specific needs of refugee CRSV survivors; calls in this regard for appropriate training and services to be provided at the reception centres on EU territory. Insists on measures to eradicate any danger of human trafficking, exploitation or abuse of vulnerable people seeking protection;
- work with the Ukrainian government, lawmakers, and non-governmental organisations to further develop urgent programs of reparations, medical care, and social and psychological support for survivors of sexual violence in the genocidal war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine;

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- work with the Ukrainian government and lawmakers to meet the unique gender-specific needs during the repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, and reintegration of survivors of CRSV, to create a barrier-free environment, promote gender equality in parenting and economic participation, support the reconstruction of Ukraine, and move towards a swift opening of EU accession negotiations in 2023 to make good on the promise of Ukraine's European future.

[1] Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine / "Crimes committed during Russia's full-scale invasion" (in Ukrainian) (April 6, 2023). <https://www.gp.gov.ua/>

[2] Official data provided by Iryna Didenko, prosecutor of the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine, in a comment to LB.ua at the United for Justice conference in Bucha, March 31, 2023. https://lb.ua/society/2023/03/31/550648_ofitsiyno_zafiksovani_175_faktiv.html

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