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برلمانيون من أجل التحرك العالمي

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NGO in general consultative status
with the Economic and Social Council

New York/The Hague, 15 March 2021

Hon. Dmytro Razumkov

Chairman of The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Dear Honorable Chairman,

On behalf of **Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)**, a global network of more than 1,200 members of parliaments from more than 130 democratically elected legislatures, including Ukraine, united by a commitment to advancing the Rule of Law and human rights, it is our honour to write to you concerning the Bill 2689 “*On amendments to certain legislative acts on the Enforcement of International Criminal and Humanitarian Law*” tentatively scheduled for the second reading at the Verkhovna Rada for 16 March 2021.

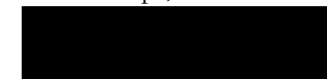
Since 2003, PGA has actively engaged with the Ukrainian legislators, as well as governmental authorities, to support domestic reforms to strengthen justice, protect human rights and enhance international cooperation. In this context, PGA has provided technical assistance on the Bill 2689 upon request of the relevant Parliamentary Committee and galvanized political will in support of the Bill at diverse fora, including at the Roundtable organised by the Law Enforcement Committee at the Verkhovna Rada on 7 February 2020.

The adoption of the Bill aligns with the commitments of Ukraine stemming from various international and European instruments, while being crucial in enabling Ukraine to achieve accountability for international crimes committed in Eastern Ukraine and the occupied territory of Crimea. The adoption of the Bill is instrumental in this regard, as even after seven years of ongoing armed conflict, Ukraine lacks comprehensive legal instruments to ensure criminal accountability for the crimes committed. The Bill 2689 addresses the existing gaps in the criminal code of Ukraine, namely, includes provisions on crimes against humanity, otherwise missing in the legislation currently in force, and defines war crimes in conformity with the requirements of International Law. As only international crimes are exempt from statutory limitations, the accurate qualification of these acts today is particularly crucial for bringing those responsible to justice, even in a distant future.

The Bill therefore empowers Ukrainian judges and prosecutors to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate on conduct that is prohibited and criminalized under International Law, building on the creation of the specialized “*Department for Supervision in Criminal Proceedings of the Crimes Committed in Armed Conflict*” in October 2019. Consequently, the adoption of the Bill will strengthen the domestic justice system and respect for the Rule of Law. Importantly, it will send a strong message to the people of Ukraine and the international community that your country is committed to bringing perpetrators of international crimes to justice, and that the suffering of victims will not be ignored.

We therefore respectfully ask you to consider the Bill positively and encourage its adoption to address accountability and end impunity, while offering victims of atrocities committed in the context of the ongoing armed conflict in Ukraine an effective recourse to justice.

Please accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurances of our highest esteem and consideration.



Ms. Margareta Cederfelt, MP (Sweden)

President, Parliamentarians for Global action (PGA)



Dr. David Donat Cattin

Secretary-General, PGA

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