



24 February 2022

Statement by the President and the Board of the European Society of International Law on the Russian Aggression against Ukraine

War has returned to Europe.

The violation of the most fundamental principles of the UN Charter and rules of international law is manifest.

The Russian Federation, as a State, is squarely responsible for this act of aggression against its neighbour. The decision of President Putin to wage war on a sovereign, independent Ukraine is criminal.

The arguments presented by the Russian Federation to justify its aggression have no basis whatsoever, whether in fact or in law. They are a cynical and perverse use of international law by a regime that has no shame, governs by fear, and indulges in lies and propaganda.

To contend that other States—especially in the West—have no better record when it comes to respecting international law is a morally corrupt and irrelevant distraction. In any event, it offers no legal justification for the aggression that has been unleashed.

We stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues, and the people of Ukraine, against the violence they face.

We also call on our Russian colleagues to speak truth to power, and to speak out against the manifest breach of international law that is taking place. We do so with the full understanding of the difficulties they face in opposing a government that relies on intimidation and suppresses dissent.

This is a very sombre day for Ukraine, for Europe, and for the world.

However, our resolve in preserving the rule of law has never been stronger.