

**Joint statement by the Ukrainian civil society
at the General Debate of the ASP24**

In 2025, attacks, political pressure, and challenges faced by the International Criminal Court (ICC) have reached an unprecedented level. Beyond institutional limitations, budgetary constraints, and an overwhelming workload, the Court now confronts instances of non-cooperation, threats of withdrawal from the Rome Statute, and the imposition of sanctions. These developments raise deep concern regarding the Court's ability to fulfil its mandate – a mandate recognised and protected by 125 States Parties.

Despite these challenges, the ICC remains the only permanent international criminal tribunal capable of ensuring accountability for crimes of the highest gravity. For victims and affected communities worldwide, the Court embodies hope when other jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to prosecute those responsible for atrocity crimes.

The situation in Ukraine demonstrates the necessity of a resilient ICC. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, numerous mechanisms have been activated to pursue accountability for conflict-related violations. Yet nearly four years on, they remain inherently limited in addressing the crimes that fall under the ICC's unique mandate as the violations continue to amass, creating further challenges for justice. Since 2022, the Court has issued six arrest warrants against senior Russian officials, reflecting its unique capacity to hold top leaders responsible.

Where crimes of this gravity are not effectively investigated and prosecuted, an impunity gap emerges. The absence of real consequences emboldens those who order, enable, or commit international crimes and signals that such conduct may continue without meaningful accountability. This lack of deterrence directly endangers lives: it increases the risk of further attacks on civilians, and of new cycles of violence in Ukraine and beyond.

A weakening of the ICC – whether through political attacks, underfunding, or threats of sanctions – undermines the global system of accountability and leaves victims without access to justice. It also removes a critical deterrent to the commission of further crimes. For Ukraine and for the world, a strong ICC is not merely a legal necessity, but a security guarantee: a mechanism that deters future atrocities by ensuring that those who order, enable, or commit them cannot escape responsibility.

We are concerned that the current pressures may hinder the Court's ability to maintain the pace and visibility of its efforts in Ukraine following the opening of the investigation in 2022. Continued, consistent action is essential to preserve trust in the institution and to demonstrate its indispensable role in addressing the gravest crimes.

Therefore, the ICC requires decisive political, financial, and diplomatic support from all stakeholders – and above all, from States Parties to the Rome Statute. Their commitment is crucial to safeguarding and strengthening an institution that embodies the hope for justice not only for Ukrainian victims but for victims worldwide, and to ensuring that impunity does not continue to put lives at risk

We call on States Parties to:

- **Provide sustainable funding to the ICC** to ensure that budgetary constraints do not limit its ability to investigate and prosecute core international crimes.
- **Publicly and consistently defend the Court's independence** against political pressure, attacks, sanctions, and attempts to undermine its mandate.
- **Strengthen diplomatic support for the ICC**, including responding to threats of withdrawal from the Rome Statute and to measures aimed at obstructing the Court's work.
- **Ensure the enforcement of arrest obligations**, including taking action when ICC fugitives – such as President Putin – travel to States Parties without being arrested, in order to uphold the integrity of the Rome Statute system.
- **Support continued visible progress in the Ukraine situation**, recognising the importance of the six arrest warrants issued against senior Russian officials and the Court's unique ability to pursue those most responsible.
- **Promote complementarity and coordination between the ICC and other accountability mechanisms**, ensuring a coherent and comprehensive justice response for victims.
- **Uphold victim-centred justice**, including meaningful participation and communication with affected communities.

Signed by:

Human Rights Centre ZMINA

Media Initiative for Human Rights

Crimean Human Rights Group

Truth Hounds

Crimean Process

Human Rights House Crimea

Social Action Centre NGO

Educational Human Rights House – Chernihiv

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Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group