

3rd Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform

Riga (Latvia), 24 October 2024

Remarks by Theodoros Roussopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Dear Colleagues,

Needless to say, that our Assembly continues to condemn the Russian Federation's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, which started back in 2014 with the illegal occupation of Crimea, and the serious, persistent and widespread violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights for which the Russian Federation is unquestionably responsible.

I am honoured to represent the Assembly which immediately expelled Russia after the Russian military invaded Ukraine in February 2022. We were the first and the only to this day international organisation to do so!!!

I am proud that it was our Assembly which was also the first to raise back in April 2022, the issue of accountability of the Russian Federation for all wrongful acts committed in and against Ukraine. Back then, we adopted two Resolutions on the consequences of the Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine and on Accountability.

These proposals included, for the first time since the beginning of the Russian aggression, a proposal to set up a special ad hoc tribunal for the crime of aggression. These ideas were considered as too controversial, too ambitious, and unrealistic at that time.

And it is extremely encouraging to see that quite a few of them are now being implemented. The now operational international register of damage is an especially critical and urgent centrepiece of a comprehensive system

of accountability for violations of international law resulting from the aggression.

But today, the war in Ukraine rages on.

Ukrainians are dying.

Children's futures are being shattered.

Homes and infrastructure are being obliterated.

We must never accept that this war is a normality. We must do everything within our power to bring peace to Ukraine.

But not just any peace at any cost, but peace based on justice and respect for the rule of law. Peace that fully restores the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine (including over the territory of Crimea), peace that fully addresses the consequences of the Russian aggression. Peace that delivers justice to all the victims. The "crime of crimes" which brings unspeakable suffering and misery must take an end.

The "core group" of 42 countries and organisations ready to set up a tribunal are on the verge of agreeing on a compromise solution regarding the legal form and statute of the tribunal. I urge the Core Group to maintain the momentum and I call on you, my fellow parliamentarians to put pressure on the governments to achieve the goal.

And let us not forget - restoring territorial integrity of Ukraine is also an integral part of delivering justice to Ukraine and its people. We condemn the attempted illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, as well as the attempted annexation of parts of the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine.

All these unilateral acts violate international law, constitute injustice to the people living there and, therefore, must be rectified.

Dear colleagues, I said earlier that now, the need to establish an International ad hoc Tribunal is generally accepted. I only raise this issue again just because when we at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe implemented the idea, were even criticised for dreaming too much in the world of realpolitik.

Let me say that: I prefer to represent the dreamers than those who are compromised.

Thank you.