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## **Council of Europe: Strasbourg, Parliamentary Assembly holds minute of silence for victims of sexual violence in conflicts**

A minute of silence marked the opening of the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg today. On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is celebrated today across the world, the pan-European body paused to remember the women and children victims of such crimes in Ukraine. The plenary session, which will end on 23 June, will focus again on Ukraine in a “joint urgent debate on the political consequences of Russia’s aggression” which will also address the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes in the Paris 2024 Olympics. The challenges faced by Belarusians in exile will be another topic for discussion, following the speech of Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, leader of the Belarusian democratic opposition. Under the “urgent debate” procedure, the issue of ensuring free and safe access through the Lachin Corridor has also entered the agenda. Guest speakers during these days will include the President of Slovenia Nataša Pirc Musar and Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó. Migration will also be discussed, with a special focus on “the integration of migrants and refugees; the social inclusion of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons through sport; and the health and social protection of undocumented workers or those in an irregular situation”.

Sarah Numico