

**Statement on behalf of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania  
at the CCPCJ 31st Session  
Vienna, 16 May 2022**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and my own country – Lithuania. We also align with the statement made on behalf of the European Union and would like to emphasise the particular concerns related to the endangerment of peace and security in the region and beyond creating the instability that will lead to increase of serious crimes.

Russia's unprovoked aggression against a sovereign country - Ukraine grossly violates international law and the principles of the UN Charter as well as undermines European and global peace and security. We deplore in the strongest possible terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Despite broad international condemnation, Russia continues the war causing extensive human suffering and many civilian casualties, including those of the most vulnerable population: children, women and elderly. Russia's disregard for international humanitarian law (IHL) and attacks against civilian population and civilian infrastructure are appalling.

Mr. Chair,

Since Russia's full-scale invasion in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, it is estimated that over 12 million people, mostly women and children, had to flee their homes. Violations concerning the most fundamental human rights have been committed in the areas under the effective Russian military control, such as targeted killings and torture of Ukrainian people with the particular intent to cause human suffering. Moreover, there are reports on conflict-related gender-based violence, such as rape, including group rapes, committed by Russian soldiers in Ukraine. Minors and women have also been exposed to an increased risk of human trafficking. Other violent acts, such as enforced disappearance and abductions of civilians, journalists and local officials were reported. Any crime of such nature deliberately committed against Ukraine and its people as a part of a military strategy, constitutes a crime of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime. All allegations of such crimes shall be properly investigated and brought to justice.

Mr. Chair,

We will continue to support the international investigation concerning alleged crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine. The Joint Investigation Team at Eurojust, for the investigation of war crimes in Ukraine is of particular importance. **Fact-finding and evidence-gathering** forms the cornerstone to fighting impunity. We emphasise that cooperation between the **national investigatory authorities based on the principle of universal jurisdiction** will reveal the crimes committed and identify the perpetrators. We believe that the good practices of cooperation among states could serve as an important source of assistance to the Prosecutor of the

International Criminal Court, as the Court does not possess independent enforcement powers, and relies on the Member States for their support.

Mr. Chair,

The aftermath of the war will have long-term consequences for the people not only in Ukraine but worldwide. The humanitarian crisis, despair and weapons are the factors behind the crime. Trafficking in human beings, arms, cybercrimes, sexual exploitation of minors deprived of parental care, organ trafficking, theft and smuggling of works of art are just the tip of the iceberg that we might face.

The broader consequences of this war are increased tensions, growing polarization and radicalization tendencies and they are significantly strengthened by the constant disinformation and propaganda on a massive scale. This can unfold as new and dangerous waves of criminal behaviour, which should be addressed by international and national legal framework.

We call the international community to enhance efforts in the fight against cross-border crime, in particular the organization of illegal transportation of persons across the state borders, and combating trafficking in human beings. We also need to strengthen the protection of the citizens of Ukraine who have been forced to leave their homes against criminal threats.

We emphasise the obligation of the Russian Federation to comply with the **16 March binding order of the International Court of Justice and United Nations General Assembly's resolutions**. The Russian Federation must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force against any Member State.

Thank you Mr. Chair