



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

**9357<sup>th</sup>** meeting

Friday, 23 June 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

*President:* Mrs. Nusseibeh . . . . . (United Arab Emirates)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Moretti
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Ishikane
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Kumanga
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Czechia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

**Ms. DiCarlo:** As we are all only too aware, the killing, destruction and suffering continue unabated in Ukraine. Sixteen months since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, the prospects for peace remain desperately dim. Indeed, since the last time I briefed the Council on Ukraine (see S/PV.9243), the war has escalated and become more fluid and unpredictable.

The impact of the intensifying violence on civilians remains our gravest concern. Russian missile barrages and drone attacks across Ukraine nearly tripled in May. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recorded 24,862 civilian casualties to date. The breakdown is as follows — 9,083 civilians killed, including 530 children, and 15,779 injured, including 1,086 children. That means that since my previous briefing, 2,131 civilians have been confirmed killed. The actual figures are likely considerably higher. Since February 2022, OHCHR has also verified a total of 1,036 attacks affecting educational and medical facilities, of which 649 occurred on territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, 301 on territory occupied by the Russian Federation and 86 on territory that was contested at the time of the attack. The World Health Organization has

verified more than 1,000 cases of attacks on health-care objects, causing 101 deaths and 139 injuries. Of those, 898 incidents affected health-care facilities and 273, health supplies. Most of the attacks involved the use of heavy weapons. Additionally, UNESCO has verified damage to 260 sites since February 2022, including 112 religious sites, 22 museums, 94 buildings of historic significance, 19 monuments, 12 libraries and one archive.

The most significant destruction of civilian infrastructure to date took place on 6 June, when the Kakhovka dam was damaged. While the exact circumstances remain unclear, it is a catastrophe that will have massive adverse consequences. Some 80 communities along the Dnipro River were reportedly flooded, with tens of thousands of people directly affected. Dozens have lost their lives. The Kakhovka reservoir — one of Europe's largest, and a source of drinking water for at least 700,000 people — has lost 70 per cent of its capacity, according to Ukrainian authorities. Concerns continue to mount about the possibility that the floodwaters could shift landmines into previously cleared areas, further endangering lives. Damaged sewer systems and a lack of clean water heighten the risk of waterborne diseases. Inundated farmland is a further blow to the already beleaguered agriculture and food-production sector. The United Nations is already engaged in assessing the extent of the environmental and ecological needs resulting from this human-made catastrophe. As reported by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is planning to resume pumping water that remains accessible, despite a major loss of volume in the Kakhovka reservoir. However, the safety and security situation at the plant is extremely fragile. Any threat to the plant or other sensitive infrastructure is dangerous and unacceptable.

As part of its immediate response to the incident, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners have rushed to deliver supplies and evacuation support for hundreds of thousands in the affected area. The United Nations country team has been fully mobilized in that vital effort, in close cooperation with the Ukrainian authorities and local partners. We are deeply disturbed by reports that evacuating civilians and emergency personnel have been shelled. There are still people we are unable to reach, especially in low-lying communities under Russian control. The Russian Federation has so far declined our request to go into those areas. The United

Nations will continue to seek the necessary access. We urge the Russian authorities to act in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law and to ensure safe and unfettered access to all areas in need. Aid cannot be denied to people who need it.

We are also concerned about the reported damage to the Togliatti-Odesa pipeline, the world's largest ammonia conduit, in Ukraine's Kharkiv region. The circumstances of the incident remain unclear. Let me say it again. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international law. All such attacks must stop immediately, whether they are on Ukrainian, Russian or Russian-controlled territory.

The United Nations continues to monitor and report on human rights violations and to support efforts toward accountability. To date, OHCHR has documented 158 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, with the majority committed by members of Russia's armed forces or its penitentiary system personnel. We remain deeply concerned about the cases of forcible transfers of protected persons, including children, to areas of Ukraine under Russian control, and their consequent deportation to Russia. That critical issue, which is affecting the most vulnerable, needs to be addressed urgently, prioritizing the reunification of families. Separately, we welcome the continued efforts by the parties to enable the return of prisoners of war and urge both sides to fulfil their obligations regarding the treatment of prisoners of war and other detainees. Accountability for all violations of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law remains of paramount importance.

Since its signing in July last year, the Black Sea Grain Initiative has enabled the safe transportation of more than 32 million metric tons of foodstuffs, helping to drive down global food prices. More than half of what has been exported has gone to developing countries. We are, however, disappointed by the slowing pace of the implementation of the Initiative. Food exports through the maritime humanitarian corridor have dropped from a peak of 4.2 million metric tons in October 2022 to 1.3 million metric tonnes in May, the lowest since the Initiative began. We urge that all obstacles be removed to ensure the continuation of the agreement. The United Nations is also fully committed to supporting the implementation of the memorandum of understanding on Russian food and fertilizer exports.

Before war began, we consistently warned about the impact of a major conflict in Ukraine and the effect it could have on the region and beyond. The recent developments are not assuring in that regard. The announced deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, for example, and the accompanying rhetoric, have further increased regional tensions. We urge all involved to act responsibly and in accordance with international obligations. We reiterate that any threat to use nuclear weapons is unacceptable.

As the conflict has intensified, there have also been increased diplomatic efforts and initiatives by Member States seeking de-escalation and calling for a peaceful settlement. The United Nations stands ready to support all meaningful efforts to bring a just and sustainable peace to Ukraine. We are guided in that by the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, as the Secretary-General emphasized during his visit to Ukraine in March and as I reiterated last week in Moscow.

This war has created a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe, traumatized a generation of children and accelerated the global food and energy crises. It has weakened the international collective security system that we have all pledged to uphold. We cannot discount further dangerous knock-on effects. An end to the war, founded on international law and the Charter, is the surest way to ensure that the tremendous suffering of the past 16 months will cease.

**The President:** I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mr. Hoxha (Albania):** I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her in-depth and, as always, professional briefing on the current developments in Ukraine.

Today is day 485 of the special — brutal — military aggression in Ukraine. The devastating consequences of that unprovoked and unjustified war need no further explanation. Ms. DiCarlo just provided an updated list. Civilian casualties are added on a daily basis. Millions of people are still refugees in neighbouring countries, and many others are internally displaced. War crimes and crimes against humanity, including conflict-related sexual violence, have been meticulously documented. Residential areas and critical civilian infrastructure continue to be under constant attack. Kyiv, the capital,

has been under continued and increased attacks by missiles and illegal Iranian drones — acquired in clear violation of resolution 2231 (2015) — including when foreign dignitaries have been visiting. It happened when the Secretary-General was in Kyiv, and again last week when African leaders were making a case for peace.

We have raised the subject of the tragic situation of children in Ukraine, including their deportation, more than once in our meetings, and it has always been denied. Now, the annual United Nations report on children and armed conflict, just released, has included the Russian military forces and proxy armed groups on its list of shame over the killing and maiming of hundreds of children in Russia's war against Ukraine. It presents shockingly high numbers of attacks on schools and hospitals and protected personnel, and of children killed, abducted, recruited or sexually abused by the Russian forces and affiliated armed groups. No one should be surprised. It is just one of the chapters of the dark reality of this horrible war.

We have called constantly for the war to stop, for reason to prevail and for a return to diplomacy and dialogue. Our calls have been ignored. We see no signs from the Kremlin of any desire to change course. It remains defiant, including by infusing a great deal of noisy talk about the possible use of nuclear weapons into various Russian media and talk shows while it has started to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

But there is worse. The Russian Parliament's lower house, the State Duma, recently approved legislation that would pardon convicted criminals who volunteer to join Russian forces fighting in Ukraine. The practice of recruiting prisoners and criminals and throwing them into the war in Ukraine as cannon fodder was first adopted by the Wagner Group. It was shocking, but that was Wagner — a mercenary force. Now it is the turn of the Russian army to do the same. In the early days of the aggression last year, we were lectured about the virtues of the Russian armed forces, who it was said would never commit sexual crimes. Much has happened since then. The United Nations and human rights groups have unquestionably documented terrible crimes, including rape, committed by the Russian forces in Ukraine. But putting criminals, killers and rapists in regular uniform — people who had been removed from the streets as a danger to the society — and giving them weapons and a licence to kill represents more than mere danger. It indicates that the Russian army is being Wagnerized. Given the terrible record of the

Wagner Group in Ukraine and many other parts of the world, the reputation of the Russian army will hardly be improved. The war is changing many things, including Russia itself, but not for the better.

Two days ago, at the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in London, the international community renewed its commitment to full support for Ukraine and its people. The World Bank has estimated that more than \$400 billion is needed today to rebuild Ukraine. Had there been no war, those billions would have been used elsewhere, for other purposes — to mitigate climate-change effects or to feed more of the people who are in dire need everywhere, including primarily in the Global South. But the reality is that Russia has destroyed or damaged 1,500 hospitals and health-care facilities. It has destroyed or damaged 10 per cent of Ukraine's education institutions and 50 per cent of its power-generation infrastructure. Close to 2.5 million people need new homes and 30 per cent of Ukraine's territory has been contaminated by landmines and shells. All of that is going on right now, making the scale of destruction unlike anything seen in Europe since the Second World War. That is why the madness that has lasted far too long must stop. From a political, moral and legal perspective, Russia will be held accountable for its war of choice and should pay for the human and physical damage caused to the Ukrainian people. In that respect, we welcome the establishment of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine at Eurojust, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation in The Hague.

A few days ago, Russia announced its intention to hold elections in September in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. We reiterate our position whereby we do not recognize any territories acquired by force or their attempted annexation. Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol belong to Ukraine. A permanent member of the Security Council knows that any attempt to legitimize illegal control of the territory of another country is a clear violation of sovereignty, international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me conclude with a very bizarre and unfortunately true fact. Last week a statue of Slobodan Milošević, known as the butcher of the Balkans, was unveiled in Moscow's Europe Square by people close to the Kremlin. Those who hope to perpetuate Milošević's memory for posterity should know that

he was responsible for the bloody break-up of the former Yugoslavia — the last war in Europe before Russia took up the baton. He was directly responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of Bosnians, Croats and Kosovo Albanians, and for the ethnic cleansing of more than 3 million people. He was surrendered to the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia — a tribunal created by the Security Council — and indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. He died alone, in prison. A few kilogrammes of bronze will not turn Milošević into a hero, but it is sad to think that from now on, whoever wants to honour and glorify a war criminal can make a pilgrimage to Moscow.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing today.

Moments ago, I stood with Ukraine, France, the United Kingdom and Albania to call out Russia and Iran's flagrant violations of resolution 2231 (2015). We know that the Kremlin has procured hundreds of uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) and is now working with Iran to produce those weapons inside Russia. And we know that in recent weeks, the Kremlin has used those UAVs to destroy Ukrainian infrastructure and to kill and terrorize civilians. The United Nations must implement resolution 2231 (2015). We still have no explanation as to why experts from the 2231 team have not been dispatched to Ukraine to review evidence of the origins of those weapons and the destruction they have caused. The United Nations must act with urgency. It is a matter of life and death for the Ukrainian people.

Russia's cruel and relentless attacks have left millions of homes in Ukraine without light, heat or water, and recent strikes in Kherson have killed civilians, including aid workers delivering assistance to those fleeing the floods created by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. As we speak, Russia is blocking the United Nations from getting aid to people in the flooded areas. That is unacceptable. Russia must immediately allow the United Nations to deliver desperately needed humanitarian assistance to occupied areas of Ukraine. Humanitarian workers must have safe passage as they deliver aid and assistance to those in need — full stop.

Moscow publicly feigns deep concern about attacks on critical infrastructure and has called Security Council meetings to try to convince us of that. But Russia's hypocrisy is on full display as we watch Russian missiles and drones reduce entire Ukrainian

cities to rubble. And for what? President Putin is hell-bent on beating a foreign country into submission, but the Ukrainian people will never, ever give up their sovereignty, democracy or freedom. President Putin thought his forces would march into Ukraine with little or no resistance, but he was wrong. The Ukrainian people have demonstrated remarkable bravery and grit. President Putin thought he would face no consequences from the international community. After that, he hoped the international community would tire of his war and simply move on. But there too he was wrong.

More than 140 countries have repeatedly voted to condemn Russia's war of choice and more than 140 voted to support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on United Nations principles. To that end, all efforts to broker peace must be rooted in the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inherent right to self-defence enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. All of us here would insist on the same if we were in Ukraine's place, and of course peace requires good-faith efforts on the part of all parties. Let us not forget that on the very day that President Zelenskyy presented his peace formula to the Group of 20 last year, Russia unleashed missile strikes across Ukraine. Let us not forget that Russia carried out an air strike on Kyiv when the Secretary-General was visiting Ukraine in April. And as we heard just last week, when a delegation of African leaders travelled to Kyiv in pursuit of peace, they were greeted by a barrage of Russian missiles. Let us therefore not "both-sides" this issue. Russia has demonstrated no meaningful interest in negotiating for peace.

There must be a sustained, united clarion call for President Putin to end his brutal war of aggression, because the longer the war goes on, the more the Ukrainian people will suffer and the more the world will suffer. After all, the effects of this war are now being felt around the world. Why? It is because President Putin has used food as a weapon of war, and in doing so has exacerbated global food insecurity. For a long time, Russia blocked Ukrainian grain from leaving the Black Sea — grain that helps feed so much of the world, especially in Africa and the Middle East. That is what makes the Black Sea Grain Initiative such a critical arrangement, and one that we must extend next month for the benefit of all. And that is why it is deeply troubling that Russia is once again the only country threatening to withdraw from the Initiative. As the new



harvest begins in Ukraine and Russia, the arrangement becomes even more important.

We must urge Russia to stay in the Black Sea Initiative. We must shine a bright light on Member States that violate Security Council resolutions, including through the timely investigation of those violations. We must continue to hold Russia accountable for its crimes against the Ukrainian people, and to call on Russia to silence its guns and embrace diplomacy. Until it does, the United States will continue to support Ukraine in its principled self-defence against Russia's savage attacks. Caving into Moscow's aggression would endanger every single country — big and small, new and old — all of us. We must never let war become a viable path for redrawing international borders. We must uphold the Charter and international peace and security, and we must continue to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Today marks a year and four months since the start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The Ukrainian people have been fighting ever since for their sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are protected under the Charter of the United Nations. But more importantly, they have been fighting for their own lives, family, friends and peace, all of which were suddenly broken by Russia. Here and now, we reaffirm our resolute solidarity with and support for Ukraine. We once again express our deepest sympathies for their loss and suffering to all who have been affected by the collapse of the dam at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, which has destroyed the efforts of Ukrainians working strenuously for the future. We are profoundly concerned about the reported shelling during the evacuation and about Russia's denial of access for United Nations humanitarian aid to areas affected, as the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Denise Brown, has confirmed.

In response to the crisis, Japan immediately decided to provide \$5 million in emergency humanitarian assistance in such areas as food, water, sanitation and health care through the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We sincerely hope that our assistance, together with that of others, will be delivered swiftly and without hindrance to the people in need. In addition,

Japan will provide approximately 160 water purifiers, 30 drain pumps, 4,000 plastic water containers and 20 large water tanks through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, along with 530 generators and 30 construction machines, as well as awareness-raising activities related to mine action for local people through the United Nations Development Programme.

Russia's aggression has had a negative impact on people all over the world, and we are taking steps to support partners worldwide as they respond to the suffering that it has caused. We are also building on the success of our efforts to ensure that Russia will no longer be able to weaponize the availability of energy and food supplies against us and everyone else. Our support for Ukraine will not waver. We will not tire in our commitment to doing everything we can to stop or mitigate the impact of Russia's illegal actions on Ukraine and the rest of the world. In that regard, the Black Sea Grain Initiative must continue without delay.

Japan values the serious engagement efforts of many countries and their leaders, including those of Africa, to realize peace in Ukraine. We would like to underline that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace cannot be realized without the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russia's troops and military equipment. That is the demand of the General Assembly and should accordingly be included in any call for peace. Peace must be based on the principles of the Charter, and in that regard, an unjust peace that defies the Charter would be a victory for the aggressor. Any attempt to change the status quo of territory by force or coercion must be rejected anywhere it occurs in the world. Other Member States should also refrain from supporting the aggression, directly or indirectly.

Belarus recently announced that it has started taking delivery of Russian tactical nuclear weapons. Japan condemns Russia's threat to use nuclear weapons as a serious and unacceptable menace to the peace and security of the international community. The 77-year record of the non-use of nuclear weapons must not be broken. We urge Russia and Belarus to refrain from any action that could increase tensions.

It is Russia that initiated the unprovoked aggression. It must stop the aggression right here and now. Nothing but ending the aggression can eliminate the root cause of the immense suffering. There must be no impunity for war crimes or other atrocities. Justice must be

done, and those who are responsible for the undeniable atrocities must be held accountable.

**Mr. Kumanga** (Mozambique): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing and acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at this meeting.

Since the start of this conflict, a year and a half ago, the Security Council has held more than 100 formal and informal meetings on the subject, including Arria Formula meetings, attesting to the gravity of the situation we are facing. We must admit the reality that despite repeated calls for a cessation of hostilities, compromise, dialogue and a return to the negotiating table, the conflict continues unabated. An alarming downward spiral is taking hold of the confrontation, manifest in the form of a dangerous arms race, millions of refugees and internally displaced people and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, which has created a dire humanitarian situation. That is taking place against a backdrop of increasing pessimism with regard to the ability of our multilateral peace and security architecture to cope with multiple security challenges, and of questions about its legitimacy and whether it is still fit for purpose. Despite several goodwill attempts at negotiation, most notably the recent initiative by some African Heads of State and Government, they have been met with scepticism and quickly dismissed as unsuitable non-starters. That is a testament to the high level of mistrust between the contending parties without whom attempts at peace are condemned to fail.

Cognizant of the unwillingness of the parties concerned to seek a politically negotiated solution, it is Mozambique's firm conviction, born out of its own journey towards peace and national reconciliation, that all avenues to bring the conflict to an end must genuinely be explored.

Needless to say, the price of war in humankind's history has been always more expensive than the price of peace. For that purpose, it is fundamental to give the force of reason a chance, rather than the reason of force. In fact, the conflict has gone too far and has brought us to this dangerous juncture. The potential of miscalculated decisions by nations involved directly and indirectly in the war moving forward may have disastrous and unimaginable consequences for the entire world.

No solutions, however, will bear fruits without genuine political will from the main parties and their

supporters to engage in negotiations. Only their good faith and genuine intent to save lives and, indeed, the entire humankind can stop the war.

It is against that background that Mozambique reiterates its call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and a return to direct negotiations between the parties as a matter of urgency and in full respect for the Charter of the United Nations and the Council's decisions in relevant matters of peace and security.

**Mr. Moretti** (Brazil): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for the update on the impacts of the conflict on the Ukrainian population. We deeply regret the thousands of deaths officially recorded by the Office of the High Representative for Human Rights since February 2022 and deplore the continuing destruction of Ukraine's civilian infrastructure. Brazil extends its solidarity to the families of the victims and reaffirms its support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We share the disappointment of others with the absence of dialogue between the parties and the insistence on the pursuit of a military solution. We are concerned about the intensification of fighting along the front lines and the placement of nuclear weapons in a non-nuclear-weapon State. We reiterate our deep concern about the risks to the integrity of the nuclear facilities in Zaporizhzhya, especially after the rupture of the Kakhovka dam. Avoiding damage to the nuclear power plant is imperative. Brazil urges the parties to collaborate to ensure the supply of water for cooling the reactors and spent fuel.

We also echo the call by the Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, Ms. Denise Brown, for Russian authorities to facilitate access to areas under their control. The rupture of the Kakhovka dam endangered thousands of people on both sides of the Dnipro River, who depend on humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations.

In recent weeks, the voices of members of the international community in favour of an immediate cessation of hostilities have multiplied. Brazil followed with great interest the visit of African leaders to Kyiv and Moscow. We endorse the words of President Macky Sall of Senegal: even in the midst of fighting, it is necessary to keep open the channels of dialogue. Otherwise, it will not be possible to escape the trap of espousing a purely military logic.

Brazil supports the proposals of a de-escalation of hostilities, an exchange of prisoners of war and peace negotiations based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations that take into account the legitimate security concerns of all parties. It is also essential to bear in mind the adverse impacts the conflict has on third countries due to the increased prices of food and agricultural inputs.

As South African President Cyril Ramaphosa pointed out a few days ago, the conflict is affecting Africa negatively. The same applies to other regions, including my own, Latin America and the Caribbean. Due consideration must be given to calls for normalization of the grain and fertilizer trade.

Sustainable peace cannot result from the imposition of unilateral terms, under the coercion of arms, on either side. We urge the parties to avoid entrenching themselves in their positions. The policy of isolation and the imposition of unilateral sanctions have already demonstrated their limits. We encourage the parties to explore alternative paths, starting with a cessation of hostilities and the resumption of direct negotiations.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

In the light of the current state of the Ukraine crisis, China wishes to stress the following points.

First, every effort must be made to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. For some time now, the fighting in Ukraine has continued to escalate, with an ever-clearer trend of expansion and significantly greater uncertainties. The destruction of the Kakhovka dam once again reminds us that, if the fighting drags on, there will be only more major risks and any horrible scenario could materialize. We hope that both parties to the conflict will stay calm and exercise restraint and that the international community will refrain from escalating the tensions, in particular strictly safeguard the bottom line of nuclear safety and stay far away from the red line of nuclear war. Everything must be done to avoid a point of no return.

Secondly, every effort must be made to alleviate the suffering of the people. China once again calls upon the parties concerned to strictly abide by international humanitarian law; strictly fulfil the obligations to protect civilians; guarantee the safety of women, children and other vulnerable groups; and respect the

basic rights of prisoners of war. We encourage the international community and humanitarian agencies to step up their assistance to populations affected by the crisis on the basis of adhering to the principles governing humanitarian aid.

Thirdly, every effort must be made to manage the spillover effects. China is seriously worried about the impacts of the Ukraine crisis on the recovery of the world economy and in particular the achievement by developing countries of the Sustainable Development Goals in the post-pandemic era. We call upon all parties to join efforts to reduce the negative impact of the crisis and keep global industrial and supply chains stable, and we urge relevant countries to immediately lift the so-called unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction. The Black Sea Grain Initiative should be implemented in a balanced, comprehensive and effective manner, and the memorandum of understanding signed between the United Nations and Russia should be implemented in earnest.

Fourthly, every effort must be made to promote dialogue and negotiation. Recently, a peace delegation consisting of the leaders of six African countries, including South Africa, visited Ukraine and Russia, which China welcomes. We hope that peace-loving and justice-upholding countries in the world will send rational messages in promotion of peace talks. However significant the difficulties, the door to the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis must not be closed, efforts to stop the fighting and promote talks must not relent, and the process of diplomatic negotiations must not stall. It is important to work to encourage all parties to enhance engagement, build consensus, form the broadest common ground and gradually accumulate and create conditions for the final settlement of the crisis.

In relation to the Ukraine issue, China has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be upheld. The purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter should be observed, the legitimate security concerns of all parties should be valued, and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported. China will continue to work with the international community and play an active and constructive role in promoting the political settlement of the Ukraine issue.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and for all her efforts.



A few weeks ago, the Secretary-General reminded us that international humanitarian law makes all the difference between life and death, between restraint and anarchy. I regret that, since then, the truth of these words has been sadly confirmed once again in Ukraine, in the context of Russian military aggression. In recent weeks, continuous Russian missile attacks have again hit residential areas in several Ukrainian cities. I repeat that civilian lives and infrastructure must be protected. Switzerland condemns all indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks. The perpetrators must be brought to justice.

In addition to the protection afforded to civilian property, structures and installations containing dangerous forces benefit from special protection. Switzerland is therefore deeply concerned about the humanitarian, ecological and economic consequences of the flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. The lack of drinking water is compounded by a host of other challenges, including the risk posed by mines and explosive remnants of war displaced by water, which complicate the delivery of humanitarian aid and humanitarian mine clearance. We welcome the ongoing efforts of humanitarian actors, including the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and local actors, to help all those affected. We urge the Russian Government to act in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law and allow and facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to Ukrainian territories currently under its control.

The destruction of the dam illustrates the risks that continued Russian military aggression poses to infrastructure, with disastrous consequences for the civilian population. It also increases the risk of further escalation, including a nuclear incident. Switzerland welcomes the continued commitment of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to protecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and other nuclear facilities in Ukraine. We reaffirm our practical, financial and political support for the IAEA's work. We call on Russia and Ukraine to strictly respect international humanitarian law protecting civilian objects and structures and facilities containing dangerous forces, and to commit to the five principles established by the IAEA.

While our attention is focused on the immediate challenges, we must nonetheless think of the future and keep hope alive. Switzerland welcomes the solidarity

expressed at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London this week. With the cycle of conferences, we are determined to offer better prospects to the Ukrainian people. It is essential that reconstruction takes place in a participatory and transparent manner, as underlined by the Lugano principles. In parallel with this show of support, Switzerland is closely monitoring the various undertakings aimed at advancing peace in Ukraine. For us, compliance with the principles of the United Nations Charter is the basic requirement in these considerations.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative has shown that the involvement of third-party actors with all parties can help mitigate the negative effects of war. We must build on and develop this experience. We regret that the trend is moving in the opposite direction and call on the parties to redouble their efforts to find a lasting solution. Switzerland is always ready to offer its good offices if the parties so wish.

Respect for international law is the only way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. I therefore reiterate today our appeal to Russia to cease all hostilities and withdraw all its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

It has been nearly 500 days since Russia's illegal and barbaric full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Let us again take stock of its impacts.

Russia's air strikes have reduced towns and cities to rubble. More than 9,000 civilians have been killed, including more than 500 children. Many thousands have been injured. Millions have been displaced, unable to return to their homes. Families have been torn apart, with children taken from their parents and sent to far-flung corners of Russia.

Wherever Putin's Government has attempted to take control of Ukraine, it has shown its true colours: a pattern of torture, killings and brutal repression of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Last week, Russia rejected pleas from the United Nations to assist those in desperate need in the aftermath of the catastrophic destruction of the Kakhovka dam.

This is a war of choice for President Putin. He has shown contempt and disregard for Russia's obligations under the United Nations Charter. He is indifferent to

the cost to Ukrainians, to Russians and to the world. He fires missiles at Kyiv even as world leaders visit Moscow seeking to build peace. He supplies his armies from United Nations-sanctioned States such as Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, further undermining global security.

He continues to hold the world's food to ransom by holding up grain shipments under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The World Bank has estimated that Ukraine's reconstruction needs are over \$400 billion. Russia's destruction adds more pressure to the global economy, already suffering from conflict, climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic.

The world needs peace. But Ukraine will never have peace while Russian forces remain on its territory. We therefore call on Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine and end this illegal war of aggression. At the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London this week, my Prime Minister paid tribute to Ukraine's incredible spirit — a spirit of strength and defiance, but also of ingenuity and innovation.

We will stand with the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes for them to win a just and sustained peace that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in line with the United Nations Charter. And we will also stand with them as they win the peace and rebuild a country shattered by Russia's aggression.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

The bloody violence and human suffering remain unsustainable in the intensifying fighting in Ukraine, despite the peace initiative of African Heads of State, the objective of which continues to be paving a path towards de-escalation and dialogue between the belligerent parties. The humanitarian situation has worsened in recent weeks following the destruction of the Kakhovka dam and the severe floods that ensued, resulting in the evacuation of thousands of people and extensive material damage.

According to the latest statistics of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees regarding verified civilian victims, the number of deaths stands at 9,093 and the wounded stands at 15,779. The civilian population and infrastructure continue to be the targets of direct shelling, and we repeat our appeal to the warring parties to cease these blind and indiscriminate

attacks and bombings. We also call on the parties to facilitate the access of humanitarian workers to people who need urgent help, especially in the areas affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam.

The latest report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme warns of the risk of deteriorating food security between June and November. The outlook is very bleak, with 22 countries at risk of housing 18 hotspots of famine. The rising food prices caused by the conflict has contributed to weakening low- and middle-income countries. The most affected are those already facing security challenges or armed conflicts. Statistics show that some international aid is indeed already being diverted to Ukraine.

Allowing this war to continue is to ensure that there will be more civilian casualties — more women and children plunged into grief and more lives shattered by war and exile. My country continues to express its rejection of the war and calls on the parties to respect international humanitarian law. The warring parties must refrain from using weapons with indiscriminate effects against civilians and from shelling critical infrastructure. We also reiterate our appeal to the parties to not use civilian infrastructure for military purposes. We eagerly await peace initiatives and mediation offers that can offer a path towards a diplomatic solution. The Black Sea Grain Initiative leads us to believe that diplomacy always prevails in the end.

We commend the work that United Nations agencies continued to undertake on the ground to assist and protect civilians, and we recognize the important role of the International Committee of the Red Cross to assist people suffering in Ukraine and beyond, particularly in its actions with regard to prisoners of war.

Finally, my country once again calls on the parties to prioritize dialogue with a view to resolving the conflict. We remain convinced that there is no credible alternative to dialogue and negotiation to ultimately achieve a cessation of hostilities and restore peaceful coexistence between the belligerent parties.

**Ms. Oppong-Ntiri** (Ghana): I join the previous speakers in thanking Under Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her informative briefing. We thank her for reaffirming the Organization's commitment to support efforts aimed at finding a lasting solution to the raging conflict in Ukraine and providing the needed humanitarian support.

From the beginning of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, the United Nations, through its agencies and partners, have performed the indispensable function of providing life-saving humanitarian aid and assistance to the suffering people of Ukraine, and we are very appreciative of their efforts.

Ghana continues to be deeply concerned about the unfolding circumstances in several regions of Ukraine. We regret that despite the many calls for the protection of civilians from harm, they still remain targets of missile and drone attacks. Civilians, on a daily basis, suffer the consequences of a war they never asked for. From the onset of the war in February 2022 to 4 June this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has recorded no less than 24,000 civilian casualties, with close to 9,000 people killed and some 15,000 more injured. Those numbers, along with the widespread destruction of infrastructure across Ukraine, point to the gravity and abject futility of the war and reinforce the urgency of action needed to end it now rather than later.

Over the past month, we also witnessed a complex mix of challenges brought about by the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric dam. Our fears of negative environmental and social impacts are being borne out as communities reliant on the dam for their water supply face challenges in accessing potable water. Reports also indicate the heightened risk of water-borne and hygiene-related diseases, as well as food security and livelihood challenges.

It is a difficult task to chronicle the myriad suffering brought about by the war. Even more distressing is the growing intensity of hostilities as the parties remain polarized on a political settlement. With regard to our mandate of the maintenance of international peace and security, we cannot be despondent; rather, with unity of purpose, we must work together to restore the hope of peace to the people of Ukraine.

During the Ukraine Recovery Conference, held over the past two days in the United Kingdom, massive expressions of support and pledges have been made towards Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction, which now runs into billions of dollars. Such support, at a time when the aggression is still ongoing, demonstrates a persevering commitment by the international community to a new dawn of peace and prosperity in Ukraine.

We remain convinced that those shared aspirations can be attained by bringing into play the full range of tools for the pacific settlement of conflicts offered under the Charter of the United Nations. It is for that reason that we have consistently advocated for dialogue and diplomacy as the best channels for reaching a comprehensive, sustainable and durable peace between the two countries.

We once more urge respect for the rules of international law and the principles and core values of the Charter of the United Nations. We further urge the parties to commit to engaging in constructive dialogue in good faith and with a view to narrowing down their differences.

While reiterating calls for the cessation of hostilities, we remind the parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law to refrain from causing deliberate harm to civilians and avoid the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure.

With regard to nuclear safety and security, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency has warned that the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is extremely fragile and reiterated the call on the warring parties to adhere to basic principles designed to prevent a nuclear incident that would be catastrophic for Ukraine and the world at large. We therefore align ourselves with all demands to restore the integrity of the power plant and appeal to the parties to ensure compliance with the five basic principles for protecting the plant during the military conflict, as outlined by the Director-General in the Council in May (see S/PV.9334).

I also wish to express our indignation at reports of ongoing gender abuse and conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls. As we are well aware, the conditions of women and girls in theatres of conflict are traumatizing enough, and for them to be subjected to such abuse is indeed tragic. All efforts must be made to hold the perpetrators of such offensive acts accountable for their actions. Moreover, it is critical that sufficient resources be provided to help victims overcome such ordeals.

As with all other conflict situations, we believe that women's conflict-resolution and peacebuilding capabilities must be harnessed through their full and meaningful participation in peace processes, as that has been established to enhance the success and durability of peace.

Finally, we reiterate our call to the Russian Federation to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbour Ukraine through the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all its troops from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

**Mrs. Frazier (Malta):** I too thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her sobering briefing.

Malta strongly condemns Russia's continued escalation of the war and its blunt disregard for international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. We deplore the continued killing of civilians. The international law is clear. Civilians and civilian infrastructure cannot and must not be targets. As things stand, the number of Ukrainians in need of emergency humanitarian aid and protection has now reached 18 million.

That devastating situation has been further exacerbated by the massive flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam on 6 June, which left behind a still uncertain number of people killed and injured. More than 700,000 people in Ukraine now face significant shortages of drinking water. The attack has also brought with it irreversible environmental damage, since the Dnipro River has now been contaminated with 150 tons of industrial lubricant. We are deeply concerned about the fact that the Russian Federation has so far declined the request of the United Nations for access to the temporarily occupied areas in order to provide humanitarian assistance to those who need it. We once again urge Russia to comply with its obligations under international law and to spare no effort to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those who are suffering as a result of that destruction. Ensuring accountability for the perpetrators responsible is essential.

Let us also remember that the dropping water levels of the dam affect access to critical cooling water for the reactors of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The risks that the occupation of the nuclear power plant currently poses to nuclear safety and security in Ukraine are a direct consequence of Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked war. Malta calls for the return of full legitimate control over the facility to the competent Ukrainian authorities, including the full demilitarization and de-occupation of the plant as a first and urgent priority. That remains a key prerequisite for restoring nuclear safety and security as well as upholding international law. We remain supportive of the International Atomic Energy Agency's continued

efforts to find a permanent solution for the safety and integrity of the Zaporizhzhya plant.

In addition to the ongoing International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice processes, in May Malta joined the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, set up by the Council of Europe. The devastating impacts of Russia's war on children, women and men will be felt for generations. Cases perpetrated by the Russian Federation of indiscriminate killing of civilians, torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, as well as sexual and gender-based violence and the abduction and forcible deportation of children, have now been widely documented.

I would like to conclude by highlighting the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which extends beyond Ukraine and affects global food security. It will be vital to ensure that the process is further extended and secured beyond July among all the parties to alleviate pressures on food security all over the globe.

Malta strongly believes that there can be no peace without justice. We urge Russia to immediately cease all hostilities and to unconditionally and completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That is the only step that can lead towards a just and lasting peace.

**Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador)** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo for the information she shared and for her briefing.

As Ecuador approaches the end of the first six months as an elected member on the Security Council, we regret that, despite the repeated calls made by my delegation and a majority of other delegations for the Russian Federation to comply with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the decision of the International Court of Justice ordering it to suspend its military operation against Ukraine, that operation is still ongoing. Such an aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State has no place in an international order based on rules and peaceful coexistence among nations. Moreover, it undermines the efforts we are pursuing for a more just and equitable world. We regret that it continues in ignorance of the decisive request by the vast majority of Member States



to put an end to the military occupation, and in the context of the persistent threat of a nuclear disaster in Zaporizhzhya, whose facilities and territory must be unconditionally returned to the Ukrainian people.

We stress the need to cease corrosive narratives and actions that could lead to misinterpretations or miscalculations. We condemn the fact that Russia has started to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. We urge the Russian Federation to allow access for humanitarian personnel and assistance, without restrictions, and to refrain from hindering such efforts, which are vital in this context. We stress the need for parties to comply with international humanitarian law and therefore urge Russia to stop its use of missiles and drones, which have caused and continue to cause extreme harm to the civilian population and critical infrastructure. We see that this war continues to exacerbate the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and weaken the rest of the world, including in terms of food security, against the backdrop of an insane increase in global military spending. While I will address the issue of the supply of arms more broadly at the Council's meeting on 29 June, I feel compelled to reiterate today how serious it is to supply arms in violation of the Council's resolutions, and even more serious when it is done to fuel a war effort.

I want to reiterate my country's support for the efforts of the United Nations in various areas since the beginning of the invasion, including through the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the efforts for the release of prisoners, humanitarian action and nuclear security work, to name but a few examples. The General Assembly has played an exemplary role in upholding the principles of the Charter. We therefore call on the Council to equip the Secretary-General with better tools to deepen the efforts aimed at achieving the peaceful solution that is needed to turn this dark page in humankind's history.

Finally, in order to make progress on a solution through dialogue, it is important to build on our areas of convergence. At the Council's meeting on 30 May (see S/PV.9334), I pointed out that nuclear security was a common component of the various peace proposals and schemes, whether we are talking about President Zelenskyy's 10-point plan or China's 12-point plan. But that is not our only point of convergence. Within the framework of the provisions of General Assembly resolution ES/11-6, adopted on 23 February, on the principles of the Charter underlying a comprehensive,

just and lasting peace in Ukraine, we can and must urge for the guns be silenced.

**Mrs. Jaraud-Darnault (France)** (*spoke in French*): I thank Under-Secretary General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

The Russian invasion was supposed to last a matter of a few days or weeks. But for 16 months Ukraine has been resisting, defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity and keeping Russia at bay on the ground. But Russia refuses to admit it, and every day since 24 February 2022 it has chosen to prolong its war of aggression, whose damaging consequences continue to grow and spread, not only for the Ukrainian people but for the rest of the world as well. Russia has maintained its cynical strategy of destroying Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. The attacks on the capital of Ukraine and other major cities have been relentless. Last Friday, Russia did not hesitate to target Kyiv and the surrounding region at the same time that a mission of African leaders was there to promote a peace initiative. Those strikes were carried out using Russian missiles and Iranian Shahed drones, of which the latter had been transferred in violation of resolution 2231 (2015).

A new threshold was crossed with the destruction of the Kakhovka dam on the night of 5 and 6 June. It is the most serious attack on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure since the start of the conflict, as Mr. Griffiths pointed out at our last meeting (see S/PV.9340). France mobilized efforts from the start in support of the displaced Ukrainians who were directly affected by the destruction of the dam and welcomes the rapid and substantial humanitarian response provided by the United Nations. We call on Russia to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and to allow humanitarian actors access to the territories under its control.

Russia continues to use aggressive nuclear rhetoric that is irresponsible coming from a nuclear-weapon State. A week ago the President of Russia announced that he had made a first transfer of nuclear weapons to Belarus, which aggravates an already unstable situation. At the same time, Russia is continuing its work of turning Belarus into a vassal State, yet another blatant illustration of its imperialist intentions and its efforts to bring a part of Europe under its thumb. As we have repeatedly warned the Council in this Chamber, one of the damaging effects of Russia's aggression is

the worsening food insecurity it has produced in many countries. Russia is running the risk that the first anniversary of the Istanbul agreement, in July, will also be the last, as Russia is threatening to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Such blackmail is unacceptable. Russia must also stop obstructing the operations of the Joint Coordination Centre, whose activity has been significantly reduced since May.

We must continue to support Ukraine in every possible way so that it can conduct an effective counter-offensive and exercise its right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. That support is essential because it is the key to just and lasting peace — in other words, a peace rooted in the Charter of the United Nations and in compliance with international law, and a peace chosen by the Ukrainian people, not dictated by the aggressor. That peace cannot be a ceasefire that would freeze the front line and enshrine Russia's annexation of the territories it has occupied. On 23 February, 141 States expressed their support for that just and lasting peace. The first step is respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity. It is in that spirit that France supports the Ukrainian peace plan.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's meeting is taking place against a remarkable backdrop. For nearly a month now, goaded by its Western sponsors, to whom Ukraine has to account for the effectiveness of its efforts in using the weapons and ammunition they supply it with, the Ukrainian Armed Forces have been conducting a suicidal counter-offensive on Russian positions. It has already cost them tens of thousands of mobilized personnel and several hundred armoured vehicles, while Ukrainian society has dubbed it the "Zaporizhzhya meat-grinder", by analogy to the Bakhmut meat-grinder to which the Kyiv regime sent Ukrainian soldiers to certain death for several months merely to prove to Western arms suppliers that Ukraine could defeat Russia. Of course, they succeeded only in proving the opposite, something that Zelenskyy and his clique are now trying to forget.

They have a rather more serious task now, which is how to turn a total fiasco and a debacle into a victory — the word in Ukrainian is *peremoga*. Washington, London and Brussels have joined forces with them to do that, although they have never given any thought either to Ukraine itself or to its interests. Given everything that has happened, it is now even more obvious that they are interested in Ukraine only as

a tool to weaken or at least restrain Russia. That is why they will not allow the puppet regime in Kyiv to say a word about peace — at least, not until every Ukrainian is dead — just as they would not allow it in March of last year, something that our President discussed in detail at his meeting with African leaders. We will talk more next Thursday about our former Western partners' criminal policies in Ukraine, a subject that is definitely worth a separate meeting.

Turning to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, we should point out the catastrophic consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric plant dam, which will continue to be felt for a very long time both in Ukraine and Russia. Ecosystems have been unrecognizably altered, and that will have a direct impact on the way of life of the people in the regions and do irrevocable damage to the environment, including in the Black Sea. It is clear that those in Kyiv who are responsible for that terrorist attack, being fixated on their famous counteroffensive, are in no way concerned about the interests of their people or the future of their country. In the time that has passed since this tragedy occurred, ever more clear evidence has been emerging that proves not just the Zelenskyy regime's responsibility for the crime but its Western sponsors' as well. As we are all perfectly aware, the Ukrainian Armed Forces can fire the HIMARS weapons systems that were used to destroy the dam only once Washington approves the target. All those facts and the evidence are detailed in our letter, which has been circulated as an official document of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

In that context, we should not fail to note our disappointment with the way our international organization has acted, and continues to act. We warned the Secretary-General about the Kyiv regime's plot regarding the Kakhovka dam as early as in our letter dated 21 October last year. Nothing was done. So where was the much-praised famous United Nations prevention? Where were the essential preventive efforts with Ukraine? Instead, United Nations officials are complaining about a lack of humanitarian access to Russian territories that suffered after the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. I am obliged to clarify the issue in that regard and to remind the Council of some points that the United Nations has either clearly distorted or failed to mention.

Since February 2022, Russia has actively advocated the continuation of international

humanitarian assistance through the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to the civilian population in Donbas, who for several years have been forced by the Kyiv regime to live under fire and in totally isolated conditions. Moscow organized regular cooperation with humanitarian workers and invited colleagues from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. However, in practice the lofty rhetoric of United Nations officials about their desire to help the people in need has led to no concrete efforts or results. The United Nations leadership is not considering and never has considered any alternatives for delivering aid to the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions other than from Kyiv and across the contact line. The main reason for that rigid position is not humanitarian but strictly political. The goal is not to help people who are suffering, but to show that the Kyiv regime allegedly retains control over those territories.

For its part, Russia has consistently drawn the attention of United Nations representatives to the lack of essential security conditions against a backdrop of active combat, high risks of sabotage and provocations and mine contamination, which for all practical purposes makes cross-line access impossible. We have repeatedly offered to consider options for delivering aid from within Russia via established routes that have already been used for supplying Donbas. The United Nations turned down all our proposals, to the advantage of Kyiv and its Western sponsors. Once again, we have to point out these double standards and the blatant politicization of humanitarian tasks. With expressions of concern for the civilian population, a political agenda is being obediently advanced without much remorse.

I should note that after Ukraine blew up the Kakhovka dam, a large-scale humanitarian operation was carried out in the Kherson oblast and the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations saved nearly 2,000 people, including hundreds of children. More than 6,000 people were evacuated from 36 flooded towns. The effectiveness of our efforts was indirectly recognized even in Ukraine, which attempted to use the footage of our operations as its own.

While the Russian Federation is doing its utmost to mitigate the suffering of the residents of the affected areas and provide them with everything they need, the Kyiv authorities have continued to shell civilian facilities. On 10 June, Ukrainian forces hit an evacuation point with British Storm Shadow missiles,

killing one woman. The United Nations has continued to ignore such egregious crimes by the Kyiv regime while attempting to sweep under the rug the destruction of the Togliatti-Odesa ammonia pipeline, which is key to ensuring the uninterrupted export of Russian fertilizer to the global market that the Secretariat claims to care about so much. At the same time, it continues to prop up the Black Sea Grain Initiative, despite its clearly commercial rather than humanitarian nature and despite the fact that the Russian side of the agreement was never implemented. And our exploded pipeline has now eliminated any doubts about that.

Ms. DiCarlo is quick to make accusations about the Russian Federation, but when it comes to the crimes of Ukraine, the Secretariat displays astounding ignorance. Let me remind the Council that the pipeline was destroyed on Ukrainian territory. Or is she trying yet again to blame us for blowing up our own pipeline? We are ready to continue to help developing countries in need with both grain and fertilizers, but we are not going to pay for commercial supplies of grain from Ukraine to rich Western States under the banner of protecting the interests of those in need. Contrary to the assertions of the Under-Secretary-General, the poorest countries have received less than 3 per cent of all the food shipments.

In the face of a failing counter-offensive, the Kyiv regime is resorting to its favourite tactic of trying to attract the attention of the Western community to high-profile crimes or stagings for which the blame is pinned on the Russian Federation. That was the case with Bucha in April 2022, and that is also one of the goals of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. That is why we are extremely alarmed by the increasingly frequent and paranoid statements of the leaders of the Kyiv regime alleging that Russia has mined the Zaporizhzhya power plant and is preparing to blow it up. Its absurdity would have been clear to the mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency led by Director-General Grossi, who recently visited the plant, despite the obstacles created by Ukraine. We would like to think that the Western sponsors of the Kyiv regime will be able to compel reason and prevent a disaster that could affect a large part of Europe. As we have seen many times before, Zelenskyy himself and his clique do not give a damn either about Ukraine or Europe.

If Council members have been paying attention, one of the Kyiv regime's main complaints to its Western sponsors since Ukraine's so-called counteroffensive

began has been the lack of anti-aircraft and missile systems. Curiously, those complaints have coincided with an almost total halt to the reports of Russian missiles and drone attacks allegedly hitting residential buildings and facilities in Ukrainian cities. The most recent such high-profile episode occurred in Odesa on 14 June when a Ukrainian missile fell on the upper floors of a residential building, causing damage and casualties. Such reports have more or less disappeared from the information space, despite the fact that attacks on military infrastructure in Ukrainian cities are taking place almost daily.

All of that confirms something that we have been warning about for a long time and that Ukrainian citizens know very well, which is that the most significant, if not the only, danger to Ukrainian cities is posed by the Ukrainian air defence systems deployed there in violation of international humanitarian law. When they are not there or are moved outside cities, the only things that are blown up are ammunition storage sites, military barracks and other military facilities, as well as energy infrastructure facilities related to supplying Western weapons to the front. Those strikes will continue as part of one of the goals of the special military operation, which is the demilitarization of Ukraine. They have already left Ukraine almost without weapons of its own, and the Kyiv regime is relying almost exclusively on Western supplies. However, we will talk about that in detail on Thursday.

Today a number of countries, and specifically the United States, Albania and the United Kingdom, alleged that the Russian Federation perpetrated another provocation by conducting a missile strike on Kyiv during the visit of the African delegation that had come there to present a peace plan. The African leaders denied the Kyiv regime's claims of rocket attacks on Kyiv during their visit. It was yet another scenario staged by the regime. Allow me to quote a Ukrainian news site.

“The delegation of South Africa, headed by President Ramaphosa, denies a missile strike by the Russian Federation.”

That was announced by the President's spokesperson, Vincent Magwenya. He said that he had been taking a video from his hotel in Kyiv “when the so-called explosion occurred”. Furthermore, he said,

“It's very strange that we didn't hear or see an explosion. There's obviously some deliberate

misinformation being spread here... [While the siren was sounding] people were simply going about their day. As we expected, this mission was not going to be easy, but some of the issues were deeply disturbing while others were outright amusing, like this so-called explosion.”

When asked to clarify whether he denied the explosion in Kyiv, Magwenya answered,

“From my own experience and that of the people I am travelling with, yes, I am disputing it. We were all perplexed when we were taken back to the hotel and passed streets where people were going about their day as normal. It's very strange and is, in a way, deliberate misinformation.”

That is an example of how Ukrainian propaganda and misinformation work and how Kyiv's Western sponsors are happy to spread it further.

Today we are seeing yet more attempts by the United States and its allies to force the Secretariat to carry out a so-called investigation into the alleged supply of Iranian drones for use in Ukraine. We presented our opinions to the press before today's meeting. Briefly, both we and the Iranians categorically deny those fabrications. The Kyiv regime has not presented either us or the Iranians, who agreed to bilateral consultations for that purpose, with even a tiny bit of credible evidence. Attempts to drag the so-called group of resolution 2231 (2015) into this misadventure could run the risk of putting in question the commitment of the Secretariat to Article 100 of the Charter. The group is not a sanctions committee or a panel of experts. Its members were not appointed by Member States as experts in specific aspects of disarmament or other areas. We hope that the Secretary-General is wise enough not to be misled by our former Western partners.

Yesterday our country marked our Day of Remembrance and Sorrow. On that day 82 years ago, fascist Germany attacked the Soviet Union. Some 27 million residents of the Soviet Union perished in the fight against their fascist aggressors. Today, as they did then, German tanks are once again firing on our soldiers in Ukraine, but with one difference, which is that the Nazi regime that has taken hold in Kyiv is backed not just by Germany but by the United States and its NATO allies. What has not changed over the years is their hatred of our country and the desire to inflict a strategic blow on our country, loot our natural resources and enslave our people. But those plans will



never come to be, just as they did not come to be 82 years ago. Because just as they did then, the German tanks and other Western equipment are burning on the Ukrainian steppes alongside the unfulfilled hopes of the newly sprung Nazis and their sponsors that they can vanquish the Russian Federation. And just as they did 80 years ago, they will meet with bitter disappointment.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

I would like to join others in thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her informative briefing, and I welcome Ukraine's participation at today's meeting.

As Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo highlighted, the recent trend of military escalation and the threat of spillover is of huge concern. Both will serve only to cause greater suffering to civilians and create knock-on effects for regional and global stability. She also rightly underlined the importance of political and diplomatic efforts to set the conflict on the path to peace. We urge all actors working towards that end to combine their efforts and to heed her call for the full respect of international humanitarian law throughout the duration of the conflict.

To that end, I want to make two points today. First, we must continue to take meaningful steps towards a political resolution of this war. In her recent visit to Kyiv, the Special Envoy of the United Arab Emirates for Ukraine, Her Excellency Ms. Mariam Almheiri, conveyed to President Zelenskyy our steadfast commitment to a just and peaceful outcome in Ukraine and our support to the country's humanitarian needs. We also welcome the efforts of the Africa Peace Initiative's presidential delegation, which recently visited both Kyiv and Moscow and made a call for peace, demonstrating global support for the stabilization of the world order.

While this conflict remains intractable, today we must engage in the practical steps necessary to alleviate human suffering and engage in trust-building exercises between the two countries. The United Arab Emirates is trying to do its part. We continue to support prisoner-exchange initiatives. We strongly support the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which remains vital for global food security, and we will support its full operationalization with practical measures. Further, we encourage the full implementation of the memorandum

of understanding on Russian fertilizer and food products in the ongoing discussion.

Secondly, the humanitarian situation must remain our clear focus today and in the coming days and the weeks ahead. During her visit, Minister Almheiri had a direct and clear-eyed view of the dire humanitarian situation on the ground in Ukraine. She underlined the unwavering humanitarian support of the United Arab Emirates to all people affected by the conflict. Accordingly, the United Arab Emirates is distributing \$100 million of aid for Ukraine. With 53 per cent of energy facilities in the country affected by the fighting, my country's donation includes generators and light-emitting diode lights for civilians. We are also providing supplies for newborns and babies, as well as a grant of \$4 million for programmes supporting the welfare of orphaned children through the Olena Zelenska Foundation. As the conflict prevents millions of children and students from attending classes, the United Arab Emirates will also donate 2,500 laptops to those affected so that they can benefit from remote learning.

Children must remain the focus of our efforts, and their rights should be upheld and protected at all costs. The weight of war falls heaviest on children. We are dismayed at reports of violations against the children of Ukraine. All parties must meet their obligations for the protection of children caught up in this war. Some 530 have so far already lost their lives and their futures.

We stress once again the importance of humanitarian services reaching all those in need. The safety of humanitarians responding to the Kakhovka dam flooding must be ensured, all parties must comply with their obligations under international law, and we encourage all relevant actors to facilitate the life-saving work of humanitarian actors.

We are also acutely aware of the dark potential of a nuclear accident at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. That has been addressed numerous times in this Chamber, and the name Chernobyl has echoed with good reason. We continue to monitor the situation closely, and we welcome the continued efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including Director-General Grossi's visit last week and the work of the IAEA teams on ground, to avoid a nuclear accident that would have devastating and long-lasting consequences for decades to come.

The United Arab Emirates emphasizes the importance of the continued non-use of nuclear

weapons. The world has avoided their use for the past 77 years. That must be maintained. Nuclear rhetoric is dangerous and destabilizing and undermines efforts to forge peace. We must all see this as a collective red line.

Ultimately, de-escalation, diplomacy and dialogue are the only way forward. None of us could have imagined in March 2022, during the first United Arab Emirates presidency of the Security Council, when the conflict had just started, that we would continue to see significant escalation almost a year later. We urge the international community to redouble all efforts aimed at ensuring that future generations are not scarred by the failure to maintain peace and security on our watch. In the meantime, the United Arab Emirates will continue its humanitarian work and its support for all mediation efforts. We stand ready to assist genuine efforts to bring the war to a just, sustainable end, in line with the United Nations Charter.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I recognize the representative of Putin's regime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union, whose statement today, as usual, was as insincere, perverse and cynical as his war-party leader's goal was a year ago, when he said, according to the Russian official tweet, that

“[t]he goal of Russia's special military operation is to stop any war that could take place on Ukrainian territory or that could start from there.”

Two weeks ago, this criminal regime blew up the dam of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant in an attempt to prevent Ukraine's possible counteroffensive actions across the Dnipro River, which was yet another blatant violation of the International Court of Justice order of 16 March 2022. Since then, Ukraine has done its utmost to mitigate the immediate consequences of this act of terror and ecocide. Evacuating people, providing them with humanitarian aid, ensuring access to drinking water for the local population and preventing infectious diseases have been among the key priorities of my Government.

Systemic work, marked with the engagement of the United Nations and other international actors, has been organized on the right bank of the Dnipro River. At the same time, the Russian occupiers have turned the left bank into a “no-go zone”, closed even to the United

Nations. It is appalling that Russia not only refused to rescue the local population in the affected areas under its temporary military control, but it also declined the United Nations request for access to these areas.

We commend the United Nations humanitarian activities in the Ukraine-controlled part of the Kherson region and support the United Nations efforts to obtain necessary access to the areas temporarily occupied by Russia. To this end, the Government of Ukraine has promptly provided all security guarantees to the United Nations for fulfilling humanitarian operations in the entire affected area. We echo United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine Denise Brown's call on the Russian authorities to act in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law and grant access to people in the occupied territory who urgently need life-saving assistance. The situation there remains critical, and the number of people reported missing so far — 109 persons — may not fully reflect the grim reality.

While Russia simply denies access in the occupied areas, it also tries to undermine humanitarian operations in Ukraine-controlled areas with unabated shelling. For instance, on 20 June, a rescue team of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine came under Russian fire in Kherson. One rescuer was killed, and eight others were wounded. The United Nations in Ukraine characterized this incident as yet another example of the human impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A comprehensive assessment of the implications of this act of terror has yet to be made, although it is clear that we are dealing with one of the biggest human-made disasters in Europe in decades. In particular, oil pollutants that weigh at least 150 tons are drifting along the Dnipro River and may reach the Mediterranean. The Kakhovka reservoir has been decimated, resulting in approximately 95,000 tons of dead fish. Some 500 square kilometres of Ukrainian forests have been flooded, and at least half of them will die. Some of the 20,000 wild animals that inhabited the flooded area could hardly have survived.

It is a matter of alarm that, according to intelligence information, Russia is considering the scenario of a terrorist attack at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant leading to radiation leakage. The dam explosion has made it clear that Russia is ready to apply a scorched-earth tactic in response to the deteriorating military situation on the ground in the captured lands

that they doubt they can hold. We therefore urge the international community to take the threat of this act of nuclear terror seriously and to step up pressure on the Russian Federation to prevent these menacing developments, including but not limited to introducing strengthened restrictive measures against the Russian nuclear industry and military-industrial complex. We also expect an objective assessment by the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Rafael Grossi, regarding Russia's criminal actions.

Only strong and adequate steps aimed at reducing Moscow's capabilities to inflict harm regionally and globally will contribute to resolving the crisis created by Russia. The military defeat of Russia in Ukraine and ensuring accountability for the crime of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity are the necessary elements of this resolution.

Appeasement options, such as territorial concessions to Russia and temporarily freezing the conflict, will serve only as delayed-action mines, with the detonator in the hands of the Kremlin. If such an option is implemented, the resulting explosion, given the damage to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, will reverberate throughout the world.

Any terrorist act aims at intimidating and generating fear. That is precisely how the Kremlin regime attempts to achieve its aggressive goals. Russia has heavily fortified the occupied Ukrainian territory, but it does not believe in its fortification structures or its own troops' resilience.

That is why Russia blew up the dam and mined the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to intimidate the international community. That is why it fills its own army with convicted criminals and deploys blocking units behind the Russian positions, tasking them to give soldiers in the first line of defence no escape from combat. The killing of the Russian soldiers attempting to retreat are evidenced by the testimonies of captured Russians, as well as by video footage taken recently by Ukrainian drones.

In some areas Ukrainian soldiers continue to move forward, despite the heavily fortified occupied areas. In some areas they defend their positions and resist Russia's intensified attacks. Ukraine will liberate all its territories, and it will take as long as necessary, because we value the lives of our soldiers and civilians and do not apply the strategy of human-wave attacks and total destruction of civilian infrastructure.

We appreciate the efforts of nations that express their willingness to contribute to genuine peace, which attest to the persistent validity and credibility of the United Nations Charter. The General Assembly outlined the modalities of such a peace in resolution ES-11/6, entitled "Principles of the United Nations Charter underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine".

Thus far, Russia has not demonstrated any willingness to give up its aggressive path, deliberately insulting nations that come up with peaceful initiatives. Russian cruise and ballistic missiles launched on Kyiv during the visit of the delegation of African leaders showed Russia's real disdain for global efforts to restore peace and to protect the world from aggression.

This attack was but one in an endless line of daily air strikes with missiles, multiple launch rocket systems, guided aerial bombs and Iran-made attack drones, resulting in significant casualties and destruction. As of today, the Russian Federation has launched more than 1,000 Iranian unmanned aerial vehicle systems over the territory of Ukraine.

In a statement delivered today at the media stakeout right before this Security Council meeting, we said that Russia's and Iran's actions violated resolution 2231 (2015) and that the Secretariat of the United Nations must respond to growing calls from the international community to investigate those violations.

Despite the war being at its height, we have already started working on post-war recovery. The Ukraine Recovery Conference, held this week in London, sent a strong political message that Ukraine and its allies have no doubt in the ultimate victory of my country — a victory that will guarantee a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the benefit of all nations.

As my President said when addressing the Conference,

"although no one has the power to cleanse the depths of human nature from the evil that sometimes rises to the surface and destroys and kills ... we are able to protect life and overcome the ruins after the Russian aggression in such a way as to block the path for evil — meaning for any new aggressions ... the world is watching to see if we will restore normal life in such a way that our transformation will land an ideological defeat on the aggressor."

In his speech in Paris just yesterday, Secretary-General Guterres said:

“[i]n 2023, more than 750 million people do not have enough to eat. The coronavirus disease pandemic [COVID-19] and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have exacerbated the situation.”

In fact, Russia is worse than COVID-19. Putin’s regime is cancer, and the world cannot be strong and healthy while its cells continue to spread from Putin’s bunker and form the new tumours around the world and, indeed, in the Security Council, in this very Chamber. It should be removed before it travels further in our blood and kills us. The choice is ours. Let us choose life.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Lithuania.

**Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania):** I deliver this statement on behalf of the Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and the Emirati presidency for the opportunity to address the Council.

Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, aided by Belarus, is ongoing for almost a year and a half now. Innocent people have been killed, injured and displaced from their homes. Families have been torn apart, and children have been orphaned. The physical and emotional scars of the war will be felt for generations to come.

Schools, hospitals and other public facilities have been destroyed, leaving people without access to essential services. According to the World Bank’s assessment — carried out in collaboration with the Ukrainian Government, the European Commission and the United Nations — the reconstruction needs for the damages caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine are estimated to be around \$411 billion over the next decade. This staggering amount highlights the severity of the damages caused by the Russian aggression and the need for significant investment to rebuild the country. The calculations conducted so far, however, do not incorporate the detrimental impact of the Kakhovka dam’s destruction by Russia and its humanitarian, economic and ecological consequences.

It is unacceptable that despite the repeated calls from the United Nations to the Russian Federation to provide safety guarantees for crossing the front line to the left

bank of the Dnipro River and ensure humanitarian access to all civilians impacted by the destruction of the dam, such guarantees have not yet been provided. It is imperative that Russia take immediate action, in accordance with its obligations under international humanitarian law to allow the United Nations to provide the much-needed humanitarian aid to those affected by this devastating act, including in Oleshky.

The Baltic State are among the top bilateral aid donors to Ukraine, as a percentage of our gross domestic products. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania already provided €1.5 million of immediate assistance to Ukraine in order to alleviate the consequences of the dam’s destruction, and that does not include private initiatives. The costs of addressing the repercussions of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, a sovereign nation, are consistently increasing, while only 26 per cent of the total \$3.9 billion required for the humanitarian response in Ukraine has been funded. We urge the international community to continue to provide the necessary funding.

The work of the United Nations and its agencies to ensure the close monitoring and proper documentation of massive human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law should also continue. We hope for an objective and accurate assessment of the situation in Ukraine resulting from Russia’s full-scale invasion in the forthcoming annual reports of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence and children in armed conflict.

I would like to express Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania’s appreciation for the active United Nations engagement in alleviating the global consequences of Russia’s aggression, including through the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Russia continues to hinder the exports of Ukrainian goods from Ukrainian ports, thereby contributing to a significant increase in food prices in global markets. Russia has also continued to manipulate the facts and to repeatedly threaten to end the Black Sea Grain Initiative if its demands are not met. In fact, according to available statistics, including of Russian origin, Russian exports of grain and fertilizers have been consistently high in recent years, and its grain exports have actually reached record levels. In 2022, due to higher prices, Russia’s export revenues from fertilizers increased by an impressive 70 per cent to 150 per cent, depending on the source. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the export volume of Russian fertilizers in 2022 decreased



by only 10 per cent. Russia must stop blackmailing the global community and allow the Black Sea Grain Initiative to operate at its maximum potential.

Finally, our countries continue to argue for full accountability on the part of Russia's political and military leadership for the crime of aggression. The core group on the creation of a special tribunal for Russia's crime of aggression against Ukraine will hold its fourth meeting in Warsaw on 29 and 30 June, and we call on all other States and international organizations to join our collective efforts. We will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes Ukraine to rightfully defend itself against Russia's brutal war of aggression. The only path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine is one that is based on full respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The withdrawal of Russia's troops is a key precondition for that. We welcome all the efforts of our global partners to reach peace in Ukraine in line with Ukraine's peace formula, the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

**Mr. Sakowicz** (Poland): Poland appreciates the convening of today's timely meeting and duly notes the insightful remarks by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and other speakers.

For almost 500 very long days and nights, Russia has been ruthlessly pursuing its brutal aggression against Ukraine. During that whole time, it has also cynically dismissed all the appeals to it — however how loud and clear they have been or where they originated — to stop the bloodshed and remove its troops from Ukraine's territory. For the past couple of weeks, the international community has therefore been closely following the efforts of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, who are determined to liberate their country from Russia's illegal occupation. In that context, let me draw the Council's attention to three issues.

First, Russia needs to bear the full cost of the destruction that its aggression has caused. With Russia's continued attacks on Ukraine's critical and civilian infrastructure, assessing the full scope of the reconstruction process will be an especially crucial challenge. After 16 months, it is obvious that what Russia cannot take, it will try to destroy. Shattering the livelihoods of thousands of innocent civilians

by blowing up the Kakhovka dam is just one of the most recent examples of that cruel strategy. Poland therefore reiterates its full support for the creation of a comprehensive registry of all the damage inflicted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, followed by close coordination and a transparent approach to the reconstruction efforts. In that regard, we commend the holding in London over the past two days of the Ukraine Recovery Conference, with the aim of preparing a political, legal and financial base that would enable the provision to Ukraine of comprehensive assistance for reconstruction. As such, it definitely fulfilled its goals.

Secondly, Ukraine has a perfect right to freely choose its future alliances and partnerships. It needs to be able to decide for itself the international partners it wants to build its prosperity with — and that naturally includes security cooperation. Kyiv is looking forward to concrete prospects for ensuring its security after Russia's aggression is ended, and Poland fully understands and supports that approach.

Last but not least, we must bear in mind that although the process of the reconstruction of Ukraine will be costly and lengthy, it is in the interests of the whole world. According to some estimates, at least 600 million consumers worldwide depend directly on Ukraine's agricultural production. We firmly believe that only a complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russia's forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine can provide a chance for a just and stable peace, facilitating a long-term solution for global economic recovery and an improvement in the world's food situation. Even if we manage to stop the bloodshed today and reinstate the primacy of international law and establish peace, the consequences of the war will be felt for a very long time.

**The President:** I now give the floor to the representative of Czechia.

**Mr. Kulháněk** (Czechia): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Slovakia and my own country, Czechia.

We fully align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Let me thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, and I of course also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing, which unfortunately only adds to the bleak picture of the devastating consequences of Russia's unprovoked and

unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. We regret that the Security Council must once again devote its attention to this issue simply because of Russia's utter disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and its fundamental principles. Judging by its actions in Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated time and again that it has no interest in effective multilateralism, the maintenance of international peace and security or the development of friendly relations. The Russian armed forces continue to deliberately target civilians and civilian infrastructure, and we strongly condemn such barbaric attacks. Let us therefore be under no illusions about the true intentions of the Russian Government. Its missile attack on Kyiv last week while African leaders were in the city on a diplomatic mission speaks for itself.

We ask ourselves how many lives must be lost or ruined for this senseless war to stop. For Russia, the death toll, which keeps rising from one Security Council briefing to the next, is apparently just a number on paper. Russia's disregard for international humanitarian law and human rights is also evident in its ongoing repression of its own citizens. We were horrified by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam and by the very disturbing reports that Russian forces were shelling Ukrainian rescue workers who were trying to reach flooded areas in the Kherson region. We call on Russia once again to stop its aggression against Ukraine immediately and withdraw its troops from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and the regions where Russia orchestrated its sham referendums. We will also continue to support efforts to hold fully accountable those who have committed the most serious crimes under international law in Ukraine, including rape and sexual violence against women and girls.

As our Foreign Ministers agreed at their most recent bilateral meeting, we will maintain our comprehensive support for Ukraine in its just struggle to preserve its statehood. Czechia and Slovakia have stood by Ukraine since the start of its defence against Russia's aggression, and we will remain steadfast in supporting Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity until the nightmare ends. We hope that day will come soon.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

**Mr. Skoog:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The

candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the potential candidate Georgia, as well as Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

I first want to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and to take this opportunity to commend the entire United Nations team on the ground, led by Resident Coordinator Denise Brown, for the invaluable assistance it is providing to the people of Ukraine at this very difficult time. We know that the United Nations system is fully mobilized through humanitarian relief, support to refugees and internally displaced persons, human rights monitoring, mine action, nuclear safety, addressing the dire global consequences of Russia's aggression and much more. It has our very strong support.

As Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression approaches the tragic 500-day mark, the people of Ukraine and the international community desire a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly. Yet one country, the aggressor, remains steadfast in pursuing its brutal war on a neighbouring country and its people. When African Heads of State visited Kyiv last week calling for peace, Russia responded by bombing the city, as it did when the Secretary-General visited last year. The way to end Russia's assault on Ukraine is crystal clear. Russia must end its war and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its forces and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. I will emphasize three brief points in my intervention — first, the tragic human rights situation in the territories temporarily occupied by Russia; secondly, the importance of upholding international humanitarian law and thirdly, the need for accountability.

The human rights situation in the occupied territories is of grave concern. International monitoring mechanisms, including the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, have concluded that Russian authorities have committed a wide range of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Ukraine. The reported violations include indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, a widespread and systematic pattern of summary executions,

torture and ill-treatment and unlawful confinement, as well as inhumane detention conditions, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence and forced transfer and deportation, including of children. Many of those amount to war crimes. The most recent report of the Commission of Inquiry (A/HRC/52/62) also concludes that the attacks on Ukraine's energy-related infrastructure and the use of torture by Russian authorities may amount to crimes against humanity.

We call on Russia to uphold international human rights law. Its practice of forcibly issuing Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens is in blatant violation of international law and undermines Ukraine's sovereignty. The International Committee of the Red Cross should be granted full and unconditional access to all detained persons, and all Ukrainian citizens illegally detained by Russia should be released. The decision by the Russian Central Election Commission to hold so-called elections in the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russia's military is yet another violation of international law — and, by the way, of General Assembly resolution ES-11/4, on Ukraine's territorial integrity, adopted in October 2022.

Secondly, we reiterate the importance of upholding international humanitarian law. We are appalled by reports that evacuation teams rescuing civilians following the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric plant dam are being shelled. We urge the Russian Federation to cease such attacks and allow help to the affected civilian population, including in areas under Russian military control. The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms the attack at the Kakhovka plant, which is a direct consequence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The downstream flooding has not only put tens of thousands of civilian lives in danger, but it is also affecting water and energy supplies and causing an ecological and environmental catastrophe. As the United Nations has repeatedly requested, we urge Russia to enable safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to the populations in need of assistance, in particular in the temporarily occupied territories. Aid cannot be denied to those in need. The impact of Russia's aggression on children

is particularly horrific, and we look forward to the imminent publication of the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict.

Thirdly, the EU is firmly committed to ensuring full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes committed in connection with Russia's war of aggression. We emphasize the importance of coordinated accountability initiatives to combat impunity and ensure justice. We support the ongoing work for the establishment of a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression, which is of concern to the international community as a whole. The EU welcomes the establishment of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine at the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation in The Hague. We are also fully supportive of the establishment of an international mechanism to register the damage Russia has inflicted. Following General Assembly resolution ES-11/5 of November 2022, which acknowledged the need for a register of damage, and the Reykjavík Summit of the Council of Europe, the register has been established. We underline our support for the investigations of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The EU calls for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in line with the Charter and General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, adopted in February, and with respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders — a peace that will benefit all nations, as the Ambassador of Ukraine just said. We welcome international efforts to that effect and reaffirm our support to President Zelenskyy's peace formula.

The members of the Security Council must distinguish between the victim and the aggressor in this war of aggression. Under the United Nations Charter, Ukraine has the right to self-defence against Russia's attacks in order to restore its territorial integrity. It also has the right to request international support for such efforts. The EU is committed to supporting Ukraine in that regard for as long as it takes.

*The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.*