



European Commission - Speech
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Speech by President von der Leyen at the Accountability Summit in Kyiv

Kyiv, 9 May 2023

President Zelenskyy, dear Volodymyr,

Thank you for welcoming me once more in Kyiv.

I am glad that today I could be at your side at your side for this important meeting on accountability for the crime of aggression in Ukraine.

There is no peace without justice.

Justice for the unarmed men and women executed in cold blood in the streets of Bucha.

Justice for the mothers, whose children have been abducted and deported to Russia.

Justice for all Ukrainians, whose families have been divided, whose homes have been razed to the ground, whose lives have been shattered by Russia's war of aggression.

And justice means accountability for Russian war crimes.

While everyone knows the stories of Bucha, Irpin, or Mariupol, there are countless similar tragedies across the occupied Ukrainian territories.

Every victim deserves justice.

Every hidden violence deserves to be brought to light.

This is why we are working daily to collect evidence, and keep record of every crime.

We are doing this in cooperation with the International Criminal Court, whose role is crucial, as could be seen when it took the unprecedented step of issuing an arrest warrant against Putin, for the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia.

Our goal is clear: truth will be established, justice will be done, and there will be no escape for war criminals.

But the father of all crimes is Russia's crime of aggression.

It is Putin's decision to unprovokedly roll his tanks over an internationally recognised border, and to unleash Russia's army against the basic principles of the UN Charter.

For this reason, I will support the creation of a dedicated tribunal for the crime of aggression.

And the support of the international community is crucial for this to happen.

This is why we are here together today.

As a first step, we must collect, store and analyse all evidence related to the crime of aggression, for any future trials.

And for this, the European Union is setting up an "International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine", within the Joint Investigation Team on Ukraine.

We should always keep in mind:

The foundation for peace is to uphold the UN Charter.

The foundation for peace is to reaffirm Ukraine's right to justice, to independence, and to freedom.

Thank you.

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