

HRC 51: Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (oral update)



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Thank you Mr President,

Given that this interactive dialogue is fundamentally about respect for international law, allow me to make an observation. And that is that however many bombastic statements you make, however many sham referendums or implausible plebiscites you hold, you can't change the international borders of a sovereign state by force of arms. That was true in 2014. And it's true in April, we have - like others in this room - followed with horror the reports of the heinous butchery and wanton destruction that Russia has sought to cover up with mass graves and propaganda. But it is sobering this morning to hear your account of the scope and scale of those atrocities, and their lasting impact on the lives of tens - if not hundreds - of thousands of innocent civilians, including children.

Commissioner, your findings support the claims that serious violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, have been committed. This Council - and indeed the wider international community - has a responsibility to ensure that those responsible are held to account. And we will.

As we celebrate Ukraine's liberation of settlements in eastern Ukraine, we cannot help but fear what further Russian atrocities will be uncovered. What plans do the Commission have to collect evidence in these regions?

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