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**The responsibility to protect and the prevention of
genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes
against humanity**

**Security Council
Seventy-seventh year**

**Letter dated 15 July 2022 from the Permanent Representative of
Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to convey to you information from the General Prosecutor's Office of Belarus on the genocide of the Belarusian population during the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 134, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Valentin **Rybakov**



Annex to the letter dated 15 July 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information from the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus on the genocide of the Belarusian population during the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period

In April 2021, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Belarus initiated, and is currently investigating, a criminal case regarding the facts pertaining to the genocide of civilians committed by Nazi Germany and its allies during the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period (1941–1951) in the territory of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), the legal successor of which is the Republic of Belarus.

Even before the attack on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), one of the main goals of the German leadership was declared to be the capture of the “living space” necessary for the prosperity of the Third Reich, its colonization and the liberation of the territory from the “surplus” indigenous population. The instruction on special areas to Directive No. 21 (the Barbarossa plan) of 13 March 1941, the Decree on Exercising Military Jurisdiction in the Area of Barbarossa and Special Measures by the Troops, signed on 13 May 1941 by Wilhelm Keitel, the Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces, the Master Plan for the East and a number of other documents elevated atrocities against the civilian population to the level of public policy and freed the occupiers from responsibility for the crimes committed, including against the civilian population of BSSR.

The ideological indoctrination of Wehrmacht soldiers contributed to the crimes. The “Memoirs of a German soldier”, published for Wehrmacht troops, reads: “You have no heart, no nerves, they are not needed in war. Destroy pity and sympathy in yourself - kill any Russian, any Soviet. Do not stop if there is an old man or a woman, a young girl or a boy in front of you. Kill them. This you will save you from destruction, ensure the future of your family and you will have eternal glory ...”.

As a result, the mass extermination of the BSSR population became industrialized by means of shootings and the use of gallows, gas chambers and incineration, famine and the spread of epidemics (such as infection with typhus and other infectious diseases).

Belarus was subjected to all forms of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (9 December 1948).

In order to exterminate the population of BSSR, the German fascist invaders and their accomplices carried out mass punitive operations (Operations “Winter magic”, “Spring festival”, “Heinrich” and many others), during which populated areas were often destroyed, together with their inhabitants.

One of the most famous examples of the burning of a village along with its inhabitants was the tragic fate of Khatyn, and there are thousands of such villages in Belarus.

During the occupation, living conditions designed for the total physical destruction of the civilian population were created. All foodstuffs were taken away and livable buildings were destroyed, leading to mass deaths from hunger and cold.

Many residents of the country were subjected to torture, during which they suffered from serious physical injury and mental harm. They were also subjected to medical experiments aimed, among other things, at preventing childbearing.

Children were taken from their parents and put in places of detention. They were driven to exhaustion by hard physical labour, tortured and used as blood donors before being put to death.

In the course of its investigation into the criminal case of genocide, the investigation team of the General Prosecutor's Office has established numerous previously unknown facts about the mass extermination of the civilian population of Belarus by Nazi criminals.

Painstaking work is being done to record information from eyewitnesses to those events and from their relatives. During the preliminary investigation more than 14,000 people were questioned, more than 7,500 of whom had been prisoners in concentration camp. Over 400 inspections were conducted of previously unknown sites of civilian massacres, during which thousands of skeletal remains were discovered.

The evidence obtained suggests that the scale of the tragedy of the Belarusian people is much greater than had been previously thought. It has been established that during the years of Nazi occupation in the territory of Belarus:

- At least 3 million civilians and prisoners of war were killed;
- More than 380,000 people were taken into German slavery, many of whom died from intolerable conditions of exploitation;
- Over 200 cities were destroyed, including such large cities as Minsk, Homiel, Vitebsk, Polotsk, Orsha, Borisov and Slutsk;
- More than 9,500 villages and hamlets were burned;
- More than 260 concentration camps and other places of detention were in operation. At Trostenets, the largest death camp on all of occupied Soviet territory, at least 546,000 people were killed; several tens of thousands of people were killed at the Ozarichi death camp; and 22,000 people were killed at the Koldichevo concentration camp.

The damage caused to the national economy, infrastructure and cultural heritage by the deliberate policy of destruction of the peoples of Belarus also exceeds the finding by the post-war emergency commissions.

Food, raw materials, industrial products and equipment, as well as museum exhibits, works of art and cultural monuments, were indiscriminately seized and shipped to Germany during the occupation.

Collaborationist militias consisting of nationalists from Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine, as well as members of the Polish Armia Krajowa (Home Army) took part in the genocide.

To date, the General Prosecutor's Office has information about the location of at least 400 people who may have been involved in the killing of civilians in Belarus during the Great Patriotic War.

Some countries have begun to forget the war crimes of Nazi Germany and its collaborators. In these States neo-Nazism is espoused, marches of former SS members are held and the rights of certain categories of the population are restricted on ethnic grounds. Attempts are being made to exonerate certain Nazi collaborators by presenting them as "freedom fighters". Monuments to liberator soldiers are being dismantled, the graves of Soviet soldiers are being desecrated, wreath-laying

ceremonies are being disrupted and paramilitary organizations are openly using Nazi symbols. These are all attempts to rewrite history and erase the heroic deeds of the Soviet people.

BSSR is one of the Soviet Republics that suffered the most from the Nazi invaders. The participation of BSSR in the foundation of the United Nations is evidence of the international community's recognition of the contribution that the Belarusian people made to the victory over fascism.

The Republic of Belarus is continuing its policy of intolerance towards and prosecution of all manifestations of Nazism and Fascism, as well as attempts to rehabilitate them.

On 14 December 2021, the House of Representatives of the Republic of Belarus passed the Genocide of the Belarusian People Act in order to honour the memory of the millions of victims of the genocide, to protect the fundamental values of the Belarusian people, to effectively obstruct attempts to falsify the events and outcome of the Second World War and to give a fair assessment of the atrocities committed by Nazi criminals, their accomplices and nationalist militias during the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period. The aforementioned Act makes it a criminal offence to deny the genocide of the Belarusian people.
