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OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

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Statement at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council

High-Level Segment

28 February 2022, 15:00 – 16:00

H.E. Dominique Hasler

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport

Mister President, Excellencies, Colleagues, Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would have wished that we could have gathered under less sinister circumstances. Instead, the Council's session is overshadowed by events in which the international order is being violated in an unprecedented manner that affects the vital interests of everyone committed to the UN Charter.

Liechtenstein strongly condemns the **Russian aggression against Ukraine**, calls for an immediate end of the illegal military intervention and reaffirms its unequivocal support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol. This military operation is not only a repeated act of aggression against Ukraine, it is also an attack on all of us, every UN member committed to a rules-based international order.

For Liechtenstein as a small State without an army, the respect for sovereignty and international law is of vital importance. We consider this crime of aggression also as an attack against us and the values we stand for. Liechtenstein stands in solidarity with the Government and the people of Ukraine, whose lives and livelihoods as well as their hope for a better future are gravely threatened.

The Government has decided to make an initial contribution for the most pressing humanitarian needs and Liechtenstein will live up to its humanitarian tradition. It is worth recalling today that Members of this Council, according to its founding resolution, "*shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights*"

Mister President,

We live in a time that is unfortunately marked by many humanitarian crises. Therefore, we remain very concerned about the current situation in **Afghanistan**, in particular about ongoing reports of the systematic violation of the rights of women and girls, including their right to education. The recent disappearances following peaceful women's rights protests illustrate the restricted, unsafe and misogynistic environment which women encounter in Afghanistan. This sheds light on the dramatic deterioration of the previously already precarious human rights situation, which furthermore includes arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, and the banning of civil society organizations as well as the oppression of human rights defenders. We strongly condemn any human rights violations committed by the Taliban and call upon them to respect human rights standards and to ensure accountability for human rights violations in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, we continue to be concerned about the situation in **Syria** where more than 350'000 civilians have become victims of the conflict that has been going on for more than a decade. There is no sustainable future for Syria without justice for the victims and survivors – justice for the countless atrocities committed and still ongoing. We express our

full support for the work of the *International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria* (IIIM) and are grateful for the efforts made by a number of European States to hold criminal trials in national courts of persons having committed atrocity crimes. It is our firm position that the situation in Syria should be referred to the ICC by the Security Council.

We are also deeply worried about the ongoing violence in **Myanmar**. As a result of the unconstitutional military coup a year ago, the human rights situation has deteriorated rapidly. Countless lives have been lost in the fight for a transition back to a democratic order. The military authorities continue their violent crackdown on civilian life, with hundreds of thousands fleeing from the violence, arbitrary arrests as well as killings and other atrocities carried out as part of a systematic attack against the civilian population.

Liechtenstein was proud to coordinate the group of States that put forward the General Assembly resolution condemning the coup last June, but more needs to be done to ensure the implementation of this resolution, especially concerning the supply of arms to the country. We support the ongoing work by international justice mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice as well as the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar.

The four situations I have highlighted are unfortunately only the tip of the iceberg in a world that faces many challenges. This only underscores the importance of committing to and upholding human rights. It is our collective responsibility to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world, including by holding perpetrators of serious violations accountable.

Mister President,

Recommitting to human rights is of particular importance in times of crisis, as an expression of our engagement for the common values at the heart of the United Nations. Finally, I would like to emphasize Liechtenstein's continued support for the UN human rights system and its work. I would furthermore like to ensure you, Mr. President, of our support for the work of the Human Rights Council and we stand ready to support you and your Bureau in any way possible.

I thank you.