

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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Context:

It is the 24th of February 2024, 2 years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the Executive Director of UN Women, Sima Bahous, is speaking in front of the Security Council. In her address, she underscores the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women and girls, whose plight is frequently marginalized amidst times of war and turmoil.

Speech:

At the outset, I want to express my solidarity with all Ukrainians: women and girls, men and boys, the ones who have left the country in pursuit of safety, as well as those who have chosen or have been forced to stay.

It has been two years since the Russian Federation has invaded Ukraine. Two years since Ukrainians' lives have fundamentally changed forever. We are still witnessing the horrors that the war has brought, disproportionately impacting women and girls. Following Russia's full-on invasion of Ukraine women have become victims of incomprehensible assaults such as torture, rape, and gang rape. Instances of domestic violence have risen exponentially as women are forced to share the same roof with their offenders. Essential medical care has been denied to many, as pregnant women have been forced to give birth in unsafe conditions due to Ukrainian hospitals being blown up by Russian missiles.

The war is not just a cause for women's and children's suffering - it is a war on human rights. This crisis has not only undermined the values defined in our UN Charter (peace, justice, respect, tolerance, and solidarity), but it has also brought Ukrainian women to the forefront of the battlefield. Ukrainian women are fighting, among other things, to ensure that their daughters will never have to prove to anyone that they are human beings, again.

Standing here, two years later, we must not forget women's crucial role in opposing and rebelling against the horrors brought upon their motherland. I am here to remind you and acknowledge that women-led civil organizations were among the first to stand up and address the need for on-ground humanitarian action, as well as start initiating post-war recovery plans. UN Women will continue to support female leaders fighting for peace, as well as women subjected to violence.

We call for a resilient Women, Peace, and Security agenda. We urge for substantial support towards President Zelensky's government which has repeatedly proven that women's well-being is among its highest priorities. Furthermore, we require that Ukrainian women and girls have access to the legislative system and justice.

UN Women condemns the crimes perpetrated against the Ukrainian people, and stands in solidarity with victims in and outside of Ukraine, with a mission to leave no woman or girl behind.

Thank you!