**MINISTRY**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION undertaken**

 REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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**3518. Mr D Bergman (DA) to ask the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation:**

Whether, with regard to the Human Rights Watch, an international nongovernmental organisation that has documented several cases of Russian military forces committing war violations against civilians in occupied areas of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Kyiv regions of Ukraine, which include a case of repeated rape, two cases of summary executions of seven men and other cases of unlawful violence that include threats against civilians between 27 February and 14 March 2022, the Government has condemned the specified war crimes by the invading Russian army; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW4331E**

**REPLY:**

South Africa is not indifferent to what is going on in Ukraine. We are deeply concerned about the continuing conflict, the loss of lives and the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation. As a matter of urgency, there must be a cessation of hostilities, which would be the first step in a comprehensive response to the humanitarian crisis. We continue to stress that dialogue, mediation, and diplomacy are the only means to end the current conflict. As South Africa stated in the United Nations General Assembly, wars end when dialogue begins, and wars endure when there is no dialogue.

We have in our statements made calls for all parties in this conflict to respect The Laws of Wars, including respect for the Principles of Distinction, which enjoins all combatants to ensure civilians are not harmed.