



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

9421st meeting

Thursday, 21 September 2023, 5.05 p.m.

New York

President: Ms. Dautllari (Albania)

Members:

Brazil	Mr. Sénéchal de Goffredo Junior
China	Mr. Niu Xiaoqiang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. Olmedo
Gabon	Mrs. Koumba Pambo
Ghana	Mr. Boateng
Japan	Mr. Hamamoto
Malta	Mr. Ciscaldi
Mozambique	Mr. Irachande Gouveia
Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland	Mrs. Baumann-Bresolin
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Almusharakh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America	Ms. Saha

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 5.05 p.m.

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Ministers and other high-level representatives present in the Security Council Chamber. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Verma (India): We convey our felicitations to His Excellency Prime Minister Edi Rama for Albania's successful presidency of the Security Council and for convening this timely and important open debate today.

India continues to remain concerned over the situation in Ukraine. We have always advocated that no solution can ever be arrived at at the cost of human lives. An escalation of hostilities and violence is in no one's interest. We have urged that all efforts be made for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an urgent return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

The global order that we all subscribe to is based on international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. Those principles must be upheld, without exception. Dialogue is the only answer to settling differences and disputes, however daunting that may appear at this moment. The path to peace requires us to keep all channels of diplomacy open.

We note with regret that the collateral consequences of the conflict have led to rising prices of food, fuel and fertilizers, affecting the world at large and particularly the Member States of the global South, who have been left to fend for themselves. From our perspective, it is critical that their voices be heard and their legitimate concerns be duly addressed. India's presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) has ensured that some of the economic pitfalls faced by developing countries were brought to the forefront of the G20 agenda for solutions to issues such as debt distress. India's approach to the Ukrainian conflict will continue to be people-centric. We are providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, as well as economic support to some of our neighbours in the global South facing economic distress.

We need to avoid steps that endanger the possibility of dialogue and negotiations. At the present juncture, we must pause and ask ourselves two pressing questions. The first is: are we anywhere near a possible acceptable solution? And if not, why is it that the

United Nations system, and particularly its principal organ, the Security Council, mandated to primarily maintain international peace and security, is rendered completely ineffective to the resolution of the ongoing conflict? For multilateralism to be effective, outdated and archaic structures need reform and reinventing, else their credibility will always be on the wane. Unless we fix that systemic flaw, we will continue to be found wanting.

In conclusion, we continue to advocate Prime Minister Modi's view that this is not an era of war. On the contrary, it is a time for development and cooperation. It is indeed vital that we continue to believe in the promise of diplomacy and that eventually it is always dialogue and diplomacy that deliver.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister of People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Gil Pinto (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is strongly committed to defending the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. That is why we view with great concern the threats to international peace and security represented by the continuing disregard of and non-compliance with the commitments and obligations arising from international treaties and agreements to which Member States are parties, as well as from other sources of international law, in flagrant violation of the foundational Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations.

In 2015, when we were a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we voted in favour of resolution 2202 (2015) in support of the Minsk agreements (see S/PV.7384). Unfortunately, the failure of those agreements led to the crisis of international security that we have been confronting for over a year. In 2022, we alerted the international community about the existence of what, in our view, was a three-tier crisis in Eastern Europe, which unless it was dealt with in a cautious and balanced way, had the potential to unleash a global conflict. Unfortunately, our warnings were not and continue to not be heeded. Far from having made progress on a genuine dialogue towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. We find ourselves today in ever greater confrontation and polarization. We must change direction and do so immediately without further delay.

In a case such as the one we are discussing, multilateralism plays an essential role in resolving conflicts, and with that in mind, in the United Nations has a major task ahead of it. That is, in case of a conflict, the role of our Organization has been to reorient conflicts towards democracy with a view to a peaceful resolution. It is our obligation today to contribute to easing tensions before they reach a point of no return that could threaten the survival of current and future generations throughout the world. Our country is convinced that only through open and sincere dialogue with the goal of understanding will it be possible to reverse the situation in which we find ourselves.

The United Nations must facilitate a peaceful solution to the conflict through dialogue and political negotiation between Russia and NATO in order to build a European security mechanism that is balanced, effective, indivisible and sustainable. Political discrimination and the unilateralism of groups are the main obstacles in that regard. Putting an end to the crisis therefore requires that the parties to the conflict engage in sincere dialogue and advance towards peace. That implies, first and foremost, complying in good faith with international law and the various relevant international agreements, and secondly, it means putting an end once and for all to resorting to incendiary rhetoric, divisive approaches or reckless actions, such as the supply of the means to prolong the conflict or the perpetration of attacks against critical infrastructure.

The international community plays an important role in this situation and its actions can fuel or reverse the situation. Venezuela is convinced that a solution to the conflict requires international commitment in favour of dialogue and against violence and other forms of pressure such as unilateral coercive measures and political manipulation of justice as an instrument for wielding threats. In that connection, we condemn the censorship of the media and disinformation, which makes it difficult to make a decision that is informed by the real situation on the ground.

We also call for refraining from participating in the growing and uncontrolled arms race which diverts towards war resources that could be used for development and combating poverty. That growing indiscriminate and uncontrolled flow of weapons is leading to a clash of blocs and seriously threatens international peace and security. Along those lines, we once again insist that achieving a definitive unilateral victory is only an illusion.

In conclusion, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reiterates its unswerving commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and stresses, from this rostrum, that only through diplomacy, dialogue and coordination, without pressure or sanctions, will we put an end to this unfortunate conflict which today threatens all of humankind.

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

Mr. Dangor: (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the opportunity to contribute to today's discussion. We hope that this debate lays the basis for concrete action to end the war in Ukraine and focuses on work that is required towards a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine, with renewed commitments to inclusive multilateralism, wherein the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law are consistently implemented in all situations.

The Charter of the United Nations established a normative framework based on international law that guides the international, multilateral system and intergovernmental relations. Those include the principles of territorial integrity and the prohibition of the annexation of land through the use of force.

It is incontestable that since its creation, the United Nations has prevented an outbreak of another world war; has promoted development, political solidarity and respect for human rights; and has extricated many countries from colonialism and violent conflicts. Although the United Nations has registered many successes, it has also had its fair share of challenges and failures. The Security Council's failure to take meaningful action to respond with equal vigour to all threats and risks to international peace and security undermines its credibility. South Africa has advocated for the uniform application of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including upholding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Similarly, the Council should ensure that the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the freedoms of the peoples of Palestine and Western Sahara, for example, also receive attention. The failure to uniformly and fairly implement international law weakens the normative framework of international accountability and makes the world less safe for all. We hope that there will now be a greater commitment to ensure that all countries are held accountable for not

abiding by the laws and norms of the Charter of the United Nations.

That being said, South Africa reiterates the need for urgent action to end the war in Ukraine and for an immediate ceasefire and the start of negotiations towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. We express concern about the escalation of the conflict and its negative regional and international socioeconomic implications. It is a war whose impact is felt in all countries all over the world, as it contributes to the current debilitating global food, fuel and financial crises.

As Africa, we have not been immune to its consequences. The war is contributing to slowing down the momentum on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

Diplomacy and dialogue remain the only path to the sustainable and peaceful resolution of the war. Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations enjoins us to seek peace through peaceful means. It is imperative that through our words and actions we seek to de-escalate rather than intensify that brutal war. It is important for the United Nations and its Member States to direct efforts towards creating the conditions conducive to dialogue, mediation and diplomacy without preconditions. While doing so, we should halt any transfer of arms, which fuels the conflict.

While we believe that war is never wise, when there is war, the Security Council must call on the warring parties to respect the laws of war, especially the principle of distinction.

The initiative of African leaders to visit and engage with Ukraine and Russia was the first high-level direct initiative from the continent to highlight our views on the necessity for a just and lasting peace. African leaders visited Kyiv and Saint Petersburg to engage with Presidents Zelenskyy and Putin on the perspectives on the ongoing war and the prospects for its end. African leaders emphasized the common desire for peace and encouraged Ukraine and Russia to seek a diplomacy-led process of negotiations.

It was noted that the African continent has its fair share of conflict. Our fight against colonialism and apartheid and the conflicts we continue to face has provided us with a perspective on the necessity for a long-term peace, which is required for all progress and development.

After the conflict began, substandard peace proposals were put forward by various parties. There are no doubt issues of commonalities in all of those proposals, which indicate key issues that have to be addressed. As we considered the attainment of peace, it was emphasized that Ukraine and Russia consider confidence-building measures that would build trust and ease tension.

Our focus has been on resuscitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative, addressing the return of Ukrainian children and ensuring the release of prisoners of war. South Africa has also been participating in the processes begun in Copenhagen and their follow-ups in Jeddah, which is known as the Ukrainian peace formula. We are participating in that process as part of a commitment to engage in all processes and furthering dialogue and peace.

In conclusion, it remains imperative for the Council to implement all the initiatives aimed at just and lasting peace in Ukraine. As the leaders of the Group of 20 agreed recently in Delhi, this era should be one of peace, not war.

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

Mr. Oddone (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina defends and promotes the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. They are the basis of peaceful coexistence and include respect for international law, the sovereignty of States and their territorial integrity, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the unrestricted observance of human rights.

Argentina is therefore following the conflict in Ukraine with attention and extreme concern. My country reiterates its firm condemnation of the aggression against that country and urges the Russian Federation to immediately cease the illegitimate use of force and military operations on Ukrainian territory.

It is imperative that the conflict be de-escalated immediately and that all parties involved return to the negotiating table. We are convinced that diplomacy and dialogue are the only way forward to avoid further suffering and to find a lasting solution. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and other actors who continue to work to facilitate constructive engagement between the parties.

One example of such efforts is the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Argentina welcomed the agreements

reached in 2022 that enabled the export of millions of tons of grain from Black Sea ports. The continued implementation of the Initiative is critical for saving lives and stabilizing global prices and provides a clear example of crisis management. We regret Russia's decision not to extend the Istanbul agreements and call for the resumption of negotiations with an eye to reactivate said agreements.

The possible consequences of a spiralling conflict are a clear and present danger. We therefore express our grave concern about the threat posed by the continuation of military activities around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the largest nuclear facility in Europe. We commend the work that the International Atomic Energy Agency is conducting with the parties to ensure that the area remains safe.

War is not a blank cheque for combatants. War has limits, and they must be respected. Compliance with international humanitarian law is imperative in the conduct of hostilities. Respect for international law is not optional.

The world wants peace in Ukraine, a sustainable peace that is in keeping with the United Nations Charter and international law. This war is a catastrophe. Argentina will continue to promote dialogue and a peaceful settlement to end the conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to Grand Chancellor Paternò di Montecupo.

Grand Chancellor Paternò di Montecupo: Please allow me to thank the President of Republic of Albania and the Republic's Ambassador to the United Nations for inviting the Sovereign Order of Malta to contribute to this open debate on a peaceful resolution to conflict in Ukraine.

The peace and the security of Ukraine is of concern to us, as it affects not only the peace and security of its 43 million citizens, but also the security of Europe and, by extension, the world. The Sovereign Order of Malta has enjoyed diplomatic relations with Ukraine for the past 15 years, but our involvement and support for the Ukrainian people runs far deeper and stretches back over a quarter of a century. During this period we have provided medical and humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine, long before the current hostilities.

In April of this year the Ukrainian Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, in his meeting in Rome with the Grand Master and the Grand Chancellor of the Order of Malta,

expressed the deep gratitude of his country for the work of the Order in Ukraine. His words were confirmed this week, when the Ukrainian Ambassador to the Order of Malta, His Excellency Ambassador Andriy Yurash, issued a joint press release with me, attesting to the fact that the contribution to Ukraine by the Order of Malta "represents the most extensive humanitarian operation undertaken by the Order of Malta since the Second World War."

Within the framework of humanitarian assistance, tens of thousands of volunteers and aid workers from the Order of Malta and other bodies have populated borders and checkpoints neighbouring Ukraine since hostilities began, offering aid and comfort. Many millions of refugees have received a warm embrace from foreign neighbours who have set aside cultural differences to serve a common humanity in need.

Yet in Ukraine itself, even this week, the carnage and destruction continues. Our Catholic confrères, Caritas-Spes, just this week suffered the destruction of an aid warehouse in Lviv containing 300 tons of aid, the most recent of several attacks on their work and a sad continuation of last year's attack in Mariupol, which resulted in the death of two aid workers. Yesterday the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Denise Brown, condemned, in the strongest terms, the attack in Lviv. She reiterated her concern about the impact of such attacks on humanitarian workers, facilities and assets, which are protected under international humanitarian law.

There is no easy solution to this conflict, but peace remains the only way out of this tragic plight. We are aware that the process could be long, difficult and painful, but there is no alternative if we want to halt, as soon as possible, the human suffering and the worldwide negative economic and social repercussions.

We grieve over the infinite waste of resources that is a consequence of war. Government bodies and independent analysts estimate, conservatively, that by the end of 2023 the world economy will have spent \$224 billion on this conflict, enough to fund UNICEF for the next 30 plus years.

In the brave new world of the twenty-first century, there is no such thing as a regional or a contained war. There will always be implications that go beyond the local and reveal the complex interdependencies that are a consequence of the global context in which we operate.

A case in point is the issue of global food security, the rising prices and the dangers caused by shortages in developing nations, particularly Africa. These are greatly exacerbated by this war. The bigger and stronger a world Power, the more significant the responsibility it has, not only for its own citizens, but also for those who live outside its borders, yet rely on it for services and products and for neighbourly support. In the same way, in the community of nations might does not always make right, and strong and powerful peers must exert greater influence and take more responsibility for reining in the behaviour of those that transgress the norms of the United Nations Charter and the rules-based world that it enshrines. They should not subvert or ignore it for their own ends.

Allow me to conclude by citing Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*,

“[P]eace is but an empty word, if it does not rest upon ... an order that is founded on truth, built up on justice, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom.”

Surely that is a formula that respects and echoes the United Nations Charter, and is one to which we should all subscribe if the suffering of the Ukrainian people is not to be in vain.

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

Mr. Nasir (Indonesia): I thank Albania for convening this open debate.

The Charter of the United Nations was drafted in the spirit of ensuring peace and solidarity for all countries to build a world anew. That spirit, along with upholding the principles of the Charter and international law, requires a strong multilateral peace infrastructure to ensure sustainable peace for all, including in Ukraine. In a world with complex and multifaceted global

challenges, efforts to achieve sustainable peace should not be a piecemeal endeavour.

In that context, let me raise three points.

First, we need to build a strong multilateral peace infrastructure that is reinforced by an effective mechanism for the peaceful settlement of disputes and fortified by a regional architecture that contributes building blocks for peace.

Secondly, we need to have a New Agenda for Peace, with a reformed Security Council at its core, that truly meets the needs of today and is equipped for the challenges of tomorrow.

Thirdly, sustainable peace requires effective peacemaking and peacebuilding. Strong and effective United Nations peacekeeping operations are therefore important.

The war in Ukraine has gone on for far too long. Its implications are being deeply felt beyond the boundaries of those involved. Peace must prevail in Ukraine. Peace talks must start with urgency. Despite its shortcomings, the current multilateral peace infrastructure must do its utmost to bring about peace in Ukraine. Only through diplomacy and negotiation can we achieve peace in Ukraine. We all have the responsibility to create the necessary conditions for peace talks to succeed. No war can be justified. War only brings misery and destruction to humankind.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the main responsibility of the Council, whether in Ukraine, Palestine or any other existing conflict area. Upholding the principle of multilateralism remains the best way to resolve any issues related to peace and security. The principle of multilateralism in the Charter should guide our way to achieving our common goal — to create a world that is peaceful, prosperous and equal.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.