

# Joint Statement by EU and partners on the Situation of Women and Girls in Ukraine 15 March 2022

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We, the undersigned Member States and the European Union come together at the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations in New York to condemn the Russian aggression against Ukraine and to reaffirm our full support to Ukraine and its people, in particular the women and girls in Ukraine.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, in grave violation of international law, including the principles of the UN Charter. We urge Russia to immediately and without conditions stop its aggression and withdraw its forces from the territory of the sovereign state of Ukraine as defined by its internationally recognized borders. We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine. We call on both Russia and Belarus to abide by their obligations under international law, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is resulting in a significant human rights and humanitarian crisis on the civilian population, particularly on the lives and livelihoods of women and girls – a pattern in all armed conflicts. We are deeply concerned for the safety of civilians in Ukraine, including women and girls. We are very concerned by reports of unlawful attacks by Russia on civilian facilities, including schools and hospitals, depriving civilians of access to education and essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health care services. Furthermore, women and girls who are forced to flee their homes find themselves in situations that exacerbate inequality and vulnerability, in the face of sexual and gender-based violence. In this regard we are appalled by reports of alleged sexual violence perpetrated by Russian armed forces. We commend the courage of the local civil society organizations, including those led by women, in responding to the humanitarian needs despite the risks they are facing. We call for the protection of civilians, safety and security of humanitarian workers, as well as safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need.

It is of critical importance that we integrate a gender-responsive approach in all our efforts to respond to the conflict in Ukraine: The immediate humanitarian response, the crisis response, and the longer-term peace and security efforts. We must ensure that local civil society organizations, including women's movements and women's rights organizations on the ground have the resources to play a decisive role in meeting the rights and needs of women and girls and shaping gender-responsive solutions.

We echo the calls by UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous and Special Representative Pramila Patten to stop this war and commit to do the utmost to keep the leadership and rights of women and girls in Ukraine at the centre of our collective efforts to mobilize for peace.

<https://www.lm.gov.lv/en/article/joint-statement-eu-and-partners-situation-women-and-girls-ukraine-15-march-2022>