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| **United Nations Security Council**  **Arria-formula informal meeting, 8 May 2020**  **“*75 Years from the end of the Second World War on European soil – Lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council*”**  ***Speech by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland***  ***Mr Jacek Czaputowicz*** |

*Check against delivery*

*Mr President,*

I would like to congratulate Estonia on taking over the presidency of the Security Council and thank it for organising our today’s meeting. Many ministers have decided to speak today, which clearly shows that the international community attaches a great significance to the experiences and consequences of World War II, and sees them as an important lesson for people living today.

*Mr President,*

Seventy five years ago, on 8 May 1945, Nazi Germany signed its capitulation. Six years earlier, in 1939, Poland had fallen victim to German invasion on 1 September, and then the Soviet attack on 17 September. As a result of the war, Poland lost six million people, including three million citizens of Jewish origin who perished in the Holocaust.

Poland was the first country to resist the German aggression, and did not lay down its arms throughout the whole war, fighting on all European fronts – but was denied the fruits of victory. As a result of the Yalta agreement, Poland, along with other Central and Eastern European countries, was made part of the Soviet Union’s sphere of influence. Those countries had their independence taken away or restricted, and the communist system was forced upon them.

It was only after the victory of Solidarity and the Velvet Revolutions in 1989 that Central and Eastern European countries could fully regain their sovereignty. As St John Paul II said to the UN General Assembly in 1995, “the nonviolent revolutions of 1989 demonstrated that the quest for freedom cannot be suppressed.”

*Mr President,*

The United Nations was created 75 years ago to protect humankind against genocide, ethnic cleansing, and religious persecution. This was also Poland’s priority during the membership in the UN Security Council in 2018-2019 as well as during our term in the Human Rights Council.

Unfortunately, we still have to face up to military aggression and revision of borders. Georgia’s Foreign Minister has spoken about the occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which is a blatant violation of a country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.

A similar situation can be seen in Ukraine, whose territorial integrity is violated by the occupation of Crimea and the so-called “separatists” in Donbas that benefit from Russia’s support. This poses a threat to peace and security in Europe which the international community must oppose.

*Mr President,*

Our duty is to remember World War II to make sure that its atrocities never happen again. Maybe the War would never have broken out if the leaders of that time had shown firmness and courage to put a stop to Hitler’s imperialist plans. This is a great lesson for us today, a lesson we cannot ignore.

*I thank you Mr President.*