

Madam Speaker of the Seimas, Ms Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, I remember your visit to Kiev as one of the first visits after the war broke out.

Mr President, Gitanas, my friend, you have been to Ukraine more than once and we have attained a lot together. I am sure we will do even more!

Madam Prime Minister, Ms Ingrida Šimonytė, I am grateful to you for your visit yesterday.

Dear people of Lithuania,

Lithuanians,

I am grateful for the opportunity to address you today on behalf of all the people of Ukraine, who will always remember your sincerity and willingness to help us at the most difficult time for our country. You were among the first to help Ukraine. And you remain among those who are the most concerned about peace and European security.

Russia's full-scale war launched against Ukraine has raised a strategic question for Europe: are the values that have formed the foundation for the unification of nations on the European continent after the Second World War still alive? Or have these values already played their role and can become exhibits in museums for tourists? Have they become only a part of the European historical heritage stocked somewhere in the halls of ancient palaces and not what defines our real life? Unfortunately, there is no common answer to this question for all Europeans. It is the common answer, however, that the future of Europe depends on.

In the liberated territories of Ukraine, we continue registering and investigating war crimes committed by the Russian Federation. We continue finding new graves of mass killings almost every day. We are collecting evidence. Thousands and thousands of victims. Hundreds of cases of cruel torture. We continue finding corpses in manholes and basements. Mutilated bodies, with bound hands. There are villages – once quite large – left deserted. Hundreds of children have become orphans. At least hundreds, because we do not know the exact number of victims yet. Hundreds of cases of rape have been registered, including rape of underage girls, very young children and even a baby! It is gruesome even to talk about it. But it is true. This happened.

The perpetrator has already been identified as Bychkov from Pskov, a paratrooper, or a special service agent. He sent his videos to his friends, including a video of what he did to the baby, a video of the abuse!

So much about the Russian army. This is the children's defender. This says it all about this 'special operation' planned in Moscow. This says it all about the fight for the 'Russian world'. That is what the Russian army and the Russian paratroopers from Pskov will be associated with from now on. Rape of infants...

Russian propagandists must have already launched the justification campaign. They will apparently say, as they always do, that it did not happen, and that even if it did, it was done to protect the 'Russian-speaking' population. But the propagandists will also be held liable for this crime, just as for any such crimes, including the crime of educating such paratroopers, from Pskov. And those in Europe who still fail to stop listening to the Russian propaganda on television will also have to shoulder the responsibility.

I wonder how the Russian Minister of Defence and other authors of this ‘special operation’ view its results now, after such crimes, and after such a ‘heroic deed’ by Russian soldier Bychkov. Might the Russian Minister of Defence invite the paratroopers from Pskov to his home to protect his own children and grandchildren? Would the Minister be willing to do so? I am sure he will fear answering.

Every location in Ukraine where the invaders had ravaged has now become the burial site, as the bodies that could not be taken to the cemetery are now being buried by the roadsides, in courtyards, squares, or garden plots. And all this happened within a few weeks, and for some locations within a month of the Russian occupation of the territories around our capital city – in the Chernihiv and Sumy regions, and in the North of Ukraine.

The whole world has memorised the name of the town of Bucha. But it is just one of the symbols of the crimes committed by the Russian army. We can take any other town, any other village where they have managed to establish themselves for some time... The invaders perpetrated the same crimes there as they did in Bucha. And what about the East of our country, where the Russian troops are still deployed? What about the South of the country? What about Mariupol and Volnovakha, which were almost completely destroyed by the Russian army? The situation is undoubtedly even more gruesome there.

Russian officials and state propagandists deny the crimes committed by their military. They say everything was staged. They lie in response even to the obvious facts that have convinced everyone else in the world. It is not surprising. They have always done so. However, they have changed their tactics in the areas where the Russian army is still present. They no longer leave corpses on the streets. They take them away, probably to burn. They massively deport people from the occupied territories. Hundreds of thousands of people have already been deported. They are sent to filtration camps with their documents taken away. These people undergo interrogation and humiliation. It is not known how many of them have died. Many of the deported people have been sent to the regions of Russia which they are forbidden to leave. Obviously, all this represents an attempt to get rid of witnesses to Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

Could the Russian military have acted and continue to act like this without orders from the Supreme Command? No, it could not. Can it be that the Russian political leadership does not realise the consequences of such orders? No, it cannot.

But this is all happening on the Ukrainian soil. Why? The answer is very cynical. The aggressors are convinced of their impunity. They are sure that they will be able to make the world forget about it. That Europe will forget about it. Or that Europe’s claims can simply be dismissed. Their logic is simple. After all, everyone needs to trade. Everyone needs oil. Everyone needs gas. Everyone will be eager to use the Russian territory for the transit of goods. Everyone will want to enjoy access to the Russian market. That is what Moscow thinks.

Of course, if only everyone in Europe were as principled as you are in Lithuania and if only everyone respected the European values just as much as you do, the Russian leadership could not entertain any expectations of success. Probably this war would not have started at all. They would not have dared to start it in the first place.

But what do we see instead? The EU debates the sixth – and I underline, the sixth – package of sanctions against Russia as an aggressor in an unprecedented war since the Second World War, and yet it is still uncertain whether oil will be subject to sanctions. Even after seeing the massacre in Bucha and other cities, even knowing about the deportations of people, even seeing the deliberate destruction of peaceful cities in Ukraine by Russian missiles and bombs, the EU Member States are still hesitant about the date when they will at least significantly restrict, let alone stop, their purchases of the Russian gas. Hundreds of European companies and banks have not only failed to stop operating

on the Russian market, but have instead openly demonstrated contempt in response to the requirements to stop financing the Russian war machine by their taxes and excise duties. And all of this is happening now, at a time when the blood of the victims is still fresh! What does this indicate?

If oil became subject of serious discussion only in the sixth package of sanctions, this means that the world fails to understand the type of war Russia has prepared for. If there is still no clear decision on the Russian gas, there can be no certainty that Europe has summoned the common will needed to put an end to Russia's war crimes and to force Russia to seek peace. If there are still large European companies and banks that, even amidst the hostilities in Ukraine, do not consider it necessary to withdraw from the Russian market, this means that all other companies will take it as a signal: wait and see, and you will return to business as usual, even if Russia's behaviour features no significant change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

People of Lithuania,

I am grateful to you for your leadership. For the fact that you were the first EU Member State to give up Russia's energy resources when this was really needed.

I am grateful to you in person, Mr Gitanas Nausėda, for your important decision and for being the first in line to provide us with real help. You provided us with weapons, including but not limited to Stinger missiles. This was a historical manifestation of genuine leadership. After all, the people of Lithuania understand better than anyone else how invaders can destroy freedom and at what cost independence is restored. And the restoration of independence is what you have managed to accomplish very well.

That is the kind of leadership the whole continent needs now. It is absolutely crucial for Europe to preserve and uphold common values and to prove that the common values, which include freedom, human rights, respect for territorial integrity, and prevention of predatory warfare, are genuinely alive and not outdated or collecting dust in museums. Whenever the continent is primarily guided by selfish interests, instead of values that should unite all, this always leads to disastrous consequences for the whole of Europe. Discord, outbreaks of revanshism and wars are certainly not what Europeans need in the 21st century. However, this is exactly what Russia is trying to bring back.

The Russian state must be held accountable for this war. Russian officials, military commanders and all those responsible for war crimes must be held accountable. All organisers and perpetrators of the deportation must be held accountable. Russia must be deprived of any opportunity to terrorise its neighbours. It is not just about Ukraine. Russia's real plans are obvious to all. Ukraine is just the beginning. Next, it will be your country, other Baltic States, Moldova, Georgia, Poland, and countries in Central Asia. Threats to Finland and Sweden have already been voiced by Moscow.

How will Europe manage to stop Russia's further expansion if it even fails to put an end to what is happening now in Ukraine?

I know Lithuania puts every effort to defend the European values and the freedom and security of Europeans. It is critical that Europe also puts every effort into the cause. Every effort must be made to ensure that the European response to the Russian aggression is truly strong and consolidated. We cannot wait for the seventh, eighth or ninth package of sanctions against Russia before we make decisions that are really powerful. Everything needs to be done now, already in the sixth sanctions package. The European Union can do this. And it is crucial to include oil. It is necessary to impose sanctions on Russian banks – all of them, not just part of them. Each Member State of the European

Union must finally be given specific deadlines in order to effectively stop, or at least significantly limit, the consumption of Russian gas. Only then will the Russian leadership conclude that there is a need to seek real peace and that the war is a disaster, first and foremost, for the aggressor itself.

We have already achieved a lot at the bilateral level. Real understanding. Real ally relations. They are based not only on interests, but also on values, on our common historical path.

We will only strengthen the cooperation in the original format of the Lublin Triangle. This will certainly serve as the foundation of the new security architecture in the Baltic and Black Sea region.

Ukraine is also grateful to all our friends in the European Union for launching the accelerated procedure for Ukraine for obtaining the status of an EU candidate country. We are especially grateful to the Republic of Lithuania. A successful conclusion of the procedure is also necessary in the near future if we want to show Russia that the war will never put Europe to its knees.

When peace will finally come – and I am sure that it can happen very soon, provided everyone in Europe is truly principled – we will be able to rebuild Ukraine quickly from scratch after this war. I invite your society, your companies, and your country to join Ukraine's reconstruction project to rebuild our state. This will be the most convincing argument for all those who still have their misgivings about Europe and its future potential.

Life must defeat the war. Values must defeat the war. Europe must win the war.

I am grateful to each and every one of you! Thank you, the people of Lithuania! Glory to Ukraine!