**34th Special Session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**on the deteriorating human rights situation in Ukraine stemming from the Russian aggression**

*12 May 2022*

**Statement by the Czech Republic**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Czech Republic welcomes the convening of this special session, as it is timely and necessary given the worsening human rights situation in Ukraine.

The Czech Republic once again strongly condemns the continuous Russian aggression against Ukraine, a flagrant violation of international law.

Mr. President, we are alarmed by the dramatically growing number of civilian casualties. We are horrified by the news of an air strike on a maternity ward in Mariupol, photos of civilians lying dead on the streets of Bucha and many other documented atrocities, including reports of widespread sexual and gender-based violence.

The perpetrators of these war crimes must be held accountable. Accountability is what the victims deserve. In this respect, it is crucial we all unite and work side by side both in the international as well as the national settings.

The Czech Republic welcomes the establishment of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the swift appointment of experts. We are prepared to fully support the strengthening of its mandate as proposed in the new resolution.

Furthermore, the Czech Republic appreciates the report of experts established under the Moscow Mechanism of the OSCE which describes clear patterns of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights by the Russian forces. We also fully support the investigative work conducted so far by the International Criminal Court. In line with our national legislation, the Czech Republic has also opened domestic criminal investigation of the reported war crimes.

Mr. President,

We reiterate our call on Russia to withdraw its military forces from Ukraine’s territory and to enable safe, timely and unhindered access of humanitarian aid to all affected areas in Ukraine. We also urge all member states to unite and show support to Ukraine and the new resolution.

I thank you.