

Joint Statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on the need to ensure accountability for Russia's crimes in Ukraine

Published: 16.10.2022.

News



Ahead of EU discussions on Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, are calling for a European Union's effort in support of Ukraine's aim to ensure Russia's accountability for its aggression against Ukraine.

The rules-based international order, which we all strive to defend, cannot survive if there is impunity for the deeds that violate it most blatantly – genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crime of aggression.

Recent deliberate targeting of civilian homes, schools and playgrounds, as well as civilian infrastructures across Ukraine is just the latest episode of Russia's unprovoked terror campaign against Ukrainian people. As Russia's brutal assault against Ukraine continues, the EU must act to ensure that seeking justice and accountability for Russia's horrific crimes in Ukraine is at the center of our policy.

We must continue supporting the ongoing investigations by Ukraine, a number of other states, as well as the International Criminal Court since it plays a key role in collecting evidential materials, identifying and punishing those responsible for the war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine.

Our efforts, however, must not end there.

Currently there is no international court or tribunal that could bring Russia's top political and military leadership to account for committing the crime of aggression against Ukraine. The Special Tribunal for the Punishment of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine has to be established to fill this jurisdictional loophole. The EU together with our partners must be at the center of this effort.

Establishment of the Special Tribunal would complement the role of the ICC. While the ICC would prosecute individuals for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, the Special Tribunal's core responsibility would be the crime of aggression.

The key masterminds, instigators and facilitators of this murderous aggression cannot escape justice simply because of the gap in the international criminal jurisdiction.

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