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**FRAMING THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMES
IN PROSECUTOR'S STATEMENTS
ON THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE**

Abstract

**ФРЕЙМІНГ МІЖНАРОДНИХ ЗЛОЧИНІВ У ЗАЯВАХ
ПРОКУРОРА ЩОДО СИТУАЦІЇ В УКРАЇНІ**

The statement of the problem. In the context of Russian aggression, the consequences of which are the dead, refugees, deported, and destroyed cities, there is a need to exercise jurisdiction over individuals responsible for the most serious international humanitarian crimes. Linguists faced the question of re-searching the integrative nature of the relationship between language and inter-

national law in bringing people to justice for committing the gravest crimes. Of particular interest in this aspect is the discourse of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, since the duties of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court include the investigation and prosecution of crimes under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

The purpose of the article. *The article aims to investigate the rhetorical devices used to create a frame regarding international crimes in the statements of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court concerning the situation in Ukraine.*

The research methods. *A frame analysis aimed at identifying rhetorical language devices in the statements of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court regarding the situation in Ukraine was used as a research method. Thirteen statements by Karim A. A. Khan K. S., Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, regarding the Situation in Ukraine, presented on the official website of the International Criminal Court, were used for the analysis.*

The main results of the research. *The study has shown that the frame that is being built in the statements of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court regarding international crimes committed by Russian criminals during the period of Russian aggression against Ukraine, which began in 2014, has a multi-aspect nature. The study has identified the following aspects in the frame structure: the informational aspect (informing the international community about the general progress of the investigation of crimes and issuing the warrants of arrest against Russian criminals); the legal aspect (legal justification of the investigation of crimes and the issuance of arrest warrants against Russian criminals through reference to the Rome Statute); the communication aspect (prosecutor's address to victims and witnesses of crimes, address to military personnel, dialogue with the international community); experiential aspect (reports about the experience of visiting crime scenes in Ukraine and communicating with crime victims). Rhetorical devices are used in the implementation of all aspects of the frame.*

Conclusions and perspectives. *The study demonstrates the significant role of linguistic rhetorical devices in the prosecutor's discourse. In his statements regarding the international humanitarian crimes committed by Russian aggressors in Ukraine and the issuance of arrest warrants against Russian high-ranking officials, Karim A. A. Khan KS, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, demonstrates a high level of rhetorical skills. In building a multi-aspect frame, the Prosecutor uses diverse rhetorical devices, including metaphor, metonymy, allusion, epithet, and rhetorical question. The rhetorical techniques used by the Prosecutor reinforce the essence of his statements: individuals who*

bear criminal responsibility for committing the atrocity crimes in Ukraine should be brought to justice.

A further study of the prosecutor's discourse in the trial of the International Criminal Court and the study of the prosecutor's discourse based on the material of the situations in other regions of the world in a comparative perspective is considered promising since the International Criminal Court has experience in prosecuting war criminals.

Keywords: prosecutor's statement, framing analysis, rhetorical devices, international crime, Ukraine.

Статтю присвячено дослідженню лінгвістичного фрейму щодо міжнародних тяжких злочинів, учинених російськими агресорами, у заявах прокурора Міжнародного кримінального суду стосовно ситуації в Україні. Лінгвістичний аналіз базується на риторичній версії фреймінг-аналізу з метою дослідження риторичних прийомів, які використовує прокурор.

Ключові слова: заява прокурора, фреймінг-аналіз, риторичні прийоми, міжнародний злочин, Україна.

1. Introduction

The world is witnessing the Russian Federation's ongoing unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine, which started in eastern regions of Ukraine and Crimea in 2014 and continued as a full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, and the strong resistance from the Ukrainian army and civilians. The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine has resulted in military and civilian casualties, forced displacement, and the destruction of Ukrainian cities.

On 28 February 2022, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced seeking authorization to open an investigation into the Situation in Ukraine. The International Criminal Court's founding treaty, the Rome Statute, grants the Court jurisdiction over four main crimes. The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crime of aggression. Ukraine was not a State Party to the Rome Statute at the relevant time, so to proceed with opening an investigation into the Situation in Ukraine, 43 State

Parties to the Rome Statute referred to the Situation in Ukraine. On 2 March 2022, the Prosecutor of the ICC announced opening an investigation into the Situation in Ukraine based on the referrals received (the International Criminal Court, Ukraine, 2024).

Linguists face the task of researching the integrative nature of the relationship between language and international law in bringing individuals to justice for committing atrocity crimes.

2. Theoretical Background

O. Glogar stresses that many legal theorists and linguists have addressed the notion of legal language from different perspectives. He argues that “legal nature of language should be determined by the context and function of the particular statement or exchange, in connection with the role of participants in the communication. This means that a particular act may be considered a part of legal language not in accordance with a certain form or lexicon used, but mainly by extralinguistic circumstances in the context of which it is being performed” (Glogar, 2023, p. 1081).

The Office of Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court is an independent organ of the Court. It is responsible for examining situations under the jurisdiction of the Court where genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression appear to have been committed, and carrying out investigations and prosecutions against the individuals who are allegedly most responsible for those crimes (the International Criminal Court, 2024). So, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has a core mission to protect the international community and ensure justice when enforcing the law. Since the beginning of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the Prosecutor has warned about the need to observe international humanitarian law and emphasized the right of the Office of the Prosecutor to investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime within the territory of Ukraine since 20 February 2014 onwards — (1), (2).

- (1) *For those that do not act in accordance with international humanitarian law, my Office is empowered to take action to ensure that those who have committed international crimes are held accountable in accordance with the Rome Statute* (Khan, 16/03/2022).
- (2) *...my Office may exercise its jurisdiction over and investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime committed within the territory of Ukraine since 20 February 2014 onwards* (Khan, 25/02/2022).

Thus, the International Criminal Court can investigate all international crimes. The International Criminal Court offers the following definitions of international crimes on its official website — (3), (4), (5).

- (3) *The crime of genocide is characterised by the specific intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group by killing its members or by other means: causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group* (The International Criminal Court, How the Court Works, 2024).
- (4) *Crimes against humanity include offences such as murder, rape, imprisonment, enforced disappearances, enslavement — particularly of women and children, sexual slavery, torture, apartheid and deportation* (The International Criminal Court, How the Court Works, 2024).
- (5) *War crimes include, for instance, the use of child soldiers; the killing or torture of persons such as civilians or prisoners of war; intentionally directing attacks against hospitals, historic monuments, or buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes* (The International Criminal Court, How the Court Works, 2024).

The importance of rhetoric for prosecutors as a means of persuasion has been highlighted. Many researchers have conducted studies to analyze different rhetorical elements prosecutors use. Most attention has been paid to prosecutors' opening statements in the courtrooms. The researchers have investigated, for example, the following features of prosecutors' oral statements in the courtrooms: person markers in the opening statements (Chaemsaitong, 2015); the role of personality and identity in trial success (Hobbs, 2008); the influence of opening statement (Spiecker & Worthington, 2003); interactive patterns of the opening statement in criminal trials (Chaemsaitong, 2014).

The course of the International Criminal Court's investigation of the situation in Ukraine is a source of significant attention. M. Futamura, who is examining war crime discourse in the context of Ukraine from the political and legal perspectives and touches on ICC's Prosecutor's statements, concludes: "The ongoing war in Ukraine shows that stakeholders are all too aware of the crucial role war crimes discourse plays" (Futamura, 2023).

The purpose of the article. This paper aims to examine the language used to frame international crimes in the statements issued by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the Situation in Ukraine. This research is the first attempt to comprehensively examine the language aspects of the state-

ments issued by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the Situation in Ukraine.

Method. A rhetorical version of framing analysis served as a research tool to determine the specific framing features of international crimes in the statements issued by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the Situation in Ukraine. Frames are understood to be devices that structure and shape narratives. Researchers operating within a framing perspective are looking for cues of how language choices push our thinking in specific directions; in particular, researchers are searching for various framing devices that may have been used: keywords and rhetorical devices (Kuypers, 2009).

3. The Research Data

The data for this research includes thirteen statements issued by Karim A. A. Khan KC, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, on the Situation in Ukraine. The statements are available to the public on the official website of the International Criminal Court.

Karim A. A. Khan KC was elected as Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the nineteenth session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute in New York on 12 February 2021. Khan was sworn in on 16 June 2021. Khan is a barrister and King's Counsel with over 30 years of professional experience as an international criminal law and human rights lawyer. He has extensive experience as a prosecutor, victim's counsel, and defence lawyer in domestic and international criminal tribunals, including, but not limited to, the International Criminal Court, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. He has also represented victims of human rights violations in Africa and Asia (The International Criminal Court, Karim A. A. Khan KC, 2024).

The first statement is dated February 25, 2022. The last statement that was examined was issued on June 25, 2024. The Prosecutor provides general information about the investigation's process in his statements. The first statement informs about the intention to start an investigation of the situation in Ukraine in the context of Russian aggression, and the last three statements, which have been examined, inform about the issuance of the arrest warrants.

4. The Results of the Research on Framing the International Crimes in Prosecutor's Statements

The research shows that the titles of the statements play a significant role since the title is presented on the website, and the statement can be read by following the link. The statement title provides a succinct description of the content of the statement. Three out of the thirteen titles include direct quotes from Khan's statements — (6), (7), (8).

- (6) *"I have been closely following recent developments in and around Ukraine with increasing concern"* (Khan, 25/02/2022).
- (7) *"I have decided to proceed with opening an investigation"* (Khan, 28/02/2022).
- (8) *"Engagement with all actors critical for effective, independent investigations."* (Khan, 16/03/2022).

The titles of the statements also inform about the activities of the Prosecutor. For instance — (9).

- (9) *ICC Prosecutor Karim A. A. Khan QC visits Kharkiv, Ukraine on 15 June 2022* (Khan, 17/06/2022).

The structure of the statements includes an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. For example, in the statement dated March 2, 2022, "Receipt of Referrals from 39 States Parties and the Opening of an Investigation", the following structural elements can be distinguished — (10), (11), (12).

Introduction

- (10) *On 28 February 2022, I announced my decision to seek authorisation to open an investigation into the Situation in Ukraine, on the basis of my Office's earlier conclusions arising from its preliminary examination, and encompassing any new alleged crimes falling within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court («ICC» or «the Court»)...*

Body paragraphs

- (11) *Today, I can confirm that an additional two States, Japan and North Macedonia have referred the Situation in Ukraine to my Office, bringing the total number of referring States to 41...*

Conclusion

- (12) *I wish to conclude by underlining that, as our investigation team continues its work on the ground, I am closely following the deeply troubling developments in hostilities* (Khan, 02/03/2022).

The content of the statements consistently informs about the essential steps in the investigation process. The Prosecutor uses the following phrases *the next step* or *the next steps* — (13), (14).

- (13) *Following my return to The Hague, I intend to issue a more detailed statement regarding the Situation in Ukraine, providing clarity on my assessment and **the next steps** I envisage in relation to this file...* (Khan, 25/02/2022).
- (14) ***The next step** is to proceed with the process of seeking and obtaining authorisation from the Pre-Trial Chamber of the Court to open an investigation....* (Khan, 28/02/2022).

The importance of the Prosecutor's steps is highlighted by such epithets as *landmark*, *important*, and *key*, which reinforce the value of certain activities of the Prosecutor — (15), (16), (17).

- (15) *In recognition of this, my Office takes **a landmark step** today in joining a JIT under the auspices of Eurojust for the first time* (Khan, 25/04/2022).
- (16) *I would also wish to recognize the strong support of Eurojust in facilitating **this important step*** (Khan, 25/04/2022).
- (17) *I have now completed my fourth official visit to Ukraine. This mission came at a pivotal moment, allowing us to take **key steps** forward in our investigative work, deepen our engagement with national authorities and meet with those impacted by alleged international crimes in Ukraine* (Khan, 17/06/2022).

The issuance of the first arrest warrants, which are the arrest warrants against Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation, is defined as *a first, concrete step* — (18).

- (18) *Whilst today is **a first, concrete step** with respect to the Situation in Ukraine, my Office continues to develop multiple, interconnected lines of investigation* (Khan, 17/03/2022).

An important feature of the statements is using the first-person pronoun *I*. For instance:

- the Prosecutor informs about his steps — (19), (20).
- (19) *On 22 February 2023, **I submitted** applications to Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court for warrants of arrest in the context of the Situation in Ukraine* (Khan, 17/03/2023)
- (20) *Today **I concluded** my third official visit to Ukraine* (Khan, 15/06/2022).
- the Prosecutor issues warnings to all those participating in hostilities — (21).
- (21) ***I wish to send a clear message** to all those participating in hostilities. **If attacks are intentionally directed against the civilian population: that is a crime** that my Office may investigate and prosecute* (Khan, 16/03/2022).

A warning to those who fight can also be expressed as a statement — (22).

- (22) *Every person who picks up a gun drives a tank or launches a missile should know that they can be held accountable where crimes are committed* (Khan, 17/06/2022).
- the Prosecutor appeals to the crime victims and crime witnesses — (23).
- (23) *I can therefore announce today that my Office has established a dedicated portal through which any person that may hold information relevant to the Ukraine situation can contact our investigators. **I encourage** all those with relevant information to come forward and contact our Team through this platform, which can be accessed [here](#)* (Khan, 11/03/2022).

The Prosecutor also presents the work of his office using the phrases *my office, my team*. Thus, he takes responsibility for the work of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court — (24), (25).

- (24) ***My Office** has responded immediately to this unprecedented collective call for action by States Parties* (Khan, 11/03/2022).
- (25) ***My team** is already working extensively on the ground in Ukraine and we will continue to engage with all partners to identify alleged crimes falling within our jurisdiction and uncover the truth* (Khan, 17/06/2022).

Using *I*, a person claims an individual stance, while *we* groups people. For instance, the Prosecutor uses the pronoun *we* in the following meanings:

- my office and I — (26).
- (26) *Our work continues as **we seek** to deliver on our mandate to ensure justice and accountability across situations* (Khan, 25/06/2024).
- Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine, and I — (27).
- (27) *I was also pleased to have the opportunity during my visit to meet virtually with His Excellency, Volodymyr Zelensky, President of Ukraine. **We were united** in our view that every possible effort should be made to ensure that the conduct of hostilities does not give rise to breaches of international humanitarian law and that civilians are protected from the effects of conflict* (Khan, 16/03/2022).

The pronoun *we* acquires a special significance in the statement dated April 27, 2022, which was made at a meeting of the UN Security Council and then presented on the official webpage of the International Criminal Court. The Prosecutor uses inclusive *we*. Inclusive *we* evokes a sense of commonality between the Prosecutor and the international community. The use of inclusive *we* in the rhetorical questions attracts attention. The Prosecutor addresses the international community to raise the important issues of the safety of the civilian population during the war in the context of Ukraine and the role of international law and the International Criminal Court — (28), (29).

- (28) *So are we to be so self-indulgent as an international community to talk politics when people are scared and children are shivering on all sides?* (Khan, 27/04/2022).
- (29) *Are we heading towards peace or more violence, more tears and more suffering? It is a moment the events, particularly since the 24th of February, I think, some have thought, well, what's the point of international law? What's the point of the International Criminal Court ("ICC" or the "Court")? What's the point of all these conventions, all these conferences that many in this room have attended and taken part in, the wonderful drafting, the high, lofty ideals of the preambles? What's the point of it all when people are suffering in so many parts of the world?* (Khan, 27/04/2022)

He addresses such rhetorical questions to the UN Security Council because he believes that the situation in Ukraine is a *situation of massive uncertainty for the people of Ukraine*. The world, according to the Prosecutor, is *holding its breath*. The Prosecutor does not consider the metaphor of *the world holding its breath* a hyperbole or exaggeration — (30).

- (30) *And I think it's not hyperbole to say the world is holding its breath* (Khan, 27/04/2022).

The Prosecutor's actions and decisions are legitimated, referring to the Rome Statute, The International Criminal Court's founding treaty, which grants the Court jurisdiction. The Rome Statute was adopted on 17 July 1998 by 120 States and entered into force on 1 July 2002 — the date the Court became operational. For instance — (31).

- (31) *The work of my Office in relation to the Situation in Ukraine will at all times be carried out in a manner consistent with of the the founding principles Rome Statute* (Khan, 16/03/2022).

The Prosecutor creates a powerful metaphor *at the heart of the Rome Statute* when he informs about cooperation with Ukraine, which takes place *"in accordance with the principle of complementarity that lies at the heart of the Rome Statute."* The principle of complementarity is the basis of the relationship between the International Criminal Court and national courts — (32).

- (32) *We identified a number of ways in which the cooperation between Ukraine and my Office can be further strengthened in accordance with the principle of complementarity that lies at the heart of the Rome Statute* (Khan, 17/06/2022).

The arrest warrants are legitimate, referring to the investigation results and the specific articles of the Rome Statute. For instance, informing about the warrants of arrest against Putin, President of the Russian Federation and Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the

President of the Russian Federation, the Prosecutor indicates that they bear criminal responsibility for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, contrary to article 8(2)(a)(vii) and article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute — (33).

- (33) *On the basis of evidence collected and analysed by my Office pursuant to its independent investigations, the Pre-Trial Chamber has confirmed that there are reasonable grounds to believe that President Putin and Ms Lvova-Belova bear criminal responsibility for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, **contrary to article 8(2)(a)(vii) and Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute** (Khan, 17/03/2023).*

According to Article 8(2)(a)(vii) and Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute, unlawful deportation and transfer of civilian population are war crimes. In the case of accusations of deportation of children, the Prosecutor also refers to the Fourth Geneva Convention — (34).

- (34) *My Office alleges that these acts, amongst others, demonstrate an intention to permanently remove these children from their own country. At the time of these deportations, the Ukrainian children were protected persons **under the Fourth Geneva Convention** (Khan, 17/03/2023).*

The Prosecutor also refers to the historical experience and alludes to the Nuremberg trials. The Prosecutor uses metonymy: he mentions only the name of the city where the trials took place, Nuremberg. In this case, he relies on the collective memory of the international community — (35).

- (35) *We heard from the High Commissioner for Human Rights about the principles of proportionality, the principles of distinction, the types of weapons, munitions and events that are in the public space of discussion. This is nothing new. **This has been known since Nuremberg** (Khan, 27/04/2022).*

It is the Prosecutor's experience that allows him to create terrifying pictures of the horrors of Russian aggression in Ukraine — (36).

- (36) *I've been to Ukraine twice, to Lviv and to Kiev. I've been to Bucha and Borodianka. The team have been more widely forensic scientists, lawyers and investigators, and we will keep on partnering with anybody but subjecting it, whatever we receive, as I've said to impartial analysis (Khan, 27/04/2022).*

The Prosecutor is using a powerful metonym to describe the situation in Ukraine — *Ukraine is a crime scene* and is *defining* crimes on the territory of Ukraine as *atrocities crimes* — (37), (38).

- (37) *As I stated when in Bucha last May, **Ukraine is a crime scene** that encompasses a complex and broad range of alleged international crimes. We will not hesitate to*

submit further applications for warrants of arrest when the evidence requires us to do so (Khan, 17/03/2023).

- (38) *I will be engaging with other senior government officials in Warsaw to further strengthen the basis for collective action towards accountability for atrocity crimes* (Khan, 16/03/2022).

In the following example, the Prosecutor creates a metaphorical image of refugees — *a caravan of people with their plastic bags*. A caravan is a group of people with vehicles or animals travelling together for safety through a dangerous area, especially across a desert on camels (Online Cambridge Dictionary, 2024). The Prosecutor also saw *body bags* during his visit to Ukraine. Thus, he creates an image of the consequences of war — the refugees and lost lives — (39).

- (39) *We see on TV screens and I've spoken to victims and survivors, pictures that are not fake. I've seen refugees, largely women and children. **This caravan of people with their plastic bags and their bags crossing on foot into Poland.** I've seen individuals in Borodianka completely non scripted walking around without any supervision, surrounded, sitting around a blackened cattle in very, very cold temperatures because that's their current existence at the moment. And of course, **I've seen body bags and other evidence of killings**, and we need to find out how did people die and who did it and then insist on accountability* (Khan, 27/04/2022).

The lifelike images of the Prosecutor's experience in Ukraine support the accusations made against the individuals of the Russian Federation. For example, his description of a visit to Kharkiv, where he saw extensive damage caused to this city and listened to the accounts of suffering endured by civilians, supports bringing the charges against Shoigu and Gerasimov, who are believed to bear individual criminal responsibility for the war crime of directing attacks against civilian objects — (40), (41).

- (40) *On the first day of my visit I travelled to Kharkiv, in the east of Ukraine, **witnessing the extensive damage caused to this city and listening to the accounts of suffering endured by civilians*** (Khan, 17/06/2022).
- (41) *On the basis of evidence collected and analysed by my Office pursuant to its independent investigations, the Pre-Trial Chamber has confirmed that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Mr Shoigu and General Gerasimov bear individual criminal responsibility for the following three crimes: 1) the war crime of directing attacks against civilian objects (article 8(2)(b)(ii) of the Rome Statute) 2) the war crime of causing excessive incidental harm to civilians or damage to civilian objects (article 8(2)(b)(iv) of the Rome Statute); and 3) the crime against humanity of inhumane acts under article 7(1)(k) of the Rome Statute* (Khan, 25/06/2024).

The Prosecutor creates a poignant image of an empty care home for children, in which children were cared for with love, but now this home is empty because of the alleged deportation of children or their unlawful transfer. He visited that care home for children two kilometres from the front lines. Such an image of a care home for children foregrounds the need to prosecute such crimes against humanity — (42).

- (42) *In southern Ukraine, two kilometres from the frontlines, I visited a care home for children. The drawings pinned on the wall and the cupboards full of clothes spoke to a context of love and support that was once there. But this home was empty, a result of alleged deportation of children from Ukraine to the Russian Federation or their unlawful transfer to other parts of the temporarily occupied territories* (Khan, 07/03/2023).

In the statement about the warrants of arrest against Putin, President of the Russian Federation and Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation the Prosecutor states that they bear criminal responsibility for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, which means that they have committed a crime against humanity — (43).

- (43) *...the Pre-Trial Chamber has confirmed that there are reasonable grounds to believe that President Putin and Ms Lvova-Belova bear criminal responsibility for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation...* (Khan, 17.03.2023).

In the statement about the arrest warrants against Putin and Lvova-Belova for the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children, the Prosecutor also defines the crimes committed in Ukraine as alleged crimes, which means accused but without legal conviction. But the Prosecutor adds that *we cannot allow children to be treated as if they are the spoils of war* — (44).

- (44) *We must ensure that those responsible for alleged crimes are held accountable and that children are returned to their families and communities. As I stated at the time, we cannot allow children to be treated as if they are the spoils of war* (Khan, 17.03.2023).

The Prosecutor's statement, "...we cannot allow children to be treated as if they are the spoils of war," reveals the true attitude of Putin towards Ukrainian children: Ukrainian children are just *the spoils of war* for him.

Khan K.A.A. creates metaphors to reinforce the importance of the keywords such as law and justice. In the understanding of the Prosecutor, the Rule of Law is not a passive spectator but *an intrinsic part, an intrinsic buckle to keep us together* — (45).

- (45) *And yet, in that moment of otherwise despair, I think something unique is happening. It is a dawning realization that the rule of law is not a passive spectator, but as an intrinsic part, an intrinsic buckle to keep us together* (Khan, 27/04/2022).

The Prosecutor creates a profound metaphor about the importance of law during the war — *the law must be mobilized and sent to the front to protect, to preserve, to shield people who are children, who are women and who are men* — (46).

- (46) *But this is a time when we need to mobilize the law and send it into battle, not on the side of Ukraine against the Russian Federation or on the side of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, but on the side of humanity to protect, to preserve, to shield people who are children, who are women and who are men, who have certain basic rights* (Khan, 27/04/2022).

The Prosecutor repeatedly uses the metaphor *law on the front lines* to stress the importance of law enforcement on the battlefields during the war — (47), (48), (49).

- *the law remains on the front lines*

- (47) *My message to those I spoke with was clear: **the law remains with them on the front lines*** (Khan, 17/06/2022)

- *to ensure the law is felt on the frontlines*

- (48) *It is unprecedented that as conflict takes place, literally as bombs fall, such a groundswell of collective work is being undertaken **to ensure that the law is felt on the frontline*** (Khan, 07/ 03/2023).

- *the law must provide shelter to the most vulnerable on the front lines*

- (49) *Since taking up my position as Prosecutor, I have emphasised that **the law must provide shelter to the most vulnerable on the front lines**, and that we also must put the experiences of children in conflict at the centre of our work* (Khan, 17/ 03/2023).

So, the Prosecutor personifies the law and sees the international humanitarian law as a *defender that protects everyone and gives equal value to all lives* — (50).

- (50) *All those engaged in such conflicts must follow the baseline rules of conduct reflected in international humanitarian law. **This law provides protection to all, and gives equal value to all lives.*** (Khan, 25/ 06/2024).

Justice is light for the Prosecutor. The statement made by the Prosecutor on March 7, 2023, after his fourth visit to Ukraine is entitled “*Amidst this darkness, the light of justice is emerging*”. For him, the situation in Ukraine, the tragic experience of many Ukrainians, is *darkness*, but cooperation with

representatives of Ukraine and international partners gives hope for the light of justice — (51).

- (51) *These allegations, and the lived experiences of so many in Ukraine, reflect a deeply challenging, often tragic, context. But during my visit it was also clear that **this darkness** has allowed us to see new ways of coming together; **new ways of building partnerships towards justice*** (Khan, 07/03/2023).

5. Conclusion

The study demonstrates the significant role of linguistic rhetorical devices in the prosecutor's discourse. In his statements regarding the international humanitarian crimes committed by Russian aggressors in Ukraine and the issuance of arrest warrants against Russian high-ranking officials, Karim A. A. Khan KS, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, demonstrates a high level of rhetorical skills.

The study shows that the frame built in the statements of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court regarding international crimes committed by Russian criminals during the period of Russian aggression against Ukraine has a multi-aspect nature. The study has identified the following aspects in the frame structure: the informational aspect (informing the international community about the general progress of the investigation of crimes and issuing the warrants of arrest against Russian criminals); the legal aspect (legal justification of the investigation of crimes and the issuance of arrest warrants against Russian criminals through reference to the Rome Statute); the communication aspect (prosecutor's address to victims and witnesses of crimes, address to military personnel, dialogue with the international community); experiential aspect (reports about the experience of visiting crime scenes in Ukraine and communicating with crime victims). Rhetorical devices are used in the implementation of all aspects of the frame. The Prosecutor uses diverse rhetorical devices, including metaphor, metonymy, allusion, epithet, and rhetorical question. The rhetorical techniques used by the Prosecutor reinforce the essence of his statements: individuals who bear criminal responsibility for committing the atrocity crimes in Ukraine should be brought to justice.

A further study of the prosecutor's discourse in the trial of the International Criminal Court and the study of the prosecutor's discourse based on the material of the situations in other regions of the world in a comparative perspective is considered promising since the International Criminal Court has experience in prosecuting war criminals.

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