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OMNIBUS STATEMENT, Third committee

Mr. Chair,

Slovakia welcomes this opportunity to discuss the current situation of human rights in the world. Human rights must be respected in all fields of our life and States have the obligation to protect them fully. No justification can be used as a pretext for their violation.

The full-scale armed attack by the Russian Federation against **Ukraine** continues to have a devastating impact across the country. Thousands of civilians lost their life and many thousands more were injured. Missile strikes and air strikes, the vast majority of which were launched by the Russian Federation, also caused widespread destruction of essential infrastructure, resulting in immeasurable harm for the civilian population, with long-term effects on the enjoyment of their human rights.

In this regard, we urge Russia to stop immediately its violent military aggression in Ukraine. Slovakia fully supports and respects Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence in internationally recognised borders.

We are deeply concerned about the unabated systematic crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, lawyers, independent media and journalists, and the repressions against political opposition and critical voices, as well as persons in vulnerable situations throughout the **Russian Federation**. The authorities continue to use the judicial system to silence critical voices, targeting human rights activists and groups for legitimate work. The sentences handed down to opposition politicians and independent journalists – such as the additional 19-year prison sentence for Alexei Navalny, and 25 years for Vladimir Kara-Murza – raise serious concerns, both for these individuals and for the rule of law.

We call on the Russian Federation to end the climate of impunity and create and maintain a safe environment both online and offline for all journalists and media workers, human rights defenders, civic activists, political opposition and critical voices in line with its domestic and international obligations and commitments.

We condemn the systematic and widespread violations of international human rights law in **Belarus**, particularly the numerous cases of arbitrary deprivation of liberty. We are also deeply concerned by the notable increase in the practice of incommunicado detention namely targeting political opposition members and civil society activists.

We urge Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release all political prisoners, currently more than 1,500, and others detained on politically motivated charges in Belarus, including members of human rights organizations. We continue to call on Belarus to respect, protect and fulfil human rights in compliance with its obligations under international human rights law and to adhere fully to the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Slovakia strongly condemns the massive terrorist attacks by Hamas on **Israel**. We express our solidarity and full support for Israel in its right to self-defence. Violence and terror only compound the suffering and Hamas' crimes are blocking the path to dialogue and a peaceful solution. Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in peace and security.

We express concern at the recent adoption of the Chastity and Hijab bill by the Iranian Parliament. The bill intensifies punishments for women and girls who do not obey Iran's compulsory dress code, ultimately undermining their right to freedom of expression. It creates unprecedented social and economic barriers for women by imposing travel bans, denying them education, and limiting access to health facilities and other public services. Women and girls of **Iran** should enjoy the full array of their human rights, free from discrimination and fear of retribution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.