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Dear colleagues,

I am honored to address this distinguished gathering on behalf of the Parliament of Ukraine.

First of all let me express our deep gratitude to our hosts, the Parliament of Serbia and Mrs Maja Gojkovic for the warm hospitality and the warm arrangements for this great inter parliamentary event.

The principles of international law stem from the Treaty of Westphal of 1648.

Since then international law has evolved into one of the pillars for the security, law and order all over the world.

Martin Luther King once said: "Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless."

Indeed, international law offers all the tools needed to guarantee the peaceful co-existence of countries and nations.

The problem arises when countries do not make use of these tools and when leaders ignore international law altogether. When rules of peaceful co-existence of nations fail, the nations themselves start to fail. Violations of human rights, terrorism, violence, human suffering and death are the consequences of territorial claims, aggression and wars.

An example of this is the aggression of Russian Federation against Ukraine which began in 2014 and has been going on for over five years now, longer than World War II.

What does this mean for the world and for Ukraine?

This aggression started from annexation of Crimea - maybe the most serious violation of international law since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 proclaimed the inviolability of frontiers.

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It continues with armed occupation of Donbass region with the use of organized armed troops, illegal paramilitary forces and armed mercenaries.

For Ukraine, this aggression also means numerous violations of human rights in the annexed Crimea, persecution of activists and journalists, repression against the indigenous population - the Crimean Tatars.

Not only Ukraine but the whole world feel the impact of this aggression.

Today, Donbass is the only area in Europe with a military conflict with human casualties.

The annexed Crimea is becoming an extremely militarized space, which threatens not only security in the Black Sea region but also serious environmental problems in the near future.

Hybrid aggression has spread to cyberspace and the social networks: there were numerous facts of influence on public opinion and foreign election intervention far beyond the epicenter of the armed conflict.

But the worst consequence of aggression is the depreciation of human life. Three weeks ago, at the UN General Assembly, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky showed to the heads of world powers, a bullet that cut off the life of a talented Ukrainian singer, who used to be soloist at the Paris Opera. A bullet - a piece of metal, \$10 price - has destroyed a priceless life of a man who could make many people on Earth happy. The impunity of aggression transforms human life into just statistics figure.

All these facts confirm the main thesis. What begins as a violation of international law, continues as a violation of human rights, as imbalance of regional security, undermining the belief in democratic institutions, as the threat of environmental catastrophe and as a tool to make the human life precarious and fragile.

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Today, conflicts and tragedies around the world have shown us the importance of commitment to international law and the consequences of the failure to do so.

Throughout the time, world community usually acted REACTIVELY - maybe with the exception of the Helsinki Final Act that prevented the Cold War's transformation into the world's nuclear suicide. But now it's time to be PROACTIVE. We must make international law efficient to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing, risky and threatening situations in the world.

International law must adequately counteract and prevent aggression. We have to reset the tools and instruments to prevent aggression. We must reshape the approach and the way we think about the containment of aggressive intention and action. In particular, we must understand that economic sanctions are an effective, but not always sufficient tool to stop military operations. Along with economic ones we must think about legal and disciplinary sanctions that can stop aggression and make its price too high for those who plan and implement it. We must expand the negotiation formats for a peaceful settlement and ceasefire.

Finally, we must recognize that the value of human life must have an absolute priority over any geopolitical goals and leadership ambitions, which often become the basis for aggressive actions. To save the human life, to make it full and happy is the only value and the most noble goal that every government in the world, including parliaments, can set for itself.