

Madame President of the Court,
Madame President of the Assembly of States Parties,
Prosecutor, Distinguished Judges,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this Assembly on behalf of Ukraine.

For my country, this is not just another diplomatic meeting. For us, the International Criminal Court is not an abstraction. It is a concrete hope that the most serious crimes committed on our territory will not disappear into silence, that even in the darkest moments law still speaks louder than violence.

Ukraine has long seen itself as part of the Rome Statute community in spirit. We have twice accepted the Court's jurisdiction under Article 12(3). We have aligned our legislation, cooperated fully with the Office of the Prosecutor, and placed our trust in this institution. Our clear political will has been completed by taking our rightful place within the Rome Statute family as a State Party.

We are deeply grateful to all States that have supported the Court's engagement with the situation in Ukraine, including through referrals and public expressions of support, through financial and technical assistance, and through the difficult political work of defending the Court when it comes under pressure. This solidarity is not only support for Ukraine. It is support for the core idea that no State and no individual is above the law.

Allow me to share how the Court is viewed today in Ukrainian society.

For many of our people, the Court has become a symbol that the international community sees their suffering and that this suffering has legal meaning. When investigators arrive in destroyed towns and villages, when victims are interviewed according to strict standards of evidence, when they see that their story becomes part of an official record — this sends a powerful message: what happened to them is not “collateral

damage”, it is potentially a crime, and someone may one day answer for it.

This perception of the Court as an ally in our fight for justice is invaluable. It strengthens trust in international law at a time when that trust is under severe stress. It reassures victims that there is a path, however long, from atrocity to accountability.

We therefore wish to express our sincere thanks to the Court, to the Office of the Prosecutor, to the Registry and the Trust Fund for Victims for their work on the situation in Ukraine and for the spirit of genuine partnership that we experience in our daily cooperation. We are grateful for the many practical instances of support — from coordination of investigative work, to assistance with evidence preservation and witness protection, to strategic advice that helps us strengthen our own national capacities.

This cooperation also extends to broader accountability efforts, including work related to the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. For Ukraine, the crime of aggression is not an abstract legal category. It is the original crime, the “gateway” through which the other atrocities have become possible.

The proposed special tribunal is designed to fill a specific accountability gap in the current international legal architecture. It is not intended to compete with the Court, but to complement it. The ICC, bound by its Statute, faces clear jurisdictional limitations with regard to the crime of aggression in situations involving non-States Parties. A dedicated tribunal focused narrowly on this crime, with strong international participation and grounded in existing international law, would help to ensure that those who planned and launched an illegal war are not shielded by legal technicalities.

In our view, a future special tribunal and the ICC can and should be seen as parts of a wider system, each with its own mandate and strengths, but united by the same purpose: to de-legitimize aggression and to end impunity for the gravest crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. We are committed to designing any such

mechanism in a way that respects and reinforces the central role of this Court.

Excellencies,

Ukraine today is defending not only its territory and its people. We are also defending the international legal system that all of us in this room have built over decades: the prohibition of the use of force, the protection of civilians, the basic rules of warfare, and the idea that serious violations of these rules are crimes, not just “political issues”.

If impunity prevails in Ukraine, it will not stay in Ukraine. Other potential aggressors will draw their own conclusions. That is why our struggle for justice is inseparable from the struggle to uphold the Rome Statute system and the broader rules-based order.

We therefore reaffirm our strong support for the Court — for its independence, for its impartiality, and for its ability to investigate and prosecute without fear or favour, wherever the Statute allows it to act. We will continue to cooperate with the Court in good faith, to facilitate its work on our territory, to support efforts to strengthen national capacity to prosecute Rome Statute crimes, and to advocate, both at home and abroad, for full respect of the Court’s mandate.

Ukraine’s path toward full membership in the Rome Statute family is, for us, a strategic choice. It is a choice to anchor ourselves firmly in a system where power is constrained by law. It is a choice that reflects the wishes of our people, who have paid an immeasurably high price and who expect that justice will not be selective or symbolic, but real.

In closing, I wish to thank the Assembly, the Court and all States that continue to stand with Ukraine — not only in our defence, but in our pursuit of accountability. We are determined to continue this work together, so that future generations can look back and say: at a moment of great danger, the international community chose the path of law, not the law of the strongest.

Thank you.