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Thank you first and foremost. I want to express also my personal gratitude for organizing this event. I use this opportunity to express my deep sorrow of all the losses of people from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These victims, they are still with us, because unfortunately, we haven't managed to prevent any tragedies like those from happening. So, accept my condolences.

The ongoing war in Ukraine is fraught with a broad range of imminent consequences. With its end still not being visible, it has affected various spheres of life in different countries, Ukraine and Russia, first and foremost. Both economically and politically. At that, its hybrid character influences domestic policies of other countries too. Because in quite many countries, those local authorities are misusing the rhetoric of war or supporting Ukraine in this war to curtail their own freedoms for their citizens.

Russia continues its offensive while Ukraine and the West vows revenge. My question is on whom their punishment will pull. Yesterday, in Donetsk, a girl of 12 was killed. It took me a while to establish her name. By the evening, I found out that the girl's name was Ekaterina Kotovaiva and she was dreaming to become a Ballet dancer. She was killed together with her Ballet teacher. Are these people the right target for the revenge? Nobody dares to push for the ceasefire. Most politicians enjoy describing themselves in terms of "freedom fighters," promising they would do what is right and necessary for Ukraine. However, they hesitate to ask Ukrainians once again. In their eyes the right thing is to provide ever more lethal weapons. Meanwhile politicians and journalists speak about their vision of establishing peace by "defeating not only Putin by now or any other kind of authoritarian regime already but Russia as such".

Instead, day in day out there is more shelling and bombing, with huge numbers of injuries, and many thousands continue to be killed. At that, it is not something which started out of the blue on February 24th. The tragedy had been developing fiercely during the previous eight years with just splashes of attention from the media. Each time the media serving the interests of this or that side of the conflict was very selective with regard to which of the tragedies to cover and which to not notice.

And I do understand the concerns that the respected host of this event expressed at the very beginning of the event that from the media it is very difficult to understand what is going on and first and foremost why this is going on. I myself am a journalist and I am a member of the union of journalist of Finland now. It is also difficult for me to work and to write in this environment. But I myself have worked out one principle in the atmosphere when it is very hard to verify the information, and unfortunately now the OSCE SMM\* stopped operating in Ukraine, so it is very difficult to find ways to get chances to check the information. I have worked out my own way, and this is never-

ending communication with the monitoring mission. I was in communion with the OSCE SMM, I sent them facts for them to verify, because this is their task first and foremost, and now I've been doing it with the UN human rights monitoring mission. And still that's very important and still it's very difficult. Right now Amnesty International is on the spot for their most recent report on Ukrainian military endangering civilians by locating forces in residential areas. What is striking is that they have been attacked not because of the doubt that these facts are not provable. No, they have been attacked because they are just there to raise the issues. This is just a top of the huge spectrum of similar reports different journalists and I myself have been receiving all through the years, not only after February 24th of both sides, and very often Ukrainian army using civilian objects for military purposes.

Unfortunately, the most drastic prognosis from that time is now the reality with which everybody is afraid to deal with. The tension is that high that any tiny attempt to call for mediation or political solutions leads to nasty labels and accusations of being either "pro-Putin" or "pro-NATO". If you call for peace, you automatically are portrayed as someone wishing the defeat for Ukraine. This is not just utterly wrong. This is absolutely irresponsible towards millions of Ukrainians and also Russians whose victims can still be prevented. It is utterly irresponsible towards peace as such and the future of our civilisation and these are not just empty words.

I was thinking about what to tell, I was looking through different statements on the conflict, and all of a sudden I decided to remind you and to quote Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO's secretary general, who on August 4th actually told addressing the youth in Utoya Island, "In this conflict, NATO has two tasks. Support Ukraine. And prevent the conflict from spreading into a full-scale war between NATO and Russia." Actually, this is half confession. I agree whole-heartedly with the assessment made by Stoltenberg of this conflict to be the most dangerous conflict after the Second World War, but I can't agree with other part of the statement about NATO's striving to prevent the conflict in Ukraine from turning into a bigger war; the reality and the facts are the opposite.

We are in the situation when all the previous calls to respect and implement the Minsk Agreements were disregarded and left without any attempt to truly demand its implementation from the sides of the conflict. I do not think that the Minsk Agreements as such were bound to fail. What caused its failure was mostly lack of interest to getting better understanding of the causes of the conflict, the refusal to consider such factors as its complex nature, the vague language of the agreements and utter refusal demonstrated by the sides to agree on the timing and sequence of the Minsk Agreements implementation. Russia and Ukraine had absolutely diverging views on the conflict's nature and causes, who should and who should not be present at the table as parties of the negotiations. All that blurred the main core of the negotiations which would be establishing peace respecting all the agreements including military provisions, including ceasefires, which lasted for a day, at best.

Unfortunately, back then the tensions between the short-term goals of stopping the fighting and long-term goals of reaching a lasting political settlement were far too apparent. The world society by then had got used to kind of enjoying “frozen conflicts” which were used as a soil to grow political ambitions and engage into a very profitable political ping-pong game. What the world was not prepared for is the reality of nowadays with its multiple once frozen conflicts being unwrapped and what is worse, all at once.

To conclude, I would like to ask all the participants to consider the ways how we the civil society, the responsible journalist community should demand from their sides to let access to the sites of tragedies to truly independent observers to enhance the possibilities of the UN human rights missions, because at the moment it is the only international observation mission which works sufficiently, although it is extremely difficult for them, and also to support such organizations as Amnesty International with their very attempt to raise very sensitive issues, which has nothing else but facts at the background. Thank you.

\*OSCE SMM: Organization for Security & Co-operation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine