

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
ON THE
EVACUATION OF ZAMBIAN NATIONALS FROM UKRAINE

Madam Speaker, I wish to, first of all, thank you for this opportunity to update the House on a matter of absolute importance and also to apprise the House on the measures that the Government has undertaken in order to ensure the safety and security as well as the evacuation of our nationals in Ukraine.

Madam Speaker, as this House may be aware, on 24th February, 2022, following the unfortunate turn of events in Ukraine, Mr Hakainde Hichilema, President of the Republic of Zambia, directed that our nationals are evacuated. This was preceded by a physical assessment that was carried out by our mission and embassy in Moscow on 17th February, 2022. The staff at our embassy took stock, engaged and advised the Zambian community of the necessary precautionary security measures that had to be undertaken.

Madam Speaker, following that assessment and directive from the President, a detailed evacuation plan was put in place by the relevant arms of Government and they included the following:

- (a) creation of a media platform by the embassy where all Zambians in Ukraine were encouraged to join. This platform has been providing our nationals with the relevant up-to-date information and a strategy for their evacuation;
- (b) securing of a plane in Warsaw, Poland, by the Government in order to transport safely our nationals, following the closure of public transport and airports in Ukraine;
- (c) establishment of a rendezvous point in a city called Lviv on the Western side of Ukraine;

- (d) process of planning the movement of our nationals from Lviv towards the Polish border in Hrebenne;
- (e) the embassy in Moscow has been painstakingly coordinating the movement of our nationals within Ukraine while our Zambian staff from the embassy in Berlin, Germany, has been stationed at the Polish border since last Saturday to receive our nationals. In addition, our honorary consul to Poland has been at the border since Friday to provide the much needed support to our nationals and also, to facilitate immigration procedures;
- (f) the Government also arranged for the waiver of visas for our nationals into Poland; and
- (g) those closer to the border with Russia are being coordinated and assisted by our staff in Moscow through our embassy in Russia.

Madam Speaker, as indicated in various statements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, specifically on 22nd, 24th, 26th and 28th February, 2022, we have 141 known Zambian nationals in Ukraine. Out of this number, twenty-seven have opted to remain in Ukraine having integrated in that society over many years. Therefore, those of our nationals scheduled for evacuation come to a total of 114.

Madam Speaker, certainly the Zambian Government has evacuated so far out of Ukraine, eighty of our nationals who are accommodated in a conducive facility in Warsaw, Poland, where the Government has also ensured the provision of warm food and other necessities to our nationals.

Madam Speaker, most of these Zambian nationals are students. Therefore, our students were being evacuated, first of all, out of Lviv, where the Government organised buses, which took them to the border at Hrebenne. All our nationals have been facilitated to the border safely following the waiver of visas.