

new speech IPU_Alona Shkrum_Ukraine

Honourable Chair!
Distinguished Members, Colleagues!

"Who's the boss? Us or the law?"

This was a question once asked by Soviet leader Khrushchev.

Unfortunately, this is the question which is not even asked anymore by some of the countries in the world as to the power of international law - some countries and their leaders are simply sure that they are bosses, not the international law or their international treaties and obligations.

I spent most of my life working on international law and studying in - first in Ukraine, then in the University of Cambridge.

However, I ask myself more and more often -
Is international law dead?
Or is it just blind on certain regions of certain aggressors?

How can we even believe in its power to promote and ensure peace and security in the world - if we cannot stop its constant violations and cannot enforce it by us all here?

There are - 52 active conflicts in 36 different countries in the world.

The topic of today's debate cannot be overrated.

28 years ago, Ukraine abandoned voluntarily the third largest nuclear arsenals showing its loyalty to peace.

We had up our nuclear arsenals in exchange for security guarantees of our territorial integrity that were broken by one of the countries who gave that guarantees.

In 2014 Russia has invaded Ukraine, further annexed the Crimea - and started a war on the East of My country.

This military aggression continues since 2014 when Russian military units, led by officers of the Russian security services occupied the Ukrainian towns.

Today we have a war in Europe which one of my fellow colleagues here called the forgotten war - “la Guerre oubliée” - which lasts longer today than the 2nd World War - we have more than:

- 13 thousand Ukrainians dead,
- 30 thousand Ukrainians – wounded,
- more than 1, 4 million - internally displaced persons who run from Russian weapons and mercenaries.
- 230 thousand of them - are children!

In 2014 The General Assembly of the UN has adopted the Resolution 68/262 on «Territorial integrity of Ukraine» provisions of which confirmed the sovereignty, political independence and integrity of Ukraine within its internationally defined boundaries; non-recognition of a so-called referendum which was held by Russia on the territory of Crimea.

Followed that other resolutions of the General Assembly on violation of human rights in Crimea and militarization of the Crimea by Russia.

After that, followed numerous Resolutions by the Council of Europe on Russian aggression in Ukraine and violation of human right and rights of indigenous population of Crimea – Crimean Tatars.

However, I ask myself - can those resolutions be only remained on paper? Have they fulfilled their purpose to stop the aggressor and to stop the suffering of people?

The international law today is truly at a crossroad, we are witnessing repeated violations of the rules and principles of international law, including basic universal obligations such as respect for the territorial integrity and not use of force.

Trust in international law and institutions is declining.
Reputation of international law is dying and desperately needs a reform.

My own trust is at risk.
However, I still believe in our common goals.
I believe in the power of a dialogue and IPU.

We can do more!
And we should do more!

We need to speak the truth about international law, especially international humanitarian law, which faces violations all over the world. and the consequences of these violations I see every day in my home country.

We need to be strong enough to enforce the international law.
Sanctions – economic, diplomatic - need to be increased to stop the aggressor.

We here should all become the sheriffs of international law and principles that we have mutually agreed on so long ago to keep us safe all over the world.

This Assembly must be useful for the people All of us represent.
International law needs a revival, and this Assembly can lead in this revival.

I want all of us to go home with this a task and come back with new solutions and new faith.

Thank you.