

Address by Mrs Andra Levite at the virtual meeting hosted by Olena Zelenska

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Dear Olena, dear participants,

My warmest greetings to the brave Ukrainian women, men and children!

Shortly before Christmas, a celebration of peace and joy around the world, we meet to discuss the situation in your home country experiencing the opposite – war and pain.

In Latvia – the government, municipalities, companies, and individual donors – have supported, and will continue to support, the Ukrainian people with military, economic, and humanitarian assistance.

Let me focus on medical support.

This autumn, the Latvian support centre for young people with psychological problems began collaborating with the organization *Gen.Ukrainian* to help soothe the psychological pain of young Ukrainians and prevent long-term post-traumatic stress.

Our rehabilitation specialists in the rehabilitation centre, *Vaivari*, are treating Ukrainian military personnel and sharing their experience with Ukrainian colleagues. I visited the centre, met dedicated Ukrainian doctors who are ready to go back to Ukraine and invest their knowledge by healing Ukrainians.

With the support of the Latvian foreign ministry, a rehabilitation centre has been developed in Ivano-Frankivsk, focusing on the needs of women and girls who have been victims of sexual violence. The centre is providing asylum, sustainable rehabilitation services, and social, psychological, legal, and humanitarian assistance.

This year our yearly charity radio broadcast *Dod pieci!* focuses on bringing joy to the Ukrainian children in Latvia and providing them with as many necessities as possible.

The Latvian help and support for Ukraine endures and will continue for as long as it is required.

Like all wars before, this war will end, and end in victory for Ukraine.

Subsequently, there will be an international tribunal to punish all those who are responsible for this war. From the soldiers who raped women and girls and trafficked Ukrainian children to unknown places, to the commanders who were responsible for their military unit, and up to the politicians who initiated this war. We in Baltic countries know that painful experience of deportations in unknown directions.

This inescapable tribunal is not unique – there were international tribunals after the Second World War, the war in former Yugoslavia, and the genocide in Rwanda.

Sometimes justice is slow, painfully slow. But, in the end, it will prevail.

Lawsuits against the war crimes of the Second World War are still taking place in Germany, 75 years after the event.

Therefore, it is important to document the war crimes happening in Ukraine because, as painful as it is for the victims, this evidence will be key in bringing perpetrators to justice.

No crime, name, or location should be forgotten.

I know that Ukrainian prosecutors have already started collecting evidence. The same is also happening in Latvia where refugees can testify about their suffering.

As painful as it might seem, this process is necessary for the future and restoration of Ukraine.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and I am fully aware that the Ukrainian people deserve real peace.

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