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Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

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Wednesday, 20 September 2023, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President: Mr. Rama/Mr. Hoxha. (Albania)

Members:

Brazil.	Mr. Sénéchal de Goffredo Junior
China.	Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang
Ecuador.	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France.	Mr. Olmedo
Gabon.	Ms. Betoe Ndojombouet
Ghana.	Mr. Nyarku
Japan.	Mr. Hamamoto
Malta.	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique.	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
Russian Federation.	Ms. Zabolotskaya
Switzerland.	Mrs. Chanda
United Arab Emirates.	Mr. Sharaf
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America.	Ms. Millard

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter through effective multilateralism: maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

Letter dated 6 September 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/653)

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The meeting was resumed at 3.35 p.m.

The President: I would like to warmly welcome all the Presidents, Ministers and other high-level representatives who are here in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject under discussion.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Flashing lights on the collars of the microphones will prompt speakers to bring their remarks to a close after four minutes.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alan Karis, President of the Republic of Estonia.

President Karis: I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate, which is important not only for Ukraine but for all of us who respect the Charter of the United Nations. We cannot remain silent when multilateralism and international law, with the Charter at their core, are under unparalleled pressure. Russia's aggression against Ukraine violates all the values we believe in. It violates the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter while exposing the structural deficiencies of the United Nations and its Security Council.

A permanent member of the Council responsible for upholding international peace and security has launched a full-scale, unlawful and unjustified war on its sovereign neighbour, using its veto power to shield itself from accountability and shamelessly undermining the credibility of the Council and the authority of the United Nations. I call on all responsible Council members and all States Members of the United Nations to urgently reflect on how we can work together to fix that brutal ignorance of our Organization's core principles. I am convinced that those responsible for aggression and conflict — even those with the right to veto in the Security Council — have to face justice, because a crime is a crime, regardless of who the perpetrators are or the power they hold.

Since the Russian Federation's large-scale armed attack on sovereign Ukraine began, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has recorded 27,149 civilian casualties in the country, including 9,614 people killed, 500 of them children. Those numbers are not bare statistics — they are people's lives, broken destinies and lost dreams. For

those who endure, there are no safe places, as homes, hospitals, food storage facilities and schools have been destroyed. Tens of thousands of children have lost their families or have been forcibly deported to Russia and Belarus, only to suffer abuse in re-education camps or be stripped of their Ukrainian roots and identity in Russian families. That disgraceful practice has been used by our neighbour in the past, in my country and in many other places.

The human toll of the war extends far beyond Ukraine. By unilaterally leaving the United Nations-mediated Black Sea Grain Initiative and obstructing Ukraine's grain export, Russia is using food scarcity as a tool to manipulate the world's most vulnerable populations. Let me repeat loud and clear that we have never imposed sanctions on Russian exports of food to third countries. Russia and Russia alone is responsible for the war and for the millions of lives of people who face starvation, as Russia is destroying Ukrainian grain facilities, stealing grain from occupied territories and bombarding Ukrainian ports. Russia's actions reveal its intention to manipulate the market and destabilize the international political climate by increasing the price of grain and forcing countries to become reliant on Russian assistance. The United Nations cannot allow aggression to become a form of politics. Ukraine has presented its peace formula — the only comprehensive plan to overcome Russia's aggression and all its consequences. The points of the peace formula reiterate all the basic principles of the Charter. An overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States voted for a just peace for Ukraine and protecting the Charter. However, the Security Council remains hostage of the aggression.

It has become an unfortunate reality that the Security Council is unable to act decisively and fulfil its mandate. In order to ensure that the Security Council can carry out the tasks set out in the Charter, there is no other alternative than to adjust the structure and working methods of the Council, while further reinforcing the power of the General Assembly. The veto initiative adopted last spring (General Assembly resolution 76/262) was a laudable significant first step, but more has to be done. There should be no right of the veto if there is a suspicion that the country casting it may have acted against international law. Estonia supports the French-Mexican initiative on veto restraint and the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group on not voting against resolutions aimed at ending mass atrocities, including the crime of aggression.

The President: I thank President Karis for his statement.

I thank I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Petr Pavel, President of the Czech Republic.

President Pavel: It is an honour to address the Security Council today, and I would like to thank the Albanian presidency for this opportunity.

We teach our children to play by the rules, to develop friendly and respectful relations and to prevent conflicts. We, the Member States of the United Nations family, have reflected that globally shared notion within the international rules-based order to secure a peaceful and prosperous life for our societies. And yet Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, has launched a full-fledged invasion and is waging a brutal and unprovoked war of aggression against its neighbour in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It is an outrageous insult to the rules-based order and thus to the entire international community. Time and again, we have been bitterly retaught the lesson that the aggressor's voracity only grows while he devours his prey. This is not only about Russia and Ukraine — this concerns us all.

The ultimate victory of Ukraine means a victory for the rule of law and respect for others, while its defeat would allow lawless brutality to prevail. That is why I believe that no country may be genuinely neutral in this conflict. Russia must completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. The Kremlin leadership must face consequences and be brought to justice. Due to Russia's aggression, people are dying once again in Europe. But the impacts of the war go far beyond the region. By violating the fundamental rights of Ukraine to its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia is putting peace and security at risk globally, inspiring possible followers. Furthermore, we cannot but condemn Russia's cynical decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative. It has led to massive increases in food prices, and it bluntly demonstrates how little Russia cares about the day-to-day struggle of the most vulnerable.

The international community, and almost every member of the Security Council, have already expressed their desire for peace in Ukraine. But clearly, no one wants peace more than the Ukrainians themselves — a just and lasting peace and a peace that does not reward the aggressor. That is why we support President

Zelenskyy's effort, as put forward in his peace formula. Only Ukraine can set the terms of any peace solution.

As we all know, my country had its own painful experience with what at the time was called Russian international assistance. They came without being asked to assist us, against us. Today we call it by its proper names: imperialism and expansionism. We have been there. Czechia therefore feels a strong sense of solidarity with Ukraine and its people. I am truly thankful that our Government and society have been supporting Ukraine so wholeheartedly. We are determined to stay side by side with Ukraine and support it as long as it takes, until peace and the rule of law are restored.

The President: I thank President Pavel for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic.

President Rebelo de Sousa (*spoke in Portuguese; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): How do we measure human suffering? How do we measure the pain of an orphaned child, of parents who have lost children, of the mutilated and of victims of torture? How does one resist and survive all that and continue fighting for one's family, home and country? I was in Ukraine a few weeks ago, and it is impossible to remain indifferent to the unspeakable devastation in Bucha and Moschun, which are tragic examples of inhumanity and suffering. But it is also impossible not to admire the inspiring vitality and moral strength embodied in the resistance and resilience of the Ukrainian people, who are admirably defending themselves against an illegal, unjust and immoral invasion. I therefore welcome the Albanian presidency's initiative to convene this crucial open debate.

Portugal's position is clear. We are, and will always be, on the side of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and any General Assembly resolution condemning the aggression against Ukraine and demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops. We are, and will always be, in solidarity with the efforts for the legitimate defence of Ukraine, its formula for peace and its struggle to restore sovereignty, while supporting its contribution to global food security. We are, and will always be, in solidarity with the victims, the refugees, whom we have always welcomed, the Secretary-General's efforts to create humanitarian corridors and conditions for the return of thousands of children taken

from their families and illegally deported. We are, and will always be, committed to a just road map for peace that restores and gives credibility to international law and reaffirms Ukraine's legitimate aspiration to full integration in organizations that it sovereignly wishes to join.

We are, and will always, be ready to contribute to achieving a just and sustainable peace that enables an immediate and lasting ceasefire, with the withdrawal of the Russian Federation's troops from the territory of Ukraine and the guarantee of nuclear safety and the safety of nuclear facilities, under the monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency; a just and sustainable peace that ensures the monitored release of prisoners and deportees, with special urgent attention to the situation of children and that ensures the credibility of international justice through a thorough investigation and accountability for all war crimes and crimes against humanity and their perpetrators. Those steps and the political courage they require could lead, in time, to the signing of a peace and security treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Let us live up to the moment. Our people and humankind demand it.

The President: I thank President Rebelo de Sousa for his statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Katalin Novák, President of Hungary.

President Novák: I would like to thank you personally, Mr. President, for making the effort to initiate this open debate. Open debates give us, countries that are not members of the Security Council, an opportunity to express our views on issues affecting our world. Our position is clear. The Russian Federation crossed the Rubicon with its invasion of an independent and sovereign State, a member of the international community and a member of the family of the United Nations. Our goal is a lasting, just peace in Ukraine.

When the 2022 Global Conflict Tracker of the Council on Foreign Relations was released, it listed 27 armed conflicts around the world. Since the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, that number has significantly increased. We are seeing new armed and military conflicts emerging as we speak. For a year and a half we have been witnessing a major war the likes of which had not been seen since the Second World War — at least not by us Europeans. War itself is not unknown to us. In the early 1990s we saw the

bloodshed and experienced the impact of the war in the Balkans — again, a region in Hungary's immediate neighbourhood. Nor should we forget that even now the stability of the western Balkans is a goal that we still have to work for, among other things by speeding up the region's integration into the European Union.

Today a nuclear Power is invading a European country that for some of us is also a neighbour. And it is also posing a realistic threat of nuclear escalation, a scenario that none of us want to experience. We Hungarians have been hit by the war in Ukraine in three dimensions. As a direct neighbour, we feel threatened. Ethnic Hungarian citizens of Ukraine are fighting and dying on the battlefield. The war in Ukraine directly threatens the security architecture of Europe. And since the war is being fought close to NATO's eastern border, the emergence of a new cold war is a disturbing possibility.

The war in Ukraine is having a serious impact not only on the European continent but on the rest of the world as well. Inflation and rising energy prices remind us that in our interconnected world, local conflicts can easily become regional and then global. We all need to work together to promote peace and security in Ukraine. Hungary supports and is open to taking part in any peace initiative that creates an environment conducive to a lasting ceasefire and yields a road map for a sustainable and just peace. We need organizations, countries and personalities that can invite the warring parties to peace negotiations. Where organizations are concerned, we acknowledge the United Nations and the Security Council as essential actors in that process. Since representatives of both the parties involved are at the table, there is room and a chance for talks and action. And we also need countries. We need strong nations — the United States, China and Türkiye, for example — that are already capable of setting the table for a possible solution and talking with both sides, and that have the potential to further influence the situation.

We also need personalities. History has many examples that show that a small group of people or even a single person can affect or change the course of history. I believe firmly that Pope Francis is someone who can facilitate peace in Ukraine. And let us not underestimate the power of women. Women leaders who join forces to contribute to peacemaking can make a substantial contribution to this process. That leads me to congratulate President Nataša Pirc Musar of Slovenia on her country's forthcoming membership

of the Security Council. Her role here is vital. The personal presence at this gathering of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine is also an indication that the moment has come to be serious about peace. I would like to take this moment to reiterate that Hungary welcomes the Ukrainian peace initiative and is open to joining the process. I also count on President Zelenskyy to take action to facilitate the restoration of the rights of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine, which he personally promised me during our last meeting in Kyiv and also yesterday here in New York.

With regard to the future of Ukraine, Hungary is interested in a stable, democratic and prosperous Ukraine. In the spirit of good-neighbourly relations, Hungary will keep providing political, economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, as we have done ever since the war began. The support that Hungary has provided to the 2.7 million refugees who have crossed our border is a token of our unwavering support to the cause of peace in Ukraine.

The President: I thank President Novák for her statement.

I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Nataša Pirc Musar, President of the Republic of Slovenia.

President Musar: Slovenia has condemned the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. We have joined others the General Assembly in demanding that the Russian Federation end its invasion and withdraw all its military forces from Ukraine unconditionally. In that spirit, I would like to contribute three points to this debate. The first addresses the impact of Russia's war on Ukraine on multilateralism and beyond. The second touches on the importance of Security Council reform in the context of the crisis of multilateralism. And the third sends a message to all who still believe that they can commit crimes against humanity with impunity.

The impact of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine is manifold. It has fallen primarily on the people of Ukraine, who have felt it on a daily basis for almost 19 long months. Furthermore, it has affected inter-ethnic and inter-State relations in the region and globally as well. It has also had an additional humanitarian impact, further endangering food security as grain supplies and their export have become part of war tactics. It is especially heartbreaking to hear the stories of women and children, many of whom are at risk of falling victim to human trafficking, exploitation

or conflict-related sexual violence. That is not multilateralism. It is violent anarchy, and it must stop.

It must stop, but not only in Ukraine. When we are speaking at United Nations Headquarters, the home of 193 Member States, it is important to put the war in Ukraine in a wider context. Fatalities caused by organized violence across the world increased by 97 per cent in 2022. It was the deadliest in almost 30 years. The Russian Federation's war against Ukraine contributed significantly to that spike, but it was not the only conflict. In fact, the aggression against Ukraine was only one of the 55 active State-based armed conflicts recorded in 2022, the great majority of them taking place outside Europe. All of those conflicts, including the aggression against Ukraine, are very worrisome and demand our full attention.

The Charter of the United Nations and international law-based multilateralism are increasingly under attack. In order to make global governance work, we need an inclusive, transparent, responsive and accountable multilateral system built on trust, respect, solidarity and international law, with the United Nations and the Security Council at its core. I made it clear in my address to the General Assembly yesterday (see A/78/PV.4) that the need for Council reform is long overdue.

What I am about to say may sound a bit naive, but it needs to be said time and again so that it will be taken seriously tomorrow. If the major Powers with special status and privileges want to live in peace and to make the United Nations a truly inclusive and fair global institution, they need to act responsibly. Not only do they need to make and keep peace, but they must also refrain from violating it. That is the point from which any meaningful reform of the Security Council should begin. Slovenia will support and participate in such endeavours.

Finally, a lasting peace can be achieved only if justice is served. Slovenia is a staunch supporter of the fight against impunity. All those responsible for crimes and atrocities must be held accountable. Earlier this year Slovenia hosted a diplomatic conference that resulted in the adoption of an important international treaty, the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes and Other International Crimes. We call on all countries to become parties to that convention.

To summarize, if we want a better and fairer world, we need a better and more fair organization of the United Nations and the Security Council. Just to remind Council members, do we know where innocent people are being killed, where houses are being destroyed? Is that in Russia? Council members know the answer.

The President: I thank President Musar for her statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Edgars Rinkēvičs, President of the Republic of Latvia.

President Rinkēvičs: I would like to thank Albania, as President of the Security Council, for convening this debate.

One and a half years ago, the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, started its brutal invasion against Ukraine. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine threatens the rules-based order and undermines the Charter of the United Nations. Latvia condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's unprovoked, large-scale aggression against Ukraine, enabled by Belarus.

The international community must not allow Russia to get away with that land grab. We cannot afford the international system to backslide to the pre-Second World War era.

Russia bears the sole responsibility for the war it started. Russia alone must end it immediately.

Every sovereign country has a right to choose its own foreign policy course. That applies to Ukraine, as well as to any other country.

Ukraine has a right to defend itself against foreign aggression. Ukraine is fighting for its survival and its right to exist. We must all continue to support Ukraine for as long as necessary.

Latvia supports Ukraine's peace formula. Only Ukraine can decide when to start peace negotiations. Sustainable peace must be based on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We are witnessing a clear pattern of Russia's deliberate steps aimed at causing maximum suffering to Ukraine's civilian population and targeting Ukraine's civilian infrastructure. Children in particular are suffering in this war. They are being deported to Russia or Belarus. There, they are forcefully re-educated and militarily trained. They are turned into Russian citizens or legally adopted. Those crimes must stop.

Russian leadership and military personnel must be held accountable for each and every international crime committed in and against Ukraine. By ensuring accountability, we will bring justice to the victims and prevent the return of such crimes in the future.

Latvia reiterates the need to establish a special international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression. Latvia invites more countries to join the register of damage created by the Council of Europe. It is an important first practical step towards a future international compensation mechanism.

Russia's war against Ukraine is causing serious geopolitical, economic and humanitarian consequences far beyond Europe's borders. It is Russia's war against Ukraine that has aggravated the shortage of food supplies, not the sanctions. Russia considers food a weapon of war, rather than an essential humanitarian good to prevent hunger around the globe. Russia alone is responsible for stopping the Black Sea Grain Initiative. That initiative allowed the export of millions of tons of foodstuffs to global markets and for those in need. It is key to continue international efforts to mitigate the effects of global food insecurity.

In conclusion, I hope the day on which Russia ceases its brutal war of aggression comes soon. Our thoughts are with the brave heroes of Ukraine who defend freedom.

The President: I thank President Rinkēvičs for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alejandro Giammattei Falla, President of the Republic of Guatemala.

President Giammattei Falla (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Friends of Accountability following the aggression against Ukraine, consisting of 49 member States and the European Union.

Today it has been 574 days since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russia's illegal war of aggression is a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and constitutes a blatant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, as has been clearly and repeatedly condemned in resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

The Group of Friends will support all meaningful efforts to bring perpetrators of these massacres to justice. That includes justice for crimes involving

children, such as the forcible transfer of Ukrainian children to Russia, as well as restoring a sense of justice for the manifold victims of the war. The journey towards justice is often long and costly, but we will be there to sustain the process.

The Group of Friends stands ready to support Ukraine's initiative for a just peace and all other initiatives seeking to advance peace in line with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

We must all stand together around the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We must remain committed in condemning the continued Russian aggression that goes against the very purpose and spirit of the Charter. The maintenance of international peace and security can be ensured only through a just peace in Ukraine.

Today we underscore the importance of pursuing perpetrators of international crimes because, by doing so, we defend the very rules our international system depends on. And we hope to deter anyone from committing such violations in the future. Without accountability, crimes will continue, and impunity will persist, undermining the prospects for future peace and reconciliation. Our resolve is unwavering for as long as it takes.

In my national capacity, I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Guatemala is a peaceful country. We promote peace and respect the values of the founding Charter of the United Nations. We call for democracy, a negotiated and civilized resolution of the conflict arising from the illegal, unjustified and unprovoked invasion of the sovereign territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

In my visit to Ukraine, as the first Latin American president to go to that fraternal country, I witnessed the horrors of that incursion. I saw the unspeakable destruction and testimonies of women and girls who had been raped by Russian soldiers. I was horrified when I arrived at Saint Andrew's Orthodox Church, in whose garden more than 400 civilian corpses were discovered, many of them children, in mass graves. Their hands were tied behind their backs, and they wore blindfolds. They had been shot in the back of the head. After witnessing that barbarism, I will never forget that Dantesque scene. How many more terrible events must happen and how many more deaths must we expect for the Council to act? How is it possible that in the United Nations due process is not respected when there

is a right of veto and that one of the persons accused is judge and jury? That is a legal aberration that must cease at the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to express my absolute respect to the Government of Ukraine and its armed forces, which after several months are still fighting and resisting with patriotism and honour. The world, the vast majority of nations of the world, are crying out for peace and an end to the aggression suffered by one of its members at the hands of its powerful neighbour, and they are calling for the immediate pacification of the region, a longing that should not be postponed any longer.

In conclusion, I can say that, after witnessing the attacks on unarmed and defenceless civilians and the actions committed by the invading forces, I cannot stop feeling ashamed to be a human being.

The President: I thank President Giammattei Falla for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania.

President Nausėda: Five hundred seventy-four days ago, a permanent member of the Security Council started an unprovoked military invasion against the independent sovereign State of Ukraine. It would be dangerous to forget this was not the start of the war or the opening act of a crime of aggression. We must remember that the war began nine years and seven months prior, or exactly 3,500 days ago. And it was precisely the weak response of the international community that allowed violence to fester and grow, leading us all to the largest military conflict in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Those old mistakes must not be repeated.

Our collective responsibility today is to challenge Russia's calculated manipulation of international norms, which must be stopped from eroding the authority of the Security Council and threatening the Charter of the United Nations. Our duty today is to uphold multilateralism and defend the rules based international order from Russia's relentless war of destruction.

If Ukraine is able to achieve victory and regain control of its internationally recognized borders, it would mean victory for us all and would serve as a precondition for a fair and enduring peace and, ultimately, stabilize the whole international order.

In any future negotiations, we must follow a set of clear principles.

First, we must hold Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity to be of fundamental importance. The Ukrainian peace formula, backed by the General Assembly, should not be in any way simplified or diluted. Ultimately, the final decision regarding peace on Ukrainian soil must rest with Ukraine itself. The Ukrainian peace summit, organized by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, provides us with an ideal opportunity in that regard.

Secondly, it is imperative that Russia put an end to its aggressive actions and withdraw its troops and military equipment from Ukrainian territory. That withdrawal should be immediate, complete and unconditional.

Thirdly, we must recognize that Russia bears sole responsibility for inflicting immense suffering upon the Ukrainian population, while also threatening the livelihood of other people in need around the globe. Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative and to attack Ukrainian ports and stockpiles has contributed to the worldwide food crisis and benefited only Russia.

Fourthly, Russia must be held accountable for numerous war crimes, including the crime of aggression.

Finally, Russia must pay for the destruction it has inflicted. Ukrainians should not be forced to bear the burden of rebuilding their country. At this crucial moment, I call on every member of the international community and the Security Council to join forces. Let us all implement the fundamental responsibilities entrusted to the United Nations and its Member States.

The President: I thank President Nausėda for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Stevo Pendarovski, President of the Republic of North Macedonia.

President Pendarovski: The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine dealt a strong blow to international peace and security, to the fundamental principles of international law and to the international order. This war challenged multilateralism as the basis of the international order, on an unprecedented level. And as we all know, the international peace and security architecture, the most important expression of which is the United Nations, is centred on multilateralism.

The current situation is the result of ignoring the obligations enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations since 1945. Without respect for the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of each Member State, we cannot talk about effective multilateralism. So far we have seen several attempts to redefine the foundations of international order, but none have received such wide support as the principles that the civilized world established after the horrors of the Second World War.

In that sense, the current deadlock in the Security Council, the main organ of the United Nations entrusted to preserve and promote international peace and security, was instigated precisely through non-compliance and, I would even say, the conscious bypassing of the basic principles of the international order. It is clear that this impasse diminishes the credibility and confidence of the people that the United Nations can effectively achieve the key goal for which it was established almost eight decades ago. Without a credible alternative on the horizon to the current international order that could garner the majority support of the nations, the people's growing frustration with the Organization's inactivity is understandable.

It is clear that the modern world is vastly different from the world in 1945 and that the Security Council should face and reflect that new reality. Within the ongoing debates about the eventual reform of the prime United Nations organ, the question of the veto of the permanent members has to be thoroughly assessed, especially when one of them is involved in a conflict.

The Council's most urgent task is to be proactively engaged in putting an end to the war in Ukraine. The only way to achieve that goal is through diplomacy and negotiations based on respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. To that end, the first step should be an immediate and unconditional truce in order to create an environment conducive to the start of negotiations. Throughout the process, the United Nations should establish a peacekeeping mission with the main task of monitoring the truce and humanitarian assistance to civilians. A key component of any future peace agreement should be, first fully respecting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, meaning the full withdrawal of all Russian forces, ensuring that all refugees and internally displaced persons are returned to their homes, massive support for the post-conflict reconstruction of a devastated country and international guarantees for the

rights of all ethnic and religious communities that have been living in Ukraine for centuries.

As I said, the war in Ukraine has seriously undermined the credibility of the world Organization, but it also offers an extraordinary opportunity for the Security Council to act in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter and help restore the people's confidence in the United Nations as an indispensable global organization.

The President: I thank President Pendarovski for his statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland.

President Duda: From the perspective of my region, 24 February 2022 is the day when the world, as we knew, it changed permanently. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine was a defining moment in geopolitics, transforming Europe's security landscape and tearing down the core pillar of our international system. This strategic change is not temporary. We are living in a new era of uncertainty. The multilateral system established nearly 80 years ago, with its principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, asserted the superiority of the rule of law over force in international relations. It gave nations a place to turn to when faced with regional or global challenges, often as a last resort. The Charter embodies a code of international ethics by which every State should abide.

When Russia replaced the Soviet Union as a permanent member of the Security Council, it took upon itself even greater responsibility than other nations to preserve international peace and security. Yet its leadership made a deliberate decision to violate our basic principles, the key norms of international law, and it continues to do so repeatedly — from air attacks on critical infrastructure to setting off a global food crisis, from causing the ecological catastrophe at Nova Kakhovka to bombing cultural heritage sites in Ukrainian cities. Those hideous actions, together with a continuous negation of the international order, including the United Nations Charter, prove that an imperialistic Russia is discrediting itself as a member of the international community.

Russia is abusing its veto power to prevent the Council from addressing the flagrant violations of international law that Russia itself has committed. In this situation, the nations of the world cannot

remain passive. The prohibition of aggression and the elimination of genocide and crimes against humanity are *jus cogens* norms that are accepted and recognized by the international community. These are the norms from which no deviation is permitted. That means that Russia's continued neocolonial aggression against Ukraine is not a bilateral or a regional issue; it concerns us all. If we do not act in solidarity today to defend the fundamental values of international law, tomorrow it may be too late.

That is why Poland has been making efforts to hold Russia and individual Russian citizens accountable for their flagrant violations of international law and the United Nations Charter. We support the work of the existing jurisdictions, such as the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the European Court of Human Rights. Because the Russian aggression as such cannot be a subject of assessment by the International Criminal Court, we support the creation of a special ad hoc international tribunal. Moreover, Poland is striving to create an international mechanism to repair the damage and compensate for the losses caused by Russia. The perpetrators of international crimes must not go unpunished. They should be tried before competent courts. It should be our imperative to ensure a lasting peace in the future.

The war in Ukraine has permanently changed the global security architecture. Regardless of its final result, we will have to face a new political, military and economic reality that will last until a new security system is formed — a system with no place for aggression, imperialism or neocolonialism.

The President: I thank President Duda for his statement.

I now give the floor to the President of the European Council.

Mr. Michel: Ukraine is a crime scene, and the perpetrator is sitting in this very Chamber. They know who they are. The Kremlin dreams of restoring the old Russian empire. After Ukraine, who would be next? Who would be next to satisfy Putin's fantasy of the past? And, if Russia succeeds in Ukraine, what other countries would be tempted to copy its actions? At this crime scene, we also have the victim, the attacked — Ukraine and all Ukrainians fighting a battle they did not start, defending their country against a war they did not want and protecting their children from suffering nobody deserves. Ukrainians

are fighting to save their children from another horror of this war — forced abduction to Russia, so-called adoption. In reality, these are deportations of children. I ask all here, including the Russian representatives, could they bear having their child stolen and deported? Could they bear having their child forced to forget their family, their language and their land? The so-called re-education is in fact an attempt at cultural genocide. By defending their children, Ukrainians are defending what is most precious — their family, their future and their freedom. And that is why we, the European Union, stand firmly with Ukraine in its defence of itself. As long as the innocent are attacked, we will help them to defend themselves, and we will stand by their side for as long as it takes.

At this crime scene, we also have the witnesses — all of us around the world. I ask all of us sitting right here, the witnesses in the Security Council: what have we done about this crime? What have we done about this aggression? What have we done as one of the permanent members attacks its neighbour? What have we done as it wields its veto power against each of us, against the Charter of the United Nations and its core principles? Do we not sit together in this Chamber for one reason and for one reason only — to protect peace and security for all people no matter their country or continent?

Powerful and responsible nations simply cannot turn a blind eye to these crimes, because we all share a responsibility to end war, a responsibility to work for a just peace that respects the United Nations Charters and its core principles and the territorial integrity of each sovereign nation. Such a peace will never last if crimes go unpunished, and that is why I would like to speak directly to each member around this table. As responsible nations, we all have a role to play in building global peace and stability. I would like to speak in particular to the Chinese representative who has warned Russia against the use of nuclear weapons. We welcome this. We now ask the Chinese representative to go further. Let us join forces to persuade Russia to end this criminal war that is hurting so many. Let us join forces to convince Russia to respect the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The consequences of this crime extend across the globe, and the Kremlin's latest cynical actions are only making things worse. That includes, for instance, pulling out of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. When you shoot missiles at grain silos in Odesa, they also strike Africa and kill the most vulnerable, destroying

the lives of millions. A tragic crime is unfolding before our very eyes, and we are the witnesses — all of us. We must stand strong by the side of the attacked, especially right here in the Security Council. That is why this Council was born. That is why we are here today — to say no to aggression and to protect peace, security and cooperation between people and between all our nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Montenegro.

Mr. Abazović (Montenegro): The idea behind the United Nations came after the biggest social disaster in our history. We should not wait for another big disaster to take steps to change our reality and reform the United Nations, including the Security Council, and to be more productive and more effective in protecting international law.

The situation that has resulted in Ukraine due to the aggression by the Russian Federation is totally unacceptable. Any kind of violence, including in order to achieve political goals, is unacceptable in the twenty-first century. Montenegro firmly supports the Ukrainian people, who today are defending not only their own citizens but also the right to choose. They are defending universal values and freedom in all its forms. If we are truly willing to protect democratic values and to promote peace and stability, we must speak the truth and lend our full support to that cause, because while it may be Ukraine today, it could be any other country tomorrow. In that context, I want to underline that while Montenegro is a very small country, it is still doing its part to contribute to international peace and security. I want the Council to know that compared to its population size, Montenegro is hosting more refugees from Ukraine than any other country. Ukrainian refugees currently constitute 5 per cent of our population. The best thing to come out of this disaster is the fact that all those refugees feel safe and secure in our country.

First and foremost, I call on all the parties to the conflict to cease their hostilities and return to the negotiating table. Next, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I think the idea behind the United Nations is to be united, not divided. If we wanted to crush that idea, that would be another story. I think that most of the States participating in the General Assembly want to see a more united world, with greater unity, greater solidarity and greater protection for human rights.

This is not only about Ukraine. There are many places around the world where we are facing various kinds of problems. We therefore need to be ready to start the process of reform and take concrete action, and not to be afraid of taking risks. Big decisions require risk-taking. I hope that the larger and more powerful countries in particular will take those risks for the good of the international community and with a view to fostering a more cosmopolitan spirit, with greater protection for human rights and international law.

The idea is to be united and to take concrete action. It is not just to come to New York once or twice to give a speech and then at the end of the day for the situation to remain the same. In that connection, I hope the situation will change and that ultimately, all of our small contributions will amount to a large contribution to making big changes and promoting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Rasmussen (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

First, on behalf of all the Nordic countries, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for bringing leaders from across the world together in the Chamber today so that we can discuss the most immediate threat to international peace and security of our time, which is Russia's unlawful and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. We also want to take this opportunity to present a vision for peace.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the responsibility vested in the Council. The Charter of the United Nations entrusted five Member States with a special responsibility — the power of the veto. But the veto power was never intended to be *carte blanche* for invading other States with a view to taking their territory, breaching the Charter or conducting brutal warfare in blatant disregard of international law. That cannot and should not be tolerated. It is our shared responsibility to uphold the Charter, which has been the foundation of international cooperation for 78 years. Rebuilding trust in its institutions will not be an easy process. It will require time and effort, and a renewed commitment to the Charter's purposes and principles. Today the Nordic countries would like to share three messages.

First, Russia is violating the most basic rules and principles of international law with its war of aggression.

A permanent member of the Council is blatantly disregarding the Charter — the very cornerstone of this organ — and the territorial integrity and political independence of all States. We should remember that the situation is very simple. If Russia stops fighting, there will be no war. If Ukraine stops fighting, there will be no Ukraine. An overwhelming majority of Member States have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and are defending the United Nations Charter. It is the first line of defence in a world order in which might does not make right. The Nordic countries will continue to seek full accountability for Russia's unlawful war of aggression against Ukraine. That includes holding those responsible for crimes under international law to account. It also includes the provision of reparations. Ensuring that Russia and its representatives are held to account is a shared responsibility that falls to all of us as States Members of the United Nations.

Secondly, the consequences of Russia's war are causing suffering across the globe. Food stocks have been reduced, prices have gone up and the energy crisis is getting worse. Time after time, Russia has shown its complete disregard for human life, not only in Ukraine but globally. It has continued to weaponize food and intensify the global food security crisis. We need to rebuild trust and double down on our efforts to find common solutions to the shared problems confronting us. Instead, Russia is creating new ones. We need strong cross-regional support to stop Russia's irresponsible actions and ensure a collective defence of the Charter. When we unite in defence of the Charter, it will also offer a pathway to peace.

That brings me to my third and final point. Russia must immediately end its war of aggression and withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. What is needed is a just and sustainable peace based on international law, including the United Nations Charter. We support all meaningful efforts in that regard, and we firmly support President Zelenskyy's peace formula, which lays a foundation for those efforts. We encourage all Member States to do the same. The Nordic countries' support for the Charter and Ukraine is unwavering.

The President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Italy

Mr. Tajani (Italy): The position of the Government of Italy, led by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, on Russia's aggression against Ukraine is clear and very

well known. We stand with Ukraine, an invaded people fighting to defend their freedom and sovereignty. We are all suffering the domino-effect consequences of the war that have affected our societies: energy crises, rising commodity prices, inflation and refugees. The increasing migration pressure from Africa, particularly on Italy, has been exacerbated by the food crisis caused by Russia's grain blockade. The international community has not surrendered to those difficulties, despite the fatigue expressed via public opinion in our countries. We of course want a just peace for Ukraine. Just peace means freedom for Ukraine. President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people know that Italy is with them, and will be with them and for them, as well as for Italy itself.

We must protect two essential principles of the Charter of the United Nations — sovereignty and territorial integrity — as also reflected in the position of the Group of Seven and in the recent final declaration of the Group of 20 leaders in New Delhi. We must admit that something has not worked. We thought that international peace and security could be taken for granted. The Security Council has been blocked for decades. The position of the Italian Government is very clear. We need a Security Council that is fairer and more representative and inclusive. For us, "more representative" means that we must give more chances to sit on the Council to Africa, Asia, Latin America and insular States, without, however, creating new hierarchies or privileges.

(spoke in Spanish)

We wholeheartedly support President Zelenskyy's 10-point peace formula. In particular, I would like to highlight three priorities of the Italian Government.

First, we are very extremely concerned about the safety situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We must continue to support the efforts of Director-General Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The risk we face is another Chernobyl — in fact, a more dangerous risk than Chernobyl.

(spoke in French)

Secondly, Italy strongly condemns Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is endangering the lives of millions of people in Africa, increasing food insecurity and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to leave their home countries, as they become prey to the merchants of death who trade in their lives on the desperate journey towards the

Mediterranean. Italy, which hosted the Food Systems Summit in July, welcomes the efforts of President Erdoğan and Secretary-General Guterres to relaunch the Black Sea Grain Initiative. They have our full support.

Thirdly, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we support the Vatican's initiative aimed at a prisoner exchange and reuniting young Ukrainian children with their families.

(spoke in English)

The reconstruction of Ukraine will be one of the top priorities of the Italian presidency of the Group of Seven next year. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has included attacks on religious sites. According to UNESCO, more than 100 religious sites have been damaged. After the bombing of the cathedral in Odesa, we launched an Italian project aimed at its reconstruction. Odesa was designed by Italian architects. Italy will be at the forefront of its reconstruction, which is a project of social and spiritual renaissance. Everyone can count on Italy. Italy will always fight for peace and stands ready to do its part everywhere. Just yesterday, we proposed to meet with the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia to discuss the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Council members can count on Italy. Council members can count on the Italian Government.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I would first like to thank Albania for convening this meeting, and the Secretary-General for his insightful briefing.

More than a year has passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We are gravely concerned about the escalating human toll and the global ramifications of that invasion, especially in regions already grappling with humanitarian challenges and food insecurity. We extend our sympathies to the grieving families. The act of aggression is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. It also erodes the pillars of trust, cooperation and global solidarity that the international community has built over decades. From the standpoint of the Republic of Korea, a nation which is all too familiar with the pains of conflict and division, the trials and tribulations of the Ukrainian people profoundly resonate with us. It is such empathy that strengthens our determination to champion meaningful efforts to end the war and restore peace in Ukraine.

The recent visit to Ukraine by President Yoon Suk Yeol in July serves as a testament to that commitment. During his visit, he unveiled the Ukraine peace and solidarity initiative, a concrete expression of support for the Ukrainian people. In line with the initiative, the Republic of Korea will contribute \$150 million in humanitarian assistance this year, which builds on our contributions from the previous year, when we delivered \$100 million, including mine-clearing equipment and emergency medical vehicles. We will also support Ukraine's reconstruction efforts with a commitment of \$300 million next year and a mid-to-long-term support package of more than \$2 billion. At the same time, we will be an active voice in the global discourse addressing challenges to global food and energy security, which have been exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine.

The media reports emerging from the recent summit between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with respect to potential military cooperation are most unsettling. Any deal that enhances North Korea's military capabilities is an unequivocal violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such developments endanger not just Ukraine but also the security of the Republic of Korea. It is regrettable that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues on its trajectory of provocations, consistently breaching Security Council resolutions and international law. Its continued pursuit of nuclear and missile programmes poses an existential threat to the Republic of Korea, the broader international community and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime. Given Russia's obligatory role in shaping the international non-proliferation regime and safeguarding world peace as a permanent member of the Security Council, we call on Russia to fully implement the Council resolutions for whose adoption it voted in favour.

The Republic of Korea is preparing to serve on the Council beginning next year. Council members may rest assured of our unwavering dedication to fulfil the Council's fundamental mandate, which is to maintain international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Mr. Osmani: At the outset, let me thank the Albanian presidency for the invitation to address the Security Council.

Our combined presence today is a strong sign of commitment and responsibility for two Balkan States. It is quite remarkable that, as we mark 30 years of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), two neighbouring countries and partners — Albania and North Macedonia — stand at the helm of two key multilateral formats, which is our contribution to global peace based on our principled commitment to multilateralism. Those principles include dialogue, cooperation and solidarity. They are enshrined in our founding documents and, moreover, in our humanity.

Earlier this month, I visited Calcutta and paid tribute to Gonxhe Bojaxhiu, better known globally as Mother Teresa, a native of Skopje, our capital, a citizen of the world and the embodiment of peace, compassion and solidarity. Allow me to convey her simple yet prophetic wisdom as a compass and an answer to our challenges:

“I can do things you cannot; you can do things I cannot; together, we can do great things”.

Indeed, the joint pursuit of peace depends on our collective engagement. With the world facing many serious trials, the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine is the most pressing challenge we must address. It constitutes the greatest breach of, and challenge to, international rules and commitments that were written and undersigned by the same Russia that now scornfully tramples on them. This war is destroying not just lives and livelihoods in Ukraine, people's homes and hopes, but beyond that, it has an impact on the lives of people far beyond. Tectonic shifts are felt across the OSCE region and beyond.

Within the OSCE, a regional organization under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which I chair at this pivotal moment in its history, we feel the impact of this war on the people of our region, on the politics between the regions and on the institutions created as platforms for dialogue and vehicles of peace. The impact and the loss of trust and dialogue will last beyond the war in Ukraine and its ongoing human suffering. Multilateralism itself is at risk of becoming a victim of this aggression, international forums like this being replaced by battlegrounds, arguments replaced by brute force. Is there anyone who can explain who is gaining from this war? There are no gains with this war, only losses.

Ukraine and its people are of paramount concern to the OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization. A new support programme for Ukraine has been designed as a vehicle of support in various fields. Those include humanitarian demining, the promotion of the rule of law and the mitigation of the consequential environmental and economic impacts. My Special Representatives and a team of OSCE professionals are already on the ground translating words into concrete actions while exploring avenues for further engagement.

The OSCE can do a lot in times of war, and even more in times of peace. Its past engagement in Ukraine is solid proof of that. As an organization, we are committed to mitigating the fallout from this war and giving a helping hand to the people on the ground. Members of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine — people who serve the cause of truth and trust — are still detained. I would like to once again call for their immediate and unconditional release. After my initial visit to Ukraine in January, I am now planning a second trip as Chairman-in-Office to engage directly with people on site and hear their needs, hopes and fears. Our motto is, "It is about people", and it is for the people of Ukraine and others in need around the globe that we must work together, do more and do better.

Returning to where I started, there are valuable lessons and tools that the OSCE has and knows, and there are experiences and expertise that the United Nations possesses. The OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and our tools and the United Nations global outreach and recognized capacity are mutually reinforcing. Building on our values and competitive advantages, working together, we must do our utmost to end the war against Ukraine and pursue our common endeavour for peace, stability and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Mrs. Gabriel (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour and a privilege to participate in this discussion. Today we are facing a security challenge, possibly the greatest challenge our Organization has faced since its establishment. It is encouraging to see so many high-level participants representing Member States from across the world. That is crucial, as it clearly demonstrates that the Russian Federation's war of aggression in Ukraine is not a regional conflict but rather a criminal act with wide-ranging security,

economic and social implications at the global level, striking at the very heart of the multilateral order that the United Nations is called upon to preserve for succeeding generations.

First of all, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, who is presiding over this debate. The active and clear stance of Albania on the Russian aggression is an example of the impact that a so-called small country — though I do not like that expression, as the measure of a country is determined by the size of its actions, not that of its territory — like Albania, motivated by its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, can have on international politics.

Compliance with those purposes and principles is an obligation that all the States Members of the United Nations must fulfil. For that reason, we cannot remain silent when the Charter of the United Nations is brutally violated by a war of aggression, the occupation of territory and rhetoric that rekindle humankind's darkest fears. Being a permanent member of the Security Council brings with it not only privileges but obligations. More than any other State, Russia should respect the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Sustained international support for Ukraine is therefore vitally important for international peace and security.

We are deeply alarmed by the Russian Federation's decision to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Russia is openly using food as a weapon, and its irresponsible actions are driving inflation on food prices and exacerbating global food insecurity. Russia's bombing of Ukrainian ports and grain facilities must be condemned firmly, given that that bombing is causing not only devastation and human losses but also aggravating grain shortages in the countries of the global South. We welcome the invaluable efforts made by the United Nations to conclude the agreement a year ago.

Bulgaria is actively seeking alternative solutions to unblock Black Sea trade routes, but it is also through regional and international cooperation that such solutions could be found. Russia's war against Ukraine imperils not only the historical development of the international community over the past 78 years, but also mutual trust and multilateralism as a key concept upon which the architecture of the modern international system is built.

It is also crucial that we do not forget those responsible for grave international crimes committed in Ukraine. The General Assembly has adopted several resolutions condemning the violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which embodies the global understanding of our key objectives and priorities as an international community and the importance of preserving multilateralism, even in times of great difficulty. Moreover, Bulgaria supports united, coordinated action on all efforts aimed at looking into the growing evidence of atrocities committed in Ukraine, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. We support Ukraine in its initiative to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We believe that the peace process should be led by Ukraine. The peace formula proposed by President Zelenskyy includes the necessary foundations; we actively encourage all countries to support that formula, which also addresses the greater ramifications of the war on food security, energy security, the environment and nuclear security.

Bulgaria will continue to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom. To support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is to defend the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The return to a rules-based order and the rebuilding of trust will be made possible only through the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and by bringing to justice the perpetrators of international crimes.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Mexican States.

Ms. Bárcena Ibarra (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico agrees with the premise of this debate, namely, that of upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations through effective multilateralism in order to maintain peace and security in Ukraine. I will focus my presentation on three dimensions of the situation in Ukraine: the humanitarian imperative, the importance of multilateral action and the path to peace.

The international community cannot accept the humanitarian consequences of the war in Ukraine, both for its people and for those in neighbouring countries and beyond. The war in Ukraine has already claimed hundreds of thousands of victims, combatants and civilians, disproportionately affecting women and

children. An immediate cessation of hostilities is therefore urgent. Pending that, priority must be given to the protection of civilians, unhindered humanitarian access and respect for international law, including international humanitarian law and refugee law, in line with General Assembly resolution ES-11/2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, sponsored by Mexico and France.

I take this opportunity to recognize the ongoing committed work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and humanitarian organizations on the ground, as well as the willingness and generosity of the countries that have welcomed those seeking refuge.

Let there be no doubt: all States have an obligation to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law. Therefore, Mexico condemns the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as well as any use, by any actor and in any place, of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, which, because of their excessively harmful nature and indiscriminate effects, have been banned by international law.

Mexico is deeply concerned about the nuclear rhetoric that has emerged in the context of this war. We unequivocally condemn any threat to use nuclear weapons — explicit or veiled — by any actor and under any circumstances, as contrary to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We reiterate our concern about the serious radiological risk of military action in the vicinity of nuclear power plants. Mexico recognizes and supports the work in Ukraine of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Director General, Rafael Grossi, at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Mexico reaffirms the importance of respecting the seven pillars of technical and physical nuclear safety and security and the five principles for the protection of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as established by the Agency. The proliferation of weapons not only exacerbates the conflict, but their wide availability, when the war comes to an end, could fuel myriad of criminal activities and, if other weapons get into the hands of non-State actors, it could lead to other violations of international law.

With regard to multilateral action in resolving the conflict in Ukraine, a lasting peace will be achieved only if there is an end to the use of force and there is respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That is an absolute requirement. Various proposals for peace involving both

parties have been put forward, including an initiative by Mexico, but so far there has not been the political will to engage in peace talks that take into account the absolute requirement I have mentioned. But we must continue to make efforts and create the conditions to promote trust.

In that regard, the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding signed with the Russian Federation on food and fertilizers played a crucial role in restoring trust and in stabilizing food markets and ensuring food security in many countries. Therefore, Mexico regrets the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which will affect food security in particular in less developed countries. We welcome the mediation efforts of Türkiye and the steadfast determination expressed yesterday by Secretary-General António Guterres (see A/78/PV.4) to continue to seek a resumption of exports of grain and fertilizers from Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

From the outset, Mexico, both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly, has unequivocally expressed its position and categorically condemned Russia's military invasion of Ukraine, which runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations and international law. However, we are also convinced that international law and diplomacy offer the means to achieve a peaceful solution to the conflict.

We are fully aware of that there will be hurdles along the way, and that a just and sustainable peace is not built on good intentions alone. However, it would be inconsistent not to try, as the United Nations, to draw up a road map for peace that is underpinned by the principles of international law.

The immediate future will require openness, dialogue and a sense of genuine commitment, both from the parties involved and from the international community, to put an end to this war. Mexico reiterates its readiness to support that effort to achieve peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Trudeau (Canada): I want to begin by thanking Albania for using its presidency to convene this meeting. I also want to thank President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for his words earlier today.

As leaders, protecting the sovereignty of our nations is one of our most sacrosanct duties. Any violation is unacceptable. It violates the very Charter of

this institution. It violates international law. It violates the peace and security of people.

The United Nations was established to save people from the scourge of war. That fundamental principle has guided this institution since it was founded. So, we need to be 100 per cent clear about what is happening right now. A permanent member of the Security Council, Russia, has launched and continues to wage an illegal war.

(spoke in French)

Vladimir Putin has violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and seeks to deny the rights of the Ukrainian people to determine their own future. At the same time, the Russian Federation has been flagrantly using its veto right within this Organization to facilitate the war and the violations of the principles of the United Nations.

(spoke in English)

We must all stand up to that affront to the United Nations. We must take action to stop the tragic deaths and violence, including sexual violence, caused by that unjustifiable invasion. We must not let the world return to a place where might makes right. We must make sure that borders mean something, even when a neighbour has a bigger army. Respect for the rule of law and accountability to it should be fundamental and non-negotiable.

This body was born out of the ashes of the deadliest war humankind had ever seen. Tens of millions of people died in Europe, Africa and Asia during the Second World War. Watching bloody conflict return to Europe has shaken the conscience of the world, and it threatens the peace that for three quarters of a century led to unprecedented prosperity around the world. We cannot let that happen. Because it is not just Ukraine or even just Europe that suffers if we do not uphold our values. All of us will suffer, including all of the international community in the global South.

And it is not just about the far-reaching and long-term impacts, it is about the suffering that is happening right now. Russia is weaponizing energy and food, leading millions to face shortages, hunger and even starvation. Canada is dedicated to mitigating the impacts on the most vulnerable. We do not believe we have to choose between supporting Ukraine and supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and global development. In fact, the only responsible choice

is to do both, which we are doing with solidarity and financial commitment.

(spoke in French)

The fight of Ukraine is also our fight. It is also our common struggle, and there can be no doubt about that. Canada calls on Russia to immediately and completely withdraw its troops without conditions.

(spoke in English)

Canada supports the key principles of the Ukrainian peace formula because it must be a peace that respects the Charter of the United Nations, is based on international law and preserves Ukraine's territorial integrity. A peace that upholds our common humanity and common values, not a peace that turns a blind eye. It must be a peace that is built on respect for the facts and respect for the rules. That is what Canada will always stand for everywhere.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Grlić-Radman (Croatia): Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is the greatest challenge to global peace and security in decades. Surely, most of the significant tragedies caused by this Russian invasion are mired in human fatalities — war crimes and crimes against humanity that displaced and otherwise harmed human lives. But Russia's war has also caused unprecedented economic, social and humanitarian tragedies whose effects are felt globally.

By deciding to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative and increasing military attacks on Ukrainian ports and agricultural infrastructure, Russia continued to weaponize food and further aggravate global food insecurity. The energy insecurity, also created by the Russian invasion, has harmed not only the global economy, but whole societies, peoples and regions around the world. The fact that these actions come from a permanent member of the Security Council, and a nuclear-weapon State no less, makes the threat to global peace only greater.

By denying the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, the pillars of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Russia attacked the very idea of multilateralism and the United Nations itself.

Ukraine, one of the founding Member States of the United Nations, has an inherent and undeniable right to defend itself and to fight for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Recognition of those unalienable rights is the foundation on which the United Nations were built upon. In that sense, we are all Ukraine.

The Security Council will remain a casualty for as long as the war rages in Ukraine. The General Assembly responded responsibly and without hesitation by holding a special session and offering a clear platform for the world's condemnation of the war against Ukraine. That global call continues to provide immense value and support to multilateralism. However, in order for the multilateral system to be efficient, the world needs fully functional United Nations organs, dedicated to their respective mandates, and their mutual cooperation. Regrettably, we lack that today.

Multilateralism can be effective only if it is founded on justice, but justice cannot be maintained if there is no accountability. For that same reason, accountability for crimes committed in Ukraine must be upheld. That is not only because the victims of Bucha, Irpin or Kharkiv deserve justice. More than anything, there needs to be accountability so that we can prevent such atrocities from recurring and, thus, safeguard the multilateral system and the role of the United Nations.

With that in mind, Croatia supports efforts to promote accountability for international crimes committed in and against Ukraine in all relevant multilateral forums, including the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe. In doing so, we should also keep in mind that the pursuit of accountability is not an event, but part of a long and complex process. The post-conflict transition will also be very challenging. Croatia is determined to stand by Ukraine.

The President: I now give the floor to the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria.

Mr. Schallenberg (Austria): Almost 19 months ago, Russia broke peace in Europe with its brutal

invasion of Ukraine, an independent and sovereign neighbour. This war of aggression has been causing unimaginable destruction and despair. It has been 19 months of targeted attacks on civilians, of barbaric war crimes, of irresponsible nuclear threats and the cynical use of hunger and energy as a weapon, affecting the most vulnerable people.

It is time to stop. Russia must withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The people of Ukraine deserve a just and lasting peace. Austria will support any initiative leading towards that goal, including President Zelenskyy's peace plan.

Let me be very clear. Yes, this is a war in Europe, but it is by no means a European war. It is an assault against the rules-based international order. It is a flagrant and deliberate breach of the founding Charter of the United Nations. Through the Charter, every single State in this Chamber has committed to settle international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat of use of force.

And what is worse is that this breach has been committed not by just any State, but by a permanent member of the Security Council, of this very organ. That is why my country, Austria, is taking such a clear stance. Yes, we are militarily neutral. But we are never indifferent or neutral when it comes to violations of international law, because it is our shield, our protective cloak against the unilateral use of force, against an international system where might makes right and where the rule of law is replaced by the law of the jungle.

Let us not beat around the bush — Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has once again shown the inability of the Security Council to act. It is high time that we address the obvious structural problem by making the Council more representative, including through adding African countries, and by finally having an honest discussion about the end of the veto power. The time when five States had the power to decide for all of us is long gone. The time to reform is now.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Ms. Hasler (Liechtenstein): The aggression against Ukraine has been a fundamental challenge to the international order for 18 long months now. I wish to pay tribute to the bravery of the people of Ukraine. We

are heartbroken by the suffering of all the victims of Russia's war of aggression.

For billions of people around the globe, the United Nations is primarily a guarantor of peace and security. That requires our collective respect for international law and the will to enforce it, together. When we joined the Organization, we did so out of the belief in the international order reflected in the Charter of the United Nations. That includes the guarantee that the illegal use of force, the violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity and, certainly, acts of aggression will be met by a strong collective response from the United Nations membership.

The Council has not been able to play its leadership role. As we all know, that is due to the repeated use of the veto by the Russian Federation. We are therefore determined to continue our work to enhance the role of the General Assembly on matters of peace and security. The veto initiative (General Assembly resolution 76/262) was just a first step in that respect.

The General Assembly has proven its ability to take up the Council's role. With respect to Ukraine, it has done so with overwhelming support from Member States. Together, we have taken decisions of fundamental importance that set the parameters for the peace that we are all looking for — the full withdrawal of all Russian troops from all of Ukraine and the need to ensure accountability for the most serious international crimes.

In the context of Ukraine, accountability is the key to securing a peaceful future for Ukraine and for our region. But accountability is also key far beyond Europe as a safeguard of the international order we have given ourselves, founded on the prohibition of the illegal use of force. The aggression against Ukraine is the most blatant challenge to that order since the creation of this Organization.

Making it clear that the very launching of that war of aggression is a criminal act is therefore the only way to protect not just Ukraine, but indeed all members of the United Nations — and of course small States in particular — as we move forward together. Ukraine's efforts to ensure meaningful accountability for the crime of aggression, in line with international law, therefore have our full support. It is indispensable to guarantee, in the interest of all of us, a United Nations with a functional Security Council, not a blocked one, and an international order governed by law, not by war.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mrs. Odobescu (Romania): I commend the Albanian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this significant high-level open debate on the maintenance of peace and security in Ukraine.

As a neighbouring country of Ukraine, I would like to share some perspectives more than a year and a half after the Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine started. The Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, generated and prolonged the gravest international crisis of multilateralism since the end of the Second World War. It undermines the Charter of the United Nations and everything the United Nations stands for. Today we stand with the Charter and international law and reiterate that there is only one way to end the aggression: the Russian Federation needs to cease its use of force and withdraw completely and immediately from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected by all United Nations Member States. But peace in Ukraine cannot be restored by inaction. Romania fully supports the Ukrainian peace formula as the single framework conducive to a fair, lasting and sustainable peace — a peace that does not reward the aggressor.

This illegal war is affecting both our region and, as the Council knows, the entire world. It is severely affecting security in the wider Black Sea area. Recently, fragments of Russian drones were found on our territory in the proximity of the Romania-Ukraine border, generating a high risk for the inhabitants of the area. The war is challenging the resilience of neighbouring States such as the Republic of Moldova, the State most affected by the war besides Ukraine itself.

The impact of the war of aggression against Ukraine also remains a matter of concern for all United Nations Member States. It has consequences of global proportions, especially for food security, energy and economic stability. By terminating the Black Sea Grain Initiative and attacking Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea and the Danube River — just across from the territory of Romania — the Russian Federation has further intensified the global food crisis. Romania remains committed to supporting global efforts on food security. So far, we have facilitated the transit of more than 25.5 million tons of Ukrainian grain.

With another winter approaching, we will meet the expectations of the vulnerable once again. Since the first day of the war of aggression, the Government and people of Romania acted as first responders in providing help to the some 6 million of Ukrainians who have crossed our borders and sought shelter in our country.

Romania strongly supports the efforts to seek accountability for all the crimes committed against Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. There should be no impunity for those responsible for atrocities in Ukraine. That is another aspect of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

The crisis we face today requires enhanced cooperation and common solutions. Global action for Ukraine and for defending the rules-based international order has now become even more relevant. And we now need an effective United Nations reform, starting with this very organ, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. We must avoid fatigue and grow even more united and resolute in defending and upholding our values and international peace and security, starting with a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia.

Ms. Wong (Australia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important high-level open debate. I acknowledge all of our colleagues here today, in particular the representative of Ukraine.

The Security Council has a singular responsibility to the people of the world for the maintenance of international peace and security. The establishment of the Council was a clear statement of intent by the nations of the world that the sovereignty of all Member States must be respected, that larger countries should not be able to determine the fate of smaller countries and that disagreement should not spiral into war. When the Council was established, its members took on a serious obligation, especially its five permanent members (P5), who were granted a power to veto the will of the Chamber. Having that power demands of the P5 an obligation to prevent conflict, to not act as an aggressor and to lead by example in upholding the rules.

The veto was never intended to empower a country to abuse the Charter of the United Nations and to be above the law. But it has been more than 570 days since Russia launched its illegal and immoral full-scale

invasion of Ukraine, a flagrant violation of the Charter by a permanent member of the Council and an attack on every Member State and everyone at this table. Russia's actions are driving the global crisis in food and energy security. Its termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its attacks on Ukrainian food infrastructure have kept food from those who need it most.

But while the cost of Russia's war is being paid by the world's most vulnerable people, Ukraine suffers the most. Russia has inflicted tragic loss of life and catastrophic damage across Ukraine. It has placed Ukraine's very existence under threat. It has torn apart families, abducting thousands of children in an effort to re-educate them to disavow their loved ones and hate their homeland. This conflict has seen great cruelty, but removing a child from family to such ends is nothing short of abhorrent. Australia stands steadfast with the people of Ukraine, who continue to show extraordinary courage, and we join all those calling for the return of Ukraine's abducted children. We contribute defence, economic and emergency humanitarian assistance — some 890 million Australian dollars thus far — and support Ukraine's efforts to hold Russia to account. Our objective, like so many others, is to help empower Ukraine to end this war on its own terms.

As United Nations Member States, we all have a responsibility to call out Russia's egregious behaviour. The rest of the Council's permanent members must be utterly unyielding in their pressure on Russia to end this war. Russia's abuse of its veto is mocking us all. It underlines the need for urgent reform of the Council, including constraints on the use of the veto. It has never been more necessary for the Council to uphold the principle of the sovereign equality of all members of these United Nations. That is the first principle of the Charter and the very rationale for the United Nations itself.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium.

Ms. Lahbib (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Eighteen months ago, the world was stunned as it bore witness to the Russian aggression in Ukraine, which infringed upon the Charter of the United Nations. The principles of the Charter are not only moral and legal imperatives, but they also determine the very existence of an international order based on values to which every human being ultimately aspires — peace, prosperity and the enjoyment of their rights. An overwhelming

majority of the members of the General Assembly took a firm stand by underscoring a commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The General Assembly also deplored the devastating consequences of the Russian aggression on civilians, in particular children, in full violation of international humanitarian law and human rights.

We applaud the fact that Russian armed forces and affiliated groups in Ukraine have been added to the list of shame in the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. We must now take action. Regrettably, thus far, the Security Council has failed in its role as the ultimate guarantor of peace. Ukraine is not the only country to suffer from that powerlessness. More than ever before, the entire world needs a functional, effective international order that is rooted in respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

As Ukraine burns, challenges faced in other parts of the world persist. The Sustainable Development Goals are facing enormous delays. Belgium is fully cognizant of that as it contributes more than ever before to effective multilateralism and to reform of international financial institutions. As the European Union and its member States provide 43 per cent of global development assistance, Russia has been unscrupulous. It blocked the maritime transport of grain and targeted the infrastructure that feeds the entire world. Russia has transformed its aggression into a cynical business model and strengthened its position on the grain market, further increasing some countries' dependence on it, while engaging in the vilest form of blackmail. Broad interregional support for the resumption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative yet again demonstrates the intrinsic value of that Initiative, which we hope will secure greater support in the near future.

The majority of the participants in today's open debate have voiced their opposition to a vision of international relations in which force takes precedence over law. The aggression constitutes a crime against peace and a crime against international law. Pursuant to the Rome Statute, the Council should refer the matter to the International Criminal Court, but it is paralysed. Belgium therefore fully supports efforts to establish an international special international tribunal on Russia's crime of aggression against Ukraine to ensure that that crime does not go unpunished.

In conclusion, allow me to emphasize the fact that respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty are prerequisites for a return to peace, as emphasized in

resolution ES-11/6, adopted by the General Assembly in February. Those two principles are also the basis for the peace plan put forward by President Zelenskyy and discussed in both Copenhagen and Jeddah. Belgium supports that plan and will remain committed to finding a solution to the conflict that can result in fair and lasting peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia.

Mr. Wlachovský (Slovakia): I thank the Albanian presidency for convening today's open debate.

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

Bearing in mind the myriad common challenges we face, such as climate change and inequality, it is shameful that we have to meet today to deliberate on such basic indisputable principles as those set out in the Charter of the United Nations. Regrettably, they are being seriously undermined by one Member State — a State in a permanent seat of the Council with specific responsibility for upholding international peace and security.

Ukraine, a Member of the United Nations family, is exercising its right to self-defence in accordance with the Charter and its Article 51, due to Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression. Russia not only disrespects a sovereign right of its neighbouring country to choose its own future but escalates the situation through so-called elections in temporarily and illegally occupied Ukrainian territories — the Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions.

We strongly condemn that attempt to illegally integrate the territory of Ukraine, whose sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity we fully support. In that regard, I would like to recall that the opinion of the international community on Russia's shameful aggression has already been expressed. In its resolution of October 2022 (ES-11/4), by its 143 votes, the General Assembly condemned Russia's malicious conduct.

We also express our strong concern about the increasing number of casualties. Intentionally directing attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime. Slovakia will continue to support all efforts to ensure full accountability for those responsible, including financial accountability through compensation for all damage caused.

I also want to remind members that the consequences of Russia's actions reach far beyond Ukraine. We deplore Russia's decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative, followed by increased attacks on Ukrainian ports. With that, Russia is only further exacerbating the global food crisis. Moscow is utterly indifferent to the hundreds of millions of people worldwide facing hunger. Instead, Russia and its representatives continue spreading propaganda and disinformation and, even worse, threatening to use nuclear weapons.

I believe we can all agree that such behaviour is utterly unacceptable, and we have a collective duty to take all possible actions to stop Russia from holding the world hostage to its imperialistic appetite. We once again call on Russia to immediately stop its aggression against Ukraine and completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders. That way, the Russian Federation can not only immediately restore peace in Ukraine, but also demonstrate a willingness to return to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chile.

Mr. Van Klaveren (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, which governs international coexistence, establishes the obligation on States to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, to resolve disputes by peaceful means and to comply, in good faith, with the obligations they undertake.

Within that context, the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of every State Member of the United Nations, including Ukraine, must be respected and protected. General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), of 1974, defines aggression and stipulates, in article 5, that "a war of aggression is a crime against international peace". As a founding Member of the United Nations and in full compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Chile reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Once again, Chile expresses its complete rejection and condemnation of war crimes perpetrated on Ukrainian territory, under the control of Russian forces, which have been made known to the United Nations

Independent International Commission of Inquiry in Ukraine. Our ongoing commitment to international humanitarian law and to the international protection of human rights led Chile to convey to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court its decision to join other States in referring the situation in Ukraine to the Court. The decision was communicated by the United Kingdom on 2 March 2022, on behalf of 39 States parties to the Rome Statute. The main goal of this action is to initiate an independent and impartial investigation of the events, with a view to holding those responsible accountable and meting out appropriate punishment in the light of international criminal law.

At this particularly difficult time, when the whole world is feeling the effects of a conflict between States, Chile would like to reaffirm its support for the general mandate of the International Criminal Court, as well as the need to maintain the conditions needed to enable it to act effectively and impartially. We firmly believe that the Court is the most appropriate body to hear and investigate all crimes committed in Ukraine under its jurisdiction, while always bearing in mind the principles of complementarity and cooperation. We believe it is preferable to strengthen our current international and national accountability mechanisms, which would contribute to legitimizing the current international jurisdictional structure.

We should consider current transitional justice practices, which would undoubtedly help to establish a more specific and effective path for the Ukrainian situation. Transitional justice places victims and survivors at the centre of the solution and is always focused on preventing any repeat violations of human rights and addressing the root causes of the conflict that gave rise to them. That is why it is vital to ensure that the process of documenting human rights violations resulting from this conflict is carried out, as it will provide the information necessary to determine the form and type of reparations needed. This war of aggression's effects, and the restoration of justice in Ukraine, pose new challenges to us as an international community. Facing those challenges as we search for the best possible solution requires solidarity from all of us.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.

Mr. Gerapetritis (Greece): The post-war security system established by the Charter of the United Nations relies on one fundamental premise, which is the prohibition of the use or threat of force. The Security

Council is the body that has been entrusted with the ultimate responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. Unfortunately, however, today the entire United Nations system is being gravely challenged by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The foreign policy of Greece, as a founding member of the United Nations, has always been defined by its commitment to international law. Together with our European Union partners, we are calling on all nations to do their utmost to ensure that the peaceful settlement of disputes in full respect for international law by all prevails. To that end, it is crucial to ensure that all nations respect the international treaties that have defined borders between States, as well as important agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We have therefore taken a principled and clear position on Russia's aggression from the beginning. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is considered a grave breach of the Charter and remains a serious threat both to European security and global peace and stability. Along with the rest of the European Union member States, Greece will continue to provide support to Ukraine. With regard to the issue of accountability, we firmly believe that the alleged crimes committed in and against Ukraine should be thoroughly investigated.

An ongoing and far-reaching consequence of Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the acute food insecurity felt by many vulnerable countries around the world. While the Secretary-General has been engaged in trying to revive the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Russia's regrettable withdrawal from that United Nations-brokered initiative has nonetheless brought exports to a halt. Moreover, Russia's attacks on Ukraine's ports have aggravated the security situation in the Black Sea, making the export of Ukrainian grain by that route impossible. More than half of that grain was transported by Greek shipping companies, and many of those vessels carried grain directly to the countries that need it most. As a leading maritime nation, Greece attaches great importance to freedom of navigation and maritime security. In the light of these developments, the European Union has decided to increase the capacity of alternative routes for exporting Ukrainian grain. In that context, along with the Baltic and Adriatic corridors, Greece is offering Ukraine an alternative transportation route to the Aegean Sea by making use of ports in northern Greece in cooperation with our partners, Bulgaria and Romania.

Greece is a candidate for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2025–2026 term. If we are elected, our term will be guided by three core values that are universally expressed in the Greek language — that is, diplomacy, dialogue and democracy. Diplomacy and dialogue remain the only path to the peaceful resolution of disputes, but lasting stability and security cannot be sustained without democracy. Today Ukrainians are fighting for the right to live in a democratic society, and Greece and the European Union stand with them.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Ms. Bruins Slot (Kingdom of the Netherlands): I would like to thank the Albanian presidency of the Security Council for arranging today's open debate, one that we need to have in the Council right now, during the opening week of the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. This is a week in which the world demonstrates its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations system and the international rules-based order that the United Nations represents.

It is now more essential than ever that we show that commitment, because the rules-based order is under pressure. Exhibit A, as the Secretary-General said yesterday (see A/78/PV.4), is Russia's attack on Ukraine, which is also an attack on the United Nations Charter and the rules-based order. Russia's aggression is destroying the lives of the Ukrainian people every day, a people who continue to show immense resilience and courage in the fight for freedom and independence, a people who as we speak are dealing with indiscriminate killings, unlawful attacks on civilian infrastructure, sexual and gender-based violence and the forcible transfer and deportation of children. As we all know, the impact of those violations extends well beyond Ukraine. Our energy and food supplies, our economies, our safety and security are all intertwined, and they are being affected everywhere. Vulnerable countries are also being disproportionately affected. That could all end now if Russia ended its unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine.

It is our duty, as peace-loving nations, to send a clear message. Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its manifest violations of the Charter must stop. It constitutes a breach of the peace and a threat to international security. Russia will be held accountable for those violations. All of us here are committed to fostering international peace, prosperity and security.

All of us are committed to meeting our obligations under international law. We must therefore join forces to prevent further violations, protect civilians against the violations that are ongoing and prosecute the perpetrators of past violations. We must do that by taking action when the Charter's principles are violated and by supporting the relevant resolutions and accountability initiatives. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands with Ukraine and with its people. We are providing financial support and giving Ukraine the means with which to defend its sovereignty. We will continue to do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes.

The President: I now give the floor to the Prime Minister of Spain.

Mr. Sánchez Pérez-Castejón (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain and the European Union are firmly committed to effective multilateralism that upholds the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is within the multilateral framework that, through dialogue and diplomacy, the great agreements that ensure peace, freedom and prosperity for our fellow citizens can be reached. That is precisely why I wish to reiterate our strong condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, as well as our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. There is no room for parity when analysing the situation — in this conflict, there is clearly an aggressor and a victim.

The situation is serious because it pertains to issues that we thought we had overcome decades ago, such as the fact that the legitimate aspirations of one State, including its security concerns, cannot be defended at the cost of forcibly violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another. It is even more serious when those principles are undermined by a permanent member of the main international organ charged with ensuring them, namely, the Security Council, before which we find ourselves today.

The impact of the war at the global level is devastating. It is affecting food security as well as nuclear and energy security worldwide, with dire consequences for millions of people, especially those living in vulnerable countries. I therefore make a solemn appeal to the Russian Federation to return immediately to the Black Sea Grain Initiative and to stop using hunger as a weapon of war. Its position is simply deplorable.

Spain and Europe want peace and are working for it. The aim is to put an end to the aggression and to the suffering of the Ukrainian people, but it is also to defend the international rules-based order that makes possible peaceful coexistence among nations. We are working with the international community to broaden the consensus towards achieving a just and lasting peace. We support President Zelenskyy's peace formula, which respects international law and the United Nations Charter. It will be up to Ukraine to determine the timing and conditions for initiating the process to end the conflict.

The European Union will stand united in its quest for peace. We will continue to provide strong political, economic, military, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine for as long as necessary, and we will contribute to the reconstruction of that war-torn country. We will also continue to strive to ensure full accountability for war crimes and other serious crimes that may have been committed, using whatever multilateral instruments are available to us.

However, I conclude by saying that in order to achieve peace, it is necessary for Russia to end its aggression and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. We believe that it is possible to have a broad debate on security in Europe in which the legitimate interests and concerns of all are taken into account. But such a debate is impossible while the sovereignty and territorial integrity of one of the parties is being violated. That is a matter of respect for the most basic principles underpinning the multilateral edifice embodied by the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Konaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation for the invitation to be here today and for the opportunity to gather in this important Chamber, which symbolizes the core of cooperation among nations. We are here to stand together in defence of such cooperation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the President of Guatemala on behalf of the Group of Friends of Accountability following the Aggression against Ukraine.

Our world is now unfortunately far from peaceful and secure. It is a world in which both injustice and

intolerance are putting in danger our shared values — the very foundation of our humanity and prosperity.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is not an isolated incident but stands as the most obvious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Its consequences are catastrophic, with countless lives lost, families torn apart and millions displaced, leading to a humanitarian crisis.

As States Members of the United Nations, we must stand strong. We do not need to look too far into the past to see what happens when our community of nations fails to uphold and defend the rules and norms of the world order. We have a right and an obligation to speak out about this topic because we have suffered due to the genocide that took place in an area of my country under the protection of the United Nations — Srebrenica — while the rest of the world stayed silent.

Violations of the rules of the United Nations Charter are no longer acceptable. They constitute an offence against our shared values. The ideals of the United Nations Charter should never be subject to disrespect or compromised. It is our duty to stand for the noble principles upon which this Organization is built. Effective responses require responsibility, respect for international norms, strong coalitions and progressive, inclusive leadership.

Despite obstacles such as the abuse of the veto power, we have taken decisive steps through the General Assembly, and we are voicing our determination to defend Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as all principles based on justice. We are decisive in our defence of this Organization and what it stands for. We will stand together in demanding that such violations stop, and we will work tirelessly for a just peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

Ms. Tewaney Mencomo (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I cannot help but recall that on a day like today, 40 years ago, Panama assumed the presidency of the General Assembly of this Organization, demonstrating our tireless efforts to promote the participation of all countries in overcoming the inequalities that hinder peace and the well-being of the peoples of the world. It is with that same determination that I wish to address the Security Council, based on the soundness of the arguments that support our position in favour of achieving lasting peace in Ukraine and with the

indomitable spirit so characteristic of my people, to reiterate clearly that we will not cease to persist in any just cause for peace.

Since the beginning of the conflict, Panama has been steadfast in its call for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. We have advocated dialogue and an end to the aggression, as demonstrated through our support for the relevant resolutions submitted to the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. Our position is one that firmly condemns the use of force and violence in order to avoid any further loss of life.

Panama believes that the Organization must increasingly adhere to its own principles in order to render its peacemaking action more effective. International peace rests on efficient and effective multilateral institutions, full respect for human rights, overcoming all forms of intolerance and the promotion and institutionalization of dialogue. I emphasize the word "dialogue". The legitimacy, authority and competence of the Council is derived from the Charter — the same Charter under Article 2 of which it is incumbent upon all States to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. It is therefore necessary to reiterate the enormous responsibility shouldered by every member of the Council to comply fully with the Charter. Only in that way will we be able to keep open the paths leading us away from frustration and avoid violent shortcuts.

Although we are all well aware of the tragedy under way, we would be remiss if we failed to mention the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the war. Therefore, we reiterate our call for ensuring access to humanitarian assistance and protecting civilians, including humanitarian personnel and vulnerable people, especially children. Panama understands all too well the struggle of peoples who suffer as a result of defending their sovereignty and refuse to accept the imposition of the will of the powerful upon the weak. Based on our own experience, we know that no State has the right to appropriate or unilaterally annex the territory of another nation, much less through the use of force.

We call for respect for international law and resolving ourselves once again to finding what unites so that we can focus our undivided attention on the multiple challenges facing us and continue efforts to reduce the effects of climate change, poverty, inequality

and the impact of transnational organized crime in order to improve people's lives. In keeping with its vision as a country with a pacifist and multilateralist calling and promoter of dialogue, Panama deeply regrets the devastating conflict in Ukraine and the impact that it is having on the entire world, especially developing countries. We know the causes and consequences of the conflict, and it is therefore understandable that the international community persist in its demand for a definitive solution that, above all, achieves peace. Such peace will be possible only through the strict application of the principles of international law.

Beyond the rhetoric and what we have seen on the ground, the stability that we have achieved to date, which has brought with it an era of increased prosperity and global growth, is also at stake. We must therefore avoid setting a precedent for similar future events, which could occur in any other part of the world. Panama reiterates its commitment to the principles of the Charter and multilateralism, as a means for promoting peace. Those are the historical pillars of our foreign policy, and we will continue to defend them in every forum and throughout the world with the tools that have always been our trademark: dialogue, negotiation and words. That is our strength, and, in accordance with our deep-seated convictions and based on our calling, we will continue to build bridges of dialogue and always promote peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Aleinik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Attempts by certain actors to rewrite the basic principles of international law and international relations to suit their own interests, while disregarding the legitimate interests of the majority of members of the international community, have resulted in an unprecedented degree of polarization in the world in general and in our region in particular. The situation has been exacerbated by the aggressive opposition of certain countries — that have become accustomed to the belief that they are at the centre of human civilization — to establishing a fair and equitable, polycentric world order. Consequently, the role played by force is increasing in international relations. The architecture of international security, non-proliferation and arms control has almost completely collapsed. We note with great alarm the disproportionate growth in military capabilities and the arms race not only in our region, but also in our neighbouring countries.

All of Belarus' initiatives to reduce confrontation, restore trust and strengthen regional security that we have proposed over the past years have been disregarded. For some reason they were looked down upon. As a result, the conflict in Ukraine flared up with renewed vigour in the European region, and the entire world has suffered its harsh consequences, as manifested in economic, food and energy crises. As a country having a common border with Ukraine, more than any other party, Belarus is interested in a rapid and peaceful settlement of the conflict. As a neighbouring country, Belarus also has its own profound insight concerning the conflict. It was in Belarus that the Minsk agreements were signed, which launched the Ukraine peace process, as was the package of measures for their implementation, which was endorsed by the Security Council.

We believe that that bears mentioning, regardless of those who would prefer pass over the matter in silence. The long-awaited result of the negotiations in the Belarusian capital should have become the basis for the peace process in Ukraine. The implementation of the agreements could have put the process on a sustainable positive trajectory. However, that did not happen, and today it is obvious why it could not happen. Our Western colleagues have spoken eloquently in that regard. Some have bluntly stated that they had no plans to end the conflict and that today they intend to fight to the last Ukrainian.

Against that background, the accusation that Belarus is aiding and abetting the aggression is completely absurd. I recall that, last year, three rounds of Russian-Ukrainian peace talks were held in our country. Since March 2022, Belarus has willingly hosted Ukrainians and foreign citizens who fled the hostilities in Ukraine. Immediately upon their arrival, they were, and continue to be, provided with needed assistance, including humanitarian aid. By a special decision by the country's leadership, they virtually enjoy the same rights as our citizens. Has any Western country adopted similar decisions? Since the end of February 2022, approximately 120,000 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Belarus, which is almost 1.5 per cent of our country's population. Do you really think that those people would have come voluntarily to Belarus, had they felt we were aggressive towards them? The answer is obvious and logical. Let me recall that our country is bearing this burden on our own, and, instead of assistance, we are met only with illegal sanctions from the West. We have officially invited the Secretary-General to visit Belarus

personally or send his representatives to assess the situation on the ground. Our borders are open, and we are open to constructive cooperation. The end of the conflict is inevitable, and it will end at the negotiating table. We welcome the growing number of countries that have proposed reasonable and peaceful initiatives to resolve the situation in Ukraine.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Belarus' readiness to contribute to resolving the situation in order to achieve long-term and sustainable peace in the region, which all our countries and our peoples need today.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See.

Archbishop Gallagher: This open debate of the Security Council takes place in the context of the cruel and senseless war against Ukraine, which, with great sacrifice, is defending its sovereignty and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. Those are the same values promoted and shared since the foundation of this noble Organization. Faced with the ongoing tragedy, a spontaneous question arises: Against whom is this war being waged? It is before the eyes of everyone that those paying the highest price are civilian, simple people and, above all, children, youth and the elderly. War is a great evil. At present, we can see that it is expanding more and more, beyond Ukraine's borders, covering not only Europe but other continents with its thick cloud, and above all infiltrating human hearts, making them containers of a logic of war. Truly, as Pope Francis has reminded us, we are witnessing a third world war that is being fought piecemeal.

It is undeniable that Russia's attack on Ukraine has jeopardized the entire global order that arose after the Second World War. Its negative consequences can already be glimpsed in the humanitarian, demographic, food, sociopolitical, legal, economic, ecological, military, nuclear, energy, health, educational, religious, migratory and other areas, which taken all together constitute fundamental elements of the architecture of world security. Evil is incapable of generating good. Aggression can generate only new aggression. If this war is not stopped and peace is not sought at every turn, the whole world risks plunging into even deeper crisis.

The solution to the war in Ukraine is not only a matter for Ukraine itself. In the face of the tragedy unfolding before our eyes, it is past time to ask ourselves some of Pope Francis's questions. What am

I doing today for the Ukrainian people? Am I doing anything? Today more than ever the entire international community cannot surrender and let the issue pass by in silence. In order to have a peaceful and secure future, all States Members of the United Nations, and especially those on the Security Council, are called on to join their efforts in the quest for a just and lasting peace for Ukraine, as an important element of the global peace for which the world is thirsting. It is better and cheaper for all to invest in peace rather than war.

For its part, the Holy See is close to Ukraine and fully upholds its territorial integrity. It also continues to engage in humanitarian initiatives aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Ukrainian population, especially those members of it who are weakest and most vulnerable, while at the same time urging all States and relevant international organizations to become creative and courageous artisans of peace and weavers of constructive dialogue. Peace is not a reality whose features and properties are unknown. Everyone knows what peace is. It will surely come when there is a common commitment to implementing it, not only at the international institutional level but in our hearts and homes. To all, and especially to tormented Ukraine, I would like to express my heartfelt wish that the peace we desire may return to cheer the whole world.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport of Ireland.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I thank the Albanian presidency for organizing this very important open debate. I also thank the Secretary-General for his contribution today and President Zelenskyy for his powerful statement.

In our capital city of Dublin, our main street is called O'Connell Street. At each end of that street there is a statue, each of them dedicated to a man who worked for Ireland's sovereignty and independence. At the north end of the street, there is a statue of Charles Stewart Parnell, the leader of our Home Rule movement, and on it is written the inscription "No man has the right or any right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation". The United Nations is based on that principle — that every country has a right to its own sovereignty. At the other end, there is a statue to Daniel O'Connell, our liberator, who famously said, "Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong". What President Putin has done and what this war has caused is morally and fundamentally wrong, and it has to stop. Russia's illegal war of choice is not only a war on the people of Ukraine

but on the Charter of the United Nations and on the very foundations of our multilateral system. In seeking to impose its will by force on a peaceful neighbour, Russia has blatantly violated the Charter's principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States.

In the 19 months since tank columns first advanced on Kyiv, Kharkiv and Mariupol, we have lost track of the number of horrific attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Just two weeks ago, 16 Ukrainians, including a child, were killed in Russia's indiscriminate missile attack on Kostiantynivka, an indefensible violation of international law and a blatant attack on civilians that no amount of disinformation can explain away.

All Member States rely on the rules-based international order as a guarantee of our independence, our sovereignty and our security. That is why pushing back on this ongoing and blatant violation of international law by Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, is so critically important. The Council, charged with the critical mandate of maintaining international peace and security, is too often unable to meet its obligations, not least when one of its permanent members is the aggressor State. That failure to act has had harrowing real-world consequences. We have seen the catastrophic impact that Russia's disregard for international law has had on women and children in particular. Conflict-related sexual violence has been a consistent feature of this war, while the evidence of the enforced deportation of Ukrainian children underscores just how the most vulnerable can suffer the most unspeakable harm.

If we fail to hold Russia accountable, that failure will have far-reaching consequences in terms of cooperation on so many of the global challenges we face, whether they are efforts to address food security, energy security, nuclear safety or the environment. Ireland unequivocally condemns Russia's nuclear threats and the utter disregard for safety that its forces have shown at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

As we reflect this week on the Political Declaration on the Sustainable Development Goals, on which Ireland, together with Qatar, has proudly led, the threat to global food security and the increased risk of global hunger resulting from the conflict have been thrown into sharp relief. It is encouraging that the General Assembly has taken action where the Security Council has failed. There have been six General Assembly resolutions in reaction to Russia's invasion. Most recently, the General

Assembly's adoption in February of resolution ES-11/6, on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, was an important signal from an overwhelming majority of Member States of their commitment to upholding the Charter of the United Nations.

It is our collective responsibility to stand fully with the people of Ukraine in the face of this brutal aggression. Fifteen million people have fled their homes, and we are proud to have welcomed more than 90,000 Ukrainians to Ireland, which is now close to 2 per cent of our population. The war is entirely of Russia's making. Just as Russia chose to start this war, it can choose to end it. It is up to Ukraine to determine the terms, conditions and timelines for any peace agreement, and Ireland reiterates its strong support for President Zelenskyy's peace plan in that regard. We support the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and Ukraine itself to bring an end to the war and to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the principles of the Charter. We will continue to do our part to support the Ukrainian people and to ensure that there can never be impunity for such violent disregard of the rules-based international system.

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

Mr. Akçapar (Türkiye): We are living on a precipice where our deliberations do matter. Türkiye has been a strong advocate of the rules-based international system, and we are concerned about the possibility that humankind may not protect it. The United Nations is at the core of efforts to uphold, restore and bolster international peace and security and sustainable development. The United Nations and the Security Council itself matter.

The Council was created to prevent the scourge of war, and its primary purpose should continue to be our guiding light in rendering the United Nations more fit for purpose. The power of the veto was granted to the permanent members of the Security Council to enable them to avert conflicts, protect victims and facilitate the maintenance of peace. Unfortunately, that system has morphed into a mechanism that prioritizes the interests of the few and is becoming increasingly anachronistic. With the war in Ukraine, the United Nations is confronting a crisis that has shaken the Organization's founding principles. It is fair to say that such cataclysmic chapters are hardly exceptional in the history of our Organization. There have been moments

in the past when the United Nations failed to do its duty because the veto of one member trumped the will of the rest. The ongoing war in Ukraine has laid bare the crisis in representation within the Organization.

After 18 months, there is still no end in sight for the war. The protracted and attritional nature of the conflict continues to exact a heavy toll on Ukraine and its people, as well as the region and indeed increasingly the world. The conflict's regional and global fallout is becoming worse. Challenges we have been facing in food, energy and supply line security are deepening.

As we head into the second year of the war, Türkiye remains firmly committed to Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. In the meantime, our pursuit of a negotiated end to the conflict continues. Since the start of the war, Türkiye has assumed efforts to facilitate diplomatic talks. After negotiations collapsed in March of last year, we shifted our efforts to addressing the practical challenges of the war, such as prisoner exchanges, food security and nuclear security. Our diplomatic efforts, together with the United Nations, brought the Black Sea Grain Initiative to life, which lasted for a year and averted a global food crisis. Its ultimate termination will unsettle the global food markets and has already shaken the stability of the Black Sea, creating risks of escalation, with the rest of the world waiting in suspense. Now we are working closely with the United Nations to revive the Initiative.

As unanimously declared by almost every country that spoke today, overwhelming global support for the restoration of the Initiative is heartening and central to the efforts of the United Nations and our own efforts. Sustainable food security depends on ensuring an uninterrupted supply from all resources available. Fair and equitable distribution of food products should also be integral to the campaign. Ultimately, diplomacy can, we hope, help us reach our goal to revive this precious Initiative.

Ukraine deserves a just peace that will secure its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We remain convinced that this can be achieved through negotiations and that the diplomatic track is worth every effort. The broader issues concerning European security and preventing future crises and conflicts can be settled only purposefully through diplomacy, and diplomacy cannot thrive while the cycle of conflict endures. With that understanding, we have supported attempts at facilitating that, including the Chinese and

African initiatives. We expressed our support for the Ukrainian peace plan in principle and participate in its meetings. We also note that a negotiated peace would have to include both Ukraine and Russia. It may be said that the current dynamics of the conflict may perhaps not be conducive to resuming negotiations. However, we must be ready when that inevitable moment emerges. Fortune favours the prepared.

That brings me to an even larger issue. Conflicts are on the rise. The principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes is enshrined in the Charter of this Organization, whose fundamental principles we have been striving to uphold and restore over the past one and a half years. The Charter of the United Nations already involves essential tools to prevent and peacefully resolve conflicts such as the one in Ukraine. Those tools can and must be utilized to the fullest in a constructive and innovative way.

In the period ahead, Türkiye will maintain its unwavering support to Ukraine not only to win the war, but also to win the peace.

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

Sheikh Al-Sabah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I congratulate your friendly country, Mr. President, on presiding over the Security Council for this month. We wish you, Sir, and your team every success in the remaining work of the Council. I would also like to thank you for organizing this important session, which is held at a very critical time. It has offered us the opportunity to listen to an update by His Excellency President Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, on the most recent developments related to the Ukrainian crisis.

Our world today is facing many unprecedented, intertwined and interconnected political, security, economic, humanitarian and environmental challenges. Our multilateral system is therefore facing a true test, which may be the most difficult test that the United Nations has faced since its establishment in 1945. Given the different transnational risks that our world is facing today, the international community has only one option — to cooperate — so that we can address those regional and international challenges. We must overcome many of the challenges and threats by committing to the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles. Upholding the Charter is the way to achieve international peace and security, and its

articles will guide our way to rightfulness, justice and dignity. Its provisions are a road map for maintaining relations among countries. It is a constitution for international action and multilateralism.

The most notable purposes and principles of the Charter are the following: respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of countries and non-interference in their internal affairs; the peaceful settlement of disputes; refraining from the threat or the use of force against another Member State; establishing friendly relations among countries; reaffirming equal rights and the right of peoples to self-determination; and promoting and respecting human rights.

The State of Kuwait reaffirms its position rejecting the threat or the use of force in international relations among countries. We also follow with deep concern the heightened tensions in Ukraine and reaffirm the need to remain committed to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as respecting State sovereignty, territorial integrity and good neighbourliness.

The State of Kuwait also calls for respecting the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine, and we reiterate our position that supports all mediation efforts for calm, de-escalation and restraint. It is also important to engage in dialogue and settle the conflict through negotiations. We also call on the parties to remain committed to the provisions of international law and international humanitarian law when it comes to the protection of civilians. They must also facilitate the quick and safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General with regard to the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We also commend the efforts of Mr. Dashti, the United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We regret that the Initiative was not renewed and stress the need for renewing it given its great importance in guaranteeing stability in food prices and establishing food security at the global level.

The Ukrainian crisis is an example of why we need to reform the Security Council to enable it to fully carry out its responsibilities pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we reaffirm the need to move forward with the reform process so that the Security Council can address the increasing challenges confronting our world today in a more representative, transparent, neutral and credible manner.

In conclusion, the State of Kuwait reaffirms that the United Nations is the cornerstone for multilateral international action. Upholding the noble purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is a solid foundation on which to organize relations among countries. I also reaffirm that upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter is the first line of defence for small countries. That is well recognized in the State of Kuwait. The liberation of the State of Kuwait is a good historical example of what the Security Council can do and a clear reflection of what countries were aspiring to do when they drafted the Charter, as it corrected an act of aggression, assault and occupation that destroyed and violated the noble purposes and principles of the Charter and must be avoided. The Council's position with regard to Kuwait's right will remain deep-rooted in the minds of Kuwaitis forever.

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

Mr. Al-Muraikhi (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we congratulate Albania for presiding over the Security Council during the month of September, and we thank you, Mr. President, for holding this important meeting on the maintenance of peace and security in Ukraine, pursuant to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and through effective multilateralism.

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the State of Qatar.

The State of Qatar is committed to the peaceful settlement of differences and disputes everywhere. We regret that the war in Ukraine has continued for more than 18 months. We are particularly concerned about the humanitarian consequences of that war on unarmed civilians. Its repercussions on the security, humanitarian, health and economic situation around

the world are getting worse, especially when it comes to global food security and the efforts to combat hunger. Those repercussions have been particularly affecting developing and poor countries. The State of Qatar therefore reiterates its call on all parties to the crisis to show maximum restraint, end the war and achieve sustainable peace.

The State of Qatar takes this opportunity to reiterate its firm position regarding the Ukrainian crisis. That position is based clearly and firmly on the principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The State of Qatar supports the principles of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We are fully committed to the principles of the Charter, especially Article 2, which calls on Member States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means and to refrain, in their international relations, from the threat or use of force. We also call on all parties to fully honour their obligations, pursuant to the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In conclusion, the State of Qatar reiterates our willingness to support all efforts or endeavours to end the war in Ukraine. We commend the efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of civilians, in addition to their efforts to address the repercussions of the war.

The President: It has been a long day, but there are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. Given the lateness of the hour, with the concurrence of members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting until tomorrow at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.35 p.m.