

STATEMENT

**by Mr. Vladimir Lenev, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the International Organizations in Nairobi at the First session of the Executive Board of the UN-Habitat for the year 2022 in exercise of the right of reply to the delegation of Ukraine
(Nairobi, 29 March 2022)**

UN-Habitat Executive Board meeting is not the right place to discuss armed conflicts. But I have to reply to the statement of the delegation of Ukraine.

After every attempt to resolve peacefully the armed conflict unleashed by the Kiev regime in the south-east of Ukraine in 2014, the Russian Federation was forced to launch a special military operation. The purpose of the operation is to achieve demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine.

In its Report published in 2016 by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights characterized “Azov” military formation actions as war crimes. But despite this the Kiev regime kept it the structure of the Ukrainian army. “Azov” combatants use civil facilities, schools and hospitals to equip firing positions. Upon retreat they destroy critical civilian infrastructure - bridges, electrical substations, water supply and sewage treatment plants.

On March 16, the Ukrainian Nazis from “Azov” staged a provocation against the civilians of Mariupol and destroyed the theater of the city for the sake of a yet another piece of fake news. This was confirmed now by the people who were present in the theater during the blast.

Common practice for NATO invasions of area-carpet bombardments of towns and cities has never and will never be used by the Russian Air Force. At the same time, Ukrainian extremists are trying to shift all the responsibility for their criminal actions on the Russian military, and the Western media actively help them by spreading the disinformation.

I would like to draw your attention to the ongoing shellings of civilian objects of the DPR and LPR by the Ukrainian side. In particular, the armed forces of Ukraine launched a missile strike with cluster munitions in the center of Donetsk on March 14, which led to deaths of 21 civilians and left about 30 other civilians heavily wounded. There are no military facilities in the center of Donetsk. A deliberate strike at civilians is nothing else but a war crime.

Let me repeat, that the military of Russia, the DPR and the LPR do their utmost, risking their own lives, to prevent civilian casualties. The Ukrainian nationalists have learned this well and employed the tactics of “human shields” as one of the main parts of their military doctrine.

All those in the Kiev regime responsible for war crimes will be brought to justice and face punishment upon the completion of the special military operation.