

Russia's illegal aggression in Ukraine has led to a disturbing increase in conflict-related sexual violence— UK Statement at the UN Security Council

Thank you, President. Let me start by thanking SRSG Patten, Ms Karbowska and Ms Rollins Westin for their powerful briefings. I also welcome the Representative of Ukraine and European Council President, Michel, amongst the participants in this meeting

President, Friday marked 100 days since Russia launched its illegal war against Ukraine.

During that time, we have witnessed death and destruction on a scale not seen in Europe since World War 2. Thousands have been killed or injured. Over 6.6 million people have fled Ukraine. And, millions inside the country remain displaced, stranded in conflict-affected areas, and in dire need of humanitarian support. As we have heard, women and girls are the most affected.

We have seen evidence of serious breaches of international law, including atrocities in places such as Bucha and Irpin. And attacks on schools, hospitals, railway stations, apartment buildings, journalists – even on Kyiv while the Secretary-General was visiting.

We have seen a disturbing increase in conflict-related sexual violence, including horrific reports of rape and sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces. And a significant increase in human trafficking.

Russia's actions, including destroying or blockading key ports, have also exacerbated one of the most severe worldwide food crises in recent history.

President,

We applaud the work of the UN and the humanitarian and civil society organisations seeking to address the suffering wrought by this war, including efforts to secure grain exports from Ukraine.

The United Kingdom is committed to supporting these efforts in every way we can. We have pledged \$500 million to help Ukraine – this includes funding to the UN, and to civil society organisations helping survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual violence.

Accountability is vital to upholding the rule of law and the rights of all States. The United Kingdom is assisting with the important task of evidence collection and preservation, including on sexual violence. We are collaborating closely with the Ukrainian Prosecutor-General and have deployed specialist UK war crimes and conflict-related sexual violence experts to

Poland to provide support.

At the Open Debate on 13 April, we launched the 'Murad Code' designed to support safe evidence-collection from survivors of sexual violence. A Ukrainian-language translation has been shared with the Ukrainian Prosecutor-General. We continue to look at all international options to tackle these heinous crimes and hold perpetrators to account.

President, this war is as appalling and unjustified after 100 days as it was on its first. Russia is ignoring all our calls for peace, continuing attacks in eastern Ukraine, and yet again striking Kyiv this weekend.

We must not allow Russia to normalise its illegal aggression with its disinformation, distraction and lies.

We must instead demand that Russia ends the suffering it is causing. This means immediately ceasing its invasion and withdrawing its forces, as the Secretary-General, members of this Council and the General Assembly have demanded, and as the International Court of Justice has ordered.

Thank you.