

Topic: "Parliaments as Platforms for Promoting Educational Background for Peace, Security and Rule of Law"

Dear Ms. President,

Dear esteemed participants,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education forms society, modernizes the country, is the basis of technological, military, and environmental security of the state. Therefore, the Development Strategy for Ukraine by 2020 and 2030 includes the goals of "qualitative education", "Innovations and infrastructure" in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Today, in the context of globalization and imaginary “erasure” of interstate borders there is an intensification of communication processes both at the interpersonal and at the international level throughout the world. This phenomenon has shown its problematic component especially in recent years due to the migration crisis, which led to a series of terrorist attacks and violence in the cities of Europe, the Middle East, New Zealand and a number of local military conflicts around the world.

In this regard, the need for proper education for the sake of peace, along with a balanced state policy, becomes of particular importance. This position is in evidence in numerous documents of UN, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, which emphasize that one of the most important tasks of modern education is to teach people to live together, to help them to transform the increasing interaction of states and ethnic groups into conscious solidarity.

Educational reform in Ukraine is intended to free education from the Soviet imprint and approximate it to the best modern international standards.

In the field of exact sciences, it is an attentive study of all modern achievements in frontier science.

In the field of the human sciences, it is destruction of the Soviet propaganda doctrines, revelation of the truth for ourselves about our history, language, culture as well as the opening of genuine Ukraine for the whole world.

However, it is precisely what the Putin's propaganda opposes trying with all its might to distort the world's perception of Ukraine.

Education plays a critical role in national security matters. The Russian Federation systematically uses education in the occupied territories to enslave mentally the local population and to undermine the security of its neighbours, including Ukraine.

1. How does Russia use education to undermine Ukrainian national security in the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea?

The Putin government uses education as a weapon against Ukraine. Russia violates the right to education in native language systematically humiliating the Ukrainian citizens living in the occupied territories. In fact, the occupation administration pursues a policy of intolerance towards other languages and nationalities deliberately closing off opportunities to get an education in other languages. Non-admission of international monitoring missions, including the UN special envoy directly states that the offender is aware of his crime.

Children of Ukrainian citizens in the illegally occupied territories are forcedly indoctrinated turning into the supporters of the Russian imperial idea. The academic programme justifies the illegal seizure of Crimea, promotes a positive image of war and boosts illegal paramilitary entities that seized Crimea massively violating human rights.

They carry out the so-called "military-patriotic education" for children where they are taught not only to shoot, but also, for example, to work with explosives. This is similar to how child soldiers are trained in the most deprived corners of the world. For example, al-Qaeda does this picking up suicide bombers children. Dozens of structures with Russian state funding, such as the "Young Friend of the Border Guard", the "Green Berets Club", "Crimeapatriotcenter", the "Sivash" military-patriotic education centre and many others, are involved in this process.

Violating international humanitarian law Russia persistently trains Ukrainian citizens living in Crimea for service in the Russian army and for the war against Ukraine. Ukrainians killing Ukrainians - this is Putin's plan.

As a result, on October 17, 2018, a tragic incident in the city of Kerch occurred when Vladyslav Roslyakov, an 18-year-old student of the local Polytechnic College, exploded a bomb and used a shotgun, killing 20

children and injuring another 50. Roslyakov participated in the “military patriotic” training where he was taught how to prepare an explosive and how to shoot. I am sure that this tragedy would not have happened if Russia had not seized Crimea, if children had not been shaped by the desire for war and violence.

In the isolated districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, a similar occupation regime has been established, which is only formally not recognized by Russia. The pro-Ukrainian position leads to persecution, dismissal from work, and even captivity and torture as it happened in the case with lyceum teachers Natalia Karachor and Gregorii Stein. For almost two years, the religious scholar Igor Kozlovsky was in illegal detention. Only in the occupied territory of Luhansk region 884 workers and 13 school principals were dismissed in August 2018.

Academic programmes in occupation are radically changed by the experts sent from Russia. Only last year 98 Ukrainian language teachers had to undergo a humiliating, forced retraining for the Russian language teachers. However, the so-called “diplomas” issued in the occupied territories are not recognized even by the Russian occupier.

The number of classes with education in Ukrainian has decreased from 875 to 163 in Crimea; all 7 schools with education in Ukrainian have been closed. In general, the number of those who study Ukrainian language decreased 31 time in 5 years. The Taurida National University has been practically eliminated; the opportunity to get a higher education in Ukrainian in Crimea has been closed off.

9 out of 16 schools with education in the Crimean Tatar language have been closed, the number of students has decreased from 13 thousand to 4 thousand for today and continues to decrease even more. Parents are forced to so called voluntarily refuse to learn their native language. The names of parents who demand education in Ukrainian or Tatar for their children are reported to the FSB. More than 46 thousand of people from Crimea became internally displaced persons. Many of them are teachers who lost their jobs and were persecuted because of their pro-Ukrainian position.

2. How do the state authorities of Ukraine oppose to this process? How does the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine legally oppose against threats to the national security of Ukraine in the field of education?

In 2017 Ukraine filed a lawsuit against Russia with the UN International Court of Justice, which, among other things, concerned the violation of cultural rights of the inhabitants of the occupied peninsula. Ukraine claimed that the Russian Federation, violating its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, interferes with the educational rights of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars, preventing the realization of the right to education in the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatars languages.

At the same time, Ukraine appealed to the UN Court to take temporary measures for the period prior to the merits of the case, which may extend for years. On April 19, 2017, the court commanded Russia to provide the opportunity to study in the Ukrainian language, as temporal measures. But hereafter resolutions of the UN General Assembly are completely ignored by Russia, the situation is only getting worse.

At the same time, Ukraine appealed to the UN Court with a request to appoint interim measures for the period prior to the consideration of the case on the merits, which can last for years. On April 19, 2017 the Court ordered Russia to ensure the possibility of learning in Ukrainian as an interim measure. Russia still has been completely ignoring the UN General Assembly Resolutions and the situation is only getting worse.

The Parliament of Ukraine has a strategic responsibility for education in Ukraine. Under my chairmanship on September 5, 2017, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the revolutionary Law of Ukraine "On Education" which gives all Ukrainians, regardless of their origin, place of residence or property status, equal educational opportunities.

This law introduces European standards: the structure and duration of studies, the autonomy and transparency of school financing and education for children with special needs. We have also amended the discriminatory situation when children from national minorities who were Ukrainian citizens could not obtain Ukrainian higher education because they did not know the official language on a proper level.

Due to the Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we have huge challenges in the field of education. In the so-called "gray zone" 178 educational institutions with almost 20 thousand of children continue to work in difficult and dangerous conditions. Studying in these schools is forcedly

ceased and children are exposed to considerable danger, because of frequent bombardments.

We changed our legislation so that more than 60 thousand of schoolchildren from the occupied territories could enter new schools and study freely and safely without fear of being killed or injured by a Russian shell. We have simplified the mechanism for entering Ukrainian universities for children from the occupied territories. Thanks to the creation of special centres "Crimea-Ukraine" and "Donbas-Ukraine" for training of such children, only in 2018 227 students from the occupied Crimea and 1522 students from the occupied Donbas entered Ukrainian universities.

We have changed our academic programme by seriously expanding the study of modern Ukrainian history pages which concern the occupation of Ukraine by the Soviet Union and Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014. Thus we defend ourselves from Putin's humanitarian aggression.

Crimean Tatars, who were previously described as criminals and slave traders in Soviet textbooks, have finally been recognized as a native people of Ukraine, and their deportation is fairly depicted as a crime against humanity. We systematically include studying the Holocaust and Holodomor has been included on a systematic basis in the school academic programme. Our education does not distort but makes it possible to give a critical insight into the past.

3. What conclusions do we want to share with the world?

The essence of the hybrid war that Russia is waging against the entire civilized world is the transformation of a human being into a weapon. Putin's goal in the occupied territories is to turn Ukrainian children deprived of critical thinking into ruthless and thoughtless executives of his insane orders. Empires always use conquered peoples to oppress the next victims.

The most horrible thing is that children zombified by imperial propaganda will be ready to kill by order without thinking, and they will do it anywhere either in Syria or in Venezuela or in Ukraine. The generation brought up by Putin will be a threat to the whole world.

The sooner the territories occupied by Russia are liberated, the less the threat to humanity will be.

I urge all the states of the world to closely monitor and respond adequately to Russia's actions in the Ukrainian occupied territories. What they do there with the Ukrainian children can happen tomorrow with yours if we do not stop Putin together. We have to do this because our great civilizational task is to build a better future for our children, a safe and prosperous world of happy, free and educated people.

Thank you all for your attention!