



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

*Provisional*

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Tuesday, 21 November 2023, 3 p.m.

New York

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Geng Shuang . . . . .	(China)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. França Danese
	Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
	Ghana . . . . .	Mrs. Hackman
	Japan . . . . .	Mr. Ishikane
	Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
	Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Fernandes
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Miroslav Jenča, Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations; and Mr. Matthew Hollingworth, Representative and Country Director in Ukraine at the World Food Programme.

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

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

I give the floor to Mr. Jenča.

**Mr. Jenča:** Last weekend, we reached a new grim milestone in the war in Ukraine. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has confirmed that to date more than 10,000 civilians have been killed and more than 18,500 have been injured since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Hundreds of children are among the victims. The full toll of this war is likely to be much greater, as there is no sign of an end to the violence. Instead, there are indications that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure may escalate further during the upcoming coldest season. The impact for millions of Ukrainians will be dire as they brace themselves for the second war-time winter.

Since I last briefed the Security Council, less than two weeks ago (see S/PV.9470), Russian aerial attacks across the country have continued to inflict death and destruction to areas near and far from the front lines. On 11 November, Kyiv was attacked by missiles, for the first time in two months. While the capital was spared

from casualties that night, attacks on Kyiv and its region have continued; the city was attacked by drones just this weekend. On the same day, strikes killed four people: two in Kherson, one in Dnipropetrovsk and another in the Zaporizhzhya region, according to local officials. The city of Kherson, recaptured by Ukraine over a year ago, has continued to suffer regular intense bombardments, resulting in civilian deaths. Last week, at least nine people were reportedly killed in the region, and 25 more, including a 2-month-old child, were injured.

In the Black Sea, the risk of escalation and spillover remains. In Odesa on 9 November, a missile reportedly hit a cargo vessel, killing a port worker and wounding crew members of the ship. Landmines posing risks to civilian navigation have been reported. A military incident in the Black Sea, whether intentional or not, could result in a dangerous escalation. Global food security depends on the ability of food exports to move safely and predictably through international waters, including in the Black Sea.

We once again stress that attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international law. Wherever they occur, they are unacceptable. And they must stop immediately.

Amid fresh waves of attacks against energy infrastructure and in anticipation of frigid weather conditions, humanitarian needs are on the rise. Last Friday's drone strikes alone resulted in power cuts in more than 400 towns and villages in the south, south-east and north of the country. They also damaged an oil depot in Odesa. This year's winter response plan, developed by the United Nations and its partners in full cooperation with Ukrainian authorities, is already in full swing.

International solidarity and support for winter and beyond, including through timely donor contributions, remains essential. Some 360,000 people have already received winter support. But \$435 million is still urgently required to deliver house repair materials, winter clothes, heating appliances, fuel and repairs to district water and heating systems for 1.7 million people in need. Continued contributions are also needed for the 2023 humanitarian response plan for Ukraine, which is currently only 54 per cent funded. United Nations agencies have provided humanitarian assistance to more than 10 million people this year. We aim to reach 11 million by the end of 2023.

Regrettably, around 4 million Ukrainians in need cannot be reached in Russian-controlled areas of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions of Ukraine owing to lack of access. They receive only minimal aid through local actors, in partnership with the United Nations and international non-governmental organizations. Humanitarian partners are ready to expand operations in those areas if they are given access and adequate support.

The destruction wrought on the country will take years — decades — to overcome. The United Nations is actively working towards long-term recovery and the rebuilding of the country's energy sector. We focus on infrastructure support for energy generation and transmission for the functioning of basic utilities — heating, water and sewage — in war-affected areas. In collaboration with the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank and the European Union, the United Nations has initiated the third Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment. It will guide the Government of Ukraine's investment priorities for recovery and reconstruction next year. The previous assessment had estimated recovery costs for Ukraine of more than \$400 billion. We are committed to advancing an inclusive recovery based on rights and local needs in communities affected by the war, leaving no one behind.

Regrettably, the war continues to cause often-irreversible damage to Ukraine's education sites and to hinder children's right to education. The Ukrainian authorities have reported that 365 educational institutions have been destroyed, and at least 3,428 have been damaged.

We are also concerned about the disregard of international law in the regions of Ukraine currently under Russian control. Russian officials are holding so-called elections, appointing Russian judges and applying Russian law, even retroactively. Policies aimed at forcefully changing or imposing institutions and identities have far-reaching consequences and are unacceptable.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also continued to document cases confirming that the use of torture has been widespread in the context of arbitrary detention in territories of Ukraine that are currently under Russian control. Accountability for all violations of human rights must be ensured, in line with international norms and standards.

In September, the Secretary-General urged all countries to do their part to prevent further escalation in Ukraine and lay the foundations for sustainable peace. Instead, attacks have increased and conditions on the ground have deteriorated. While prospects for peace may seem distant and the risk of further escalation looms, urgent efforts must be undertaken to minimize the impact on civilians. Amid global challenges and crises, the international community must sustain its focus on Ukraine and end the suffering caused by the war. As the Secretary-General underlined, peace in Ukraine must remain a priority — a just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolutions of the General Assembly. We remain ready to support all meaningful efforts to that end.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Jenča for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Hollingworth.

**Mr. Hollingworth:** On behalf of the World Food Programme, I am honoured to appear before the Security Council today. I will briefly speak about the humanitarian consequences of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine and, in particular, the impact on food security both domestically and globally.

Today, because of hostilities, Ukrainians are being cut off from accessing markets to buy food, and farmers are reporting that they can no longer produce enough food — a situation that has a dramatic impact inside and outside Ukraine. The war in Ukraine is driving food insecurity inside the country, and this is a country that used to feed 400 million people around the world per year before February 2022. Right now, we know from our surveys that in 80 per cent of the settlements close to the front line, people face barriers in accessing food. Today around one in five Ukrainian families faces some level of severe food insecurity. The closer someone lives to the hostilities, the more critical those needs are. As a result, more than 900,000 people still living within 30 km of the front line have the most acute and severe food security needs, which only worsen in the winter.

The World Food Programme is feeding some 750,000 of those people with food baskets throughout the winter, and additionally another 1.5 million people who have broader needs will receive some form of cash assistance in areas that have been directly affected by the conflict but where markets are still working.

Consistently, when people are asked about their priority needs, food, access to medicine and indeed shelter in the winter come out on top. While responding to the food security needs, the irony should not be lost on us that, in one of the world's most formidable breadbaskets, there are hundreds of thousands of people living in proximity to the hostilities who now depend on humanitarian food assistance with no obvious way to cope.

The humanitarian needs in the country are sadly but fundamentally linked to the consequences of the war in Ukraine on agriculture and rural food-producing communities. The impact on Ukrainian agriculture is not only about big numbers, metric tons produced and grains exported, but also about the impact on the everyday life of citizens of the country. Today the war means fields are contaminated with mines and unexploded ordnance, and households are unable to grow the food they need to feed themselves. Approximately 174,000 square km, roughly 30 per cent of Ukraine's territory, have been affected by the conflict and are potentially contaminated by remnants of war. Out of that great number, 25,000 square km is agricultural, food-producing land, and that was some of the most productive land in the country. Despite farming less than 7 per cent of the country's land, it is the smallholder farmers in Ukraine who contribute to 75 per cent of the employment within this sector, and they have been the most adversely affected by the war. As an example, last week I was in Kharkiv oblast, visiting an agricultural demining project that the World Food Programme manages with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The households there are twice as likely to have inadequate food consumption when they cannot have access to their own land to produce their own food.

But the war in Ukraine has also meant that there are continuing attacks on port and grain infrastructure. A forthcoming report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will reveal some findings. Since mid-July, there have been 31 documented attacks targeting facilities crucial to grain production and export from the country. Twenty-eight of those attacks were in Odesa oblast alone, which is the home of the vital Black Sea and Danube River terminals essential for global trade in food.

If attacks on food infrastructure and the blockage of sea export routes continue, it will dramatically impact the agricultural production outlook over years to come, and may, in the worst-case scenario, lead to wheat

production being unable to meet domestic and export demands. That export of produce means that people are being fed around the world. It is important to remember that Ukraine accounted for 9 per cent of global wheat exports, 15 per cent of maize exports and 44 per cent of sunflower oil exports before February 2022.

Our task is now threefold.

First, we must continue to address the acute and urgent humanitarian food needs facing millions of Ukrainians.

Secondly, as we do that, we must not lose sight of the food system recovery efforts that are required. The most recent rapid damage and needs assessment estimated that the country has already experienced a loss of \$40.2 billion in damages to the agricultural sector. And Ukrainian farmers and Ukrainian rural communities most affected need support or indeed they will be left behind.

Thirdly, alongside the rest of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and others have to work to ensure that there continue to be a viable market for the food that is produced in Ukraine. Otherwise, there is simply no incentive for farmers to farm. That includes working to reduce the enormous increase in logistics costs created by any hindrance to the use of Black Sea ports.

We must all keep our efforts on the immediate needs in that country, but also on the long game, to ensure that this agricultural powerhouse can be quickly put back on its feet and made able to feed the world's hungry, because when the next food crisis happens globally, the world will continue to need Ukraine.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Hollingworth for his briefing.

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Country Director in Ukraine at the World Food Programme (WFP) Hollingworth for their briefings today.

This month we mark the ninetieth anniversary of the Holodomor, which translates to death by starvation — death by starvation. Millions of Ukrainian women, men and children perished because of the Stalin regime's harsh and repressive policies, because

of a man-made deliberate famine. It has become a cautionary tale of what happens when we let cruelty and tyranny go unchecked.

But Putin has not taken heed; rather, he has taken inspiration. Like Stalin, Putin has used food as a weapon of war, and like Stalin, Putin has inflicted hunger and death on Ukraine. And let us be clear, Russia is not only waging war on Ukraine's people and food supply, but also waging war on vulnerable people around the world who rely on Ukraine's food exports.

We know that Russia has exacerbated global food insecurity. Prior to Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine was one of the top agricultural producers and exporters. But Ukraine's wheat production is 35 per cent lower than pre-war levels. Why is that? It is because Russia has stolen Ukrainian grain, sabotaged farmlands and bombarded Ukraine's agricultural infrastructure and port cities. One Russian attack destroyed 60,000 tons of grain, which, according to the WFP, would have been enough to feed more than 270,000 people for a year.

Despite those relentless attacks, the Ukrainian people have stood strong, and they continue to be a beacon of hope to the world's most vulnerable. Ukrainian farmers continue to harvest crops even in the face of grave danger. And for a long time, grain was getting out to the world through the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was brokered by the United Nations and Türkiye. More than 60 per cent of wheat exported through the Initiative went to developing economies, including those at risk of severe hunger and malnutrition. But Russia decided to unilaterally end that arrangement without cause and without regard for the needs of developing countries. Still, Ukraine was not deterred. By setting up a Black Sea grain corridor for ships to pass through Kyiv, Kyiv is doing everything in its power to feed the world. Russia, predictably, hates that. It has threatened to attack cargo vessels in the port of the Black Sea. And earlier this month, there were reports that Russia struck a civilian vessel in the port of Pivdennyi. Those actions compromise, shipping, safety and commercial activity, and we must all call on Russia to comply with its international legal obligations and respect freedom of navigation.

President Putin is counting on us. He is counting on us to become numb to the horrors his forces have carried out — the killing and the torture and the rape and other forms of sexual violence, the indiscriminate attack on civilian structure, the illegal forcible transfer and deportation of Ukraine's children to Russia and

Russian-occupied territories, as well as the transport of children from Russian-occupied territories to Belarus. And Putin is hoping that, given the number of crises before us, in the Sudan, in Syria, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Yemen, in Israel and Gaza, we will forget about the plight of the Ukrainian people. I also expect Council members will hear Russia try to change the topic today and throw a litany of whataboutisms our way.

As United States Secretary of Defence Austin said during his visit to Kyiv yesterday,

"The United States will continue to stand with Ukraine in their fight for freedom against Russia's aggression both now and into the future."

We must not let Russia trample on the Charter of the United Nations. We must not let Russia carry out war crimes with impunity and must not let Russia continue to weaponize food and inflict so much pain and suffering on Ukraine by attacking Ukraine's critical infrastructure as the cold, dark winter approaches.

Let us all stand with the Ukrainian people for as long as it takes until families are reunited, until children can go back to school and people can return home, and until a just and comprehensive peace, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, is secured.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth for their briefings.

While the world's attention remains glued to the ongoing dramatic developments in Gaza, with hope that some of the much-awaited good news will come soon, the aggression against Ukraine continues unabated, with terrible humanitarian consequences and a profound detrimental impact on human lives, including for many around the world.

Like it or not, the world media and public attention have their own patterns. They can focus on only one event at a time. Nothing can or should diminish the tragedy unfolding in Gaza, but we cannot forget that civilians are dying every day in a disastrous war in the Sudan, that a horrible civil war is going on almost in silence in Myanmar and that the cruelty of Russia in Ukraine has not stopped, to mention just a few human miseries of our world. That is why this meeting is important, as a very much-needed reality check.

The briefers shared the latest information on several key aspects, and we welcome that. In the



course of nearly two years, Russia has reduced entire Ukrainian cities to rubble, conducted indiscriminate attacks with shelling, missiles and drones against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, caused a massive humanitarian crisis and is guilty of multiple crimes, including crimes against humanity. The reports established by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, based on numerous missions to Ukraine and other evidence, show beyond any doubt that the Russian authorities have committed a wide range of violations, many of which amount to war crimes. They include wilful killings, attacks on civilians, unlawful confinement, torture, rape, sexual violence and forced transfers and deportations of children.

Just a few days ago, Ukraine commemorated the ninetieth anniversary of the Holodomor, otherwise known as the great famine. In the period from 1932 to 1933, millions of Ukrainians were starved to death in a man-made famine engineered by the Soviet Government of Joseph Stalin. In 2023, in a man-made war, the Kremlin continues to weaponize food against the same country and people, this time with effects reverberating around the world. As part of its efforts to subjugate its neighbour, Russia killed the Black Sea Grain Initiative, annihilating much-needed food security relief worldwide. It continues to deliberately bombard and destroy Ukraine's export facilities and grain silos. It has wrecked and heavily mined vast parts of the agricultural land, inflicting huge damage to the country's economy and its output. What Russia did not want, Ukraine is now making possible, thankfully. The food corridor is vital both for Ukraine and for millions around the world.

As we approach the twenty-second month of uninterrupted, brutal war, let us take a moment to look at some key aspects of this war — which was probably a culmination of incompetence, non-strategic decisions and political blunder — and what it has brought for Ukraine, Russia and the world. It was meant to be a three-day promenade. It has been going on for more than 620 days with no end in sight, bringing death and destruction for Ukraine, but also extraordinary costs for Russia itself. It promised to save and liberate Ukrainians. It has only brought misery and suffering, killed 10,000 innocent people and displaced more than 10 million others. It was meant to bring Ukraine closer to Russia. It has instead created a more unified, nationally conscious country and society than before the war. Ukraine has become a candidate country to the

European Union, strengthened its European credentials and is making its choices free from the Russian dictate. It was meant to show Russia's strength and grandeur. It has instead proved a disastrous example of overreach. It has isolated Russia, which stands now as a weak pariah, perceived as a threat to democracies, the European security architecture and the international security system.

By invading its smaller neighbour, Russia showed its contempt for the rules-based international order. It has upset and challenged it. But the world, as shown in the General Assembly, has not followed Russia. It has openly opposed and condemned it. This war, which was based on bogus pretexts and alternative realities that Russia created and continues to perpetuate, has only revealed how little respect a permanent member of the Security Council has for the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolutions of the Council, despite its unsuccessful attempts to preach otherwise.

History can always provide good advice to learn from the past and understand the present. In 1792, Maximilien Robespierre warned that:

“The most extravagant idea that can take root in the head of a politician is to believe that it is enough for one people to invade a foreign people to make it adopt its laws and constitution. No one likes armed missionaries; and the first lesson given by nature and prudence is to repel them as enemies.”

As incomprehensible as it may be, 231 years later, that extravagant idea and that kind of politician are still around — except that today Robespierre's advice to repel enemies is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law and is embodied in the worldwide solidarity with Ukrainians in their right to self-defence and their heroic resistance. It means that we have learned from past mistakes — at least some of us have.

That is why we will continue to support Ukraine's right and ability to defend itself against Russia's aggression, uphold the fundamental principles of multilateralism and help the Ukrainian people to build the secure, prosperous and independent future they deserve. Because, let us not forget, for Ukraine, the defence efforts are a matter of survival. For Russia, the war has been and remains a matter of caprice and imperial design. It is therefore crucial not to allow Russia to get away with crimes: the crime of changing

borders by force, the crime of illegal annexation of territory and the crime of deliberate policy that could bring back anarchy in Europe and instability in the entire world. That is why standing with Ukraine and for its sovereignty and territorial integrity means all of us defending democratic values, the international rules-based order and the Charter of the United Nations — what we stand for.

**Mrs. Hackman** (Ghana): I would like to thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Miroslav Jenča, and the Country Director in Ukraine at the World Food Programme, Mr. Matthew Hollingworth, for their briefings.

As the Security Council turns its focus once again on the prevailing conditions in Ukraine and, in particular, the continuing effects of the war on food security, my delegation reiterates Ghana's firm support for a just, peaceful and comprehensive political settlement. We continue to believe that diplomacy and dialogue are pertinent for redirecting the military fixation of the warring parties towards non-combatant peace efforts, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Much like the global finance and energy systems, the global food system, already under pressure from the climate crisis and the coronavirus disease pandemic, has been manifestly affected by the war on Ukraine. As noted in one of the briefings, millions of people, especially in developing countries, including those reliant on exports under the World Food Programme, have been pushed closer to the brink of food insecurity and the threats of hunger and famine. With as many as a quarter of a billion people facing food insecurity worldwide, we are worried about the growing risk that the war on Ukraine poses to many people far removed from the theatres of war. That is particularly the case today, as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which facilitated the export of some 30,000 metric tons of essential food, abated rising food prices and met the pangs of hunger of many, stands terminated. Grain storage facilities and ports have also been destroyed, reducing the already compromised export capacity of Ukraine by approximately 40 per cent. We therefore join many others in encouraging continuing efforts by all relevant stakeholders to restore grain supplies to the global markets, with a priority for countries that are vulnerable and whose populations face famine and hunger.

As the war grinds on, with increasing risk to the lives and livelihoods of civilian populations, especially women, children, the elderly and the sick, we reiterate the necessity of unhindered access for humanitarian aid and assistance to address the heightened vulnerabilities arising from the frigid conditions of winter temperatures. We also highlight the dictates of international humanitarian law for the safety and protection of civilians during wartime and call once more on the parties to align their actions with the humanitarian principles of distinction, proportionality and military necessity. It cannot be said enough that civilians and civilian infrastructure are not and should not be targets of war.

We conclude our statement by reiterating our appeal for an end to the war in Ukraine. Fully convinced that there is no alternative to winning the peace in Ukraine, we strongly call on the parties to address their competing interests at the negotiating table and away from the battlefield.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth of the World Food Programme for their briefings.

The scale of the humanitarian needs arising from the war in Ukraine continues to grow as attacks continue to target critical infrastructure, hospitals, Black Sea ports, schools and homes. The living conditions of the more than 3.7 million displaced people are becoming increasingly difficult as winter draws on. In its latest update, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs underscores that almost 1.7 million people will need assistance in the next few months.

The civilian toll has been particularly alarming since the war in Ukraine began. Nearly 3,800 schools have been damaged by the fighting or destroyed outright, and there have also been numerous attacks on health facilities. Gabon reminds the belligerent parties of the importance of respecting their obligations under international humanitarian law and all the relevant Council resolutions. We want to reiterate that civilians and anyone else who is not a participant in the fighting must not be targeted for attack. We are alarmed by the proliferation of drone attacks, which are a major factor exacerbating the effects of the conflict on people's daily lives. We reiterate our call on all the parties to refrain from using any weapons with indiscriminate and inhumane effects.

In a global context marked by increasing food insecurity, with the risk of famine in certain fragile countries, we want to emphasize that agricultural infrastructure must not be the target of armed attacks. The effects of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam on such key economic sectors as agriculture and fishing are a potential threat to the livelihoods of people in the surrounding areas. It is crucial to manage those effects properly and take adequate measures to ensure resilience on the part of the populations affected.

In conclusion, we reiterate our appeal to the countries with influence over the belligerents to use diplomatic channels to bring this deadly conflict to an end. Gabon encourages all parties to prioritize dialogue with a view to achieving peace and peaceful coexistence.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth for their briefings, and I welcome Ukraine's participation in today's meeting.

As we just heard from our briefers, the lives of civilians in Ukraine remain precarious, a situation that is set to worsen, given the onset of winter and a recent intensification of the attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure. The situation is particularly alarming considering that Ukraine's energy system is more vulnerable than it was at this time last year. There is little excess capacity and minimal spare equipment. Ensuring a consistent supply of electricity and heating during the coming months will be critical to the health and safety of the population. In eastern Ukraine, continued military engagements are putting civilians at risk, and as the fighting intensifies in various areas, civilian displacement is increasing. It is particularly challenging for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and we encourage all efforts to ensure their safety and provide them with assistance.

Following the expiration of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July, the conflict intensified in and around the Black Sea and its ports, which has negatively affected Ukraine's ability to export grain and other food items. Reduced food exports affect not only Ukraine but many people all over the world who rely on a stable and affordable food supply. Indeed, in its presidential statement of 3 August (S/PRST/2023/4), the Council re-emphasized the obligations of all parties to conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law to respect and protect civilian objects, including objects necessary for food production and distribution, such as food

processing and storage sites and hubs and means for food transportation. That reaffirmed many of the provisions of resolution 2417 (2018), which highlighted the obligation under international humanitarian law to protect objects necessary for food production and distribution and drew attention to the links between conflict and hunger. The law is clear, and we call on all the parties to the conflict to adhere to it fully.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative was a practical mechanism for enabling the protection of civilian objects required for food distribution, and it had a significant impact on global food security during the year it was in effect, enabling the export of nearly 33 million metric tons of Ukrainian grains and foodstuffs. While we regret its expiry, we note the subsequent establishment of a Black Sea corridor, which has facilitated the export of Ukrainian food and goods on more than 150 ships. We also reiterate that civilian objects remain protected under international humanitarian law at all times, whether or not they are part of the Black Sea Grain Initiative or the corridor. We strongly encourage discussions aimed at re-establishing a joint mechanism to ensure the protection of civilian ports, shipping and other necessary elements of food distribution, and to potentially create momentum for broader diplomatic breakthroughs.

There remains only one way to put a sustainable end to this war's destructive impact on the people of Ukraine and to its negative consequences for global food security, as well as to address its regional and international political repercussions, and that is to bring the conflict to a peaceful conclusion. We reiterate our call for a cessation of hostilities and a just and lasting peace that respects Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. We encourage all serious efforts to that end and stand ready to support them.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I join my colleagues in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and the World Food Programme representative and country director in Ukraine, Mr. Matthew Hollingworth, for their briefings.

On the ninetieth anniversary of the Holodomor, I too would first like to pay tribute to the millions of victims of that great famine caused by the Soviet regime. Our thoughts are with the victims and above all with the Ukrainian people, who commemorate this wound to their soul every year.



Ukraine is the breadbasket of the world. In normal times, it can feed 400 million people a year by itself. The combat operations that have been ongoing since the start of the Russian military aggression have affected some of the country's best agricultural land. As we have heard, one third of the country is potentially contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance, and targeted Russian attacks are destroying Ukraine's Black Sea grain and port infrastructure. Switzerland is deeply concerned about the adverse consequences of those actions for food security, first and foremost in Ukraine but also throughout the whole world, especially in the most vulnerable countries. At a time when one in 10 people worldwide are suffering from chronic hunger, everything must be done to restore and protect Ukraine's capacity to stabilize supply chains. There is a simple solution for that. With a view to protecting the right to food worldwide, we once again urge Russia to cease its combat operations and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory.

We reiterate our call for all parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. We want to remind everyone that international humanitarian law prohibits attacks on goods essential to the survival of the civilian population. The serious damage that has been done to civilian property and objects, and the interruption of essential services such as water, electricity and heating, are particularly alarming as another winter season approaches. Those attacks must stop immediately.

As the impact of Russia's military aggression is felt around the world, we commend all the actors — including Ukraine itself — that are working tirelessly to help those suffering from food insecurity. Switzerland thanks the Secretary-General for giving priority to securing exports via the Black Sea. Nearly 33 million tons of grain and other foodstuffs have been exported under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We regret that by withdrawing from the Initiative, Russia has extinguished this beacon of hope. Since then, more than 150 ships have used the humanitarian corridor launched by Ukraine in the Black Sea. We call on all parties to refrain from any action that could harm civilian shipping, as happened on 8 November.

We also express our gratitude to the World Food Programme (WFP), present with us today virtually. Its activities, in particular food distribution, cash assistance and, in Ukraine, the agricultural demining that we heard about, are essential to supporting

vulnerable people. Switzerland is proud to have supported the WFP's efforts with almost \$15 million since February 2022.

Finally, I underline Switzerland's support for the Grain from Ukraine humanitarian programme. Just a few days before the second summit, we are looking forward to being able to continue today's discussions in Kyiv. We will continue our commitment to global food security and to meeting urgent humanitarian needs. Together, we can return the mined land and destroyed infrastructure to their original state: a sea of grain fields — because hunger should never be used as a weapon of war.

**Mr. De Rivi re** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Jen a and Mr. Hollingworth for their briefings.

I would like to highlight two points.

First of all, France continues to condemn the illegal war of aggression led by Russia against Ukraine. Since 24 February 2022, the Ukrainian people have defended themselves with courage, despite suffering daily abuses, crimes and torture. Russia relentlessly attacks civilian populations, in violation of international humanitarian law. Since Friday, Kyiv has been targeted by several dozen Shahed drones. Russian forces are also targeting Ukraine's critical infrastructure, in particular its energy infrastructure. Those indiscriminate strikes worsen the situation of the population. Nearly 17 million people now need humanitarian assistance. As winter approaches, we must remain fully committed. A total of  300 million has been mobilized by France to respond to emergency needs and ensure that essential infrastructure is restored. France will continue to provide Ukraine with the necessary assistance to enable it to exercise its right to legitimate self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We will also continue to support the Ukrainian courts and the International Criminal Court, with a view to combating impunity.

Instead of forging ahead and endangering international peace and security, Russia must end this war. It must stop its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, as requested by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022. It must heed the appeals of the General Assembly, which, by an overwhelming majority, has affirmed and reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and declared any attempt to annex Ukrainian territory as illegal under international law. Restoring Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial

integrity and preserving our collective security are at the heart of Ukraine's vision for a just and lasting peace. In that regard, we welcome the meeting held in Malta on 28 October and the participation of a growing number of States in this work.

Secondly, we remain committed to mitigating the consequences of this war of aggression at the global level, in particular by combating food insecurity. Russia made a unilateral decision not to renew the Black Sea Grain Initiative and has conducted repeated attacks on Ukrainian production and storage infrastructure. On 9 November, Russia targeted a civilian ship in the port of Odesa, killing the captain and injuring several crew members and shore personnel. That was the twenty-first attack on Ukrainian ports since July. These demonstrate that Russia continues to use food as a weapon. The consequences are felt well beyond Ukraine by the populations of the most vulnerable countries. In response, France and the European Union have been working since the start of this war to support the continuation of Ukraine's agricultural activities and allow Ukrainian agricultural products to supply world markets, particularly via solidarity corridors. France has decided to increase its contribution to the World Food Programme (WFP) to the tune of €166 million in 2023, including for the benefit of Ukraine. With our support, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will be able to contribute to the demining of agricultural land in Ukraine through an innovative project using artificial intelligence. France will continue to provide support to the countries most vulnerable to food insecurity, with food aid that will exceed €950 million in 2023. Our participation in the Grain from Ukraine summit in Kyiv on 25 November and the holding of the global food security summit yesterday in London demonstrate our engagement on this subject.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča and World Food Programme (WFP) Representative and Country Director in Ukraine Matthew Hollingworth for their briefings.

More than 600 days have passed since the aggression against Ukraine began. Today we once again pay our utmost respects to the Ukrainian people, who are defending their country. There are numerous conflicts around the world. There is no silver bullet for identifying all the causes and effects of each one. However, this war of aggression is very different from other conflicts. Its causes could not

be clearer. This unprovoked war of aggression was started by Russia. And Ukraine is fighting against it in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to protect its own people, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

There is a plethora of credible information from multiple sources, as well as ample evidence on the ground, that the damage and disastrous humanitarian situation caused by Russia is enormous. Russia continues to attack critical infrastructure, including power plants, causing the Ukrainian people to suffer as they enter their second winter since the beginning of the war. It has also withdrawn from the Black Sea Grain Initiative and destroyed port facilities that deliver food abroad, affecting not only Ukraine but the entire world.

We reaffirm our commitment to address the growing needs of vulnerable countries and populations impacted by Russia's aggression. We welcome steps taken by Ukraine to strengthen export routes free of Russian control. We continue to fully support the export of Ukrainian agriproducts, including through the European Union-Ukraine solidarity lanes, Danube ports and the humanitarian maritime corridor.

We remain steadfast in upholding and strengthening the free and open international order based on the rule of law, respecting the United Nations Charter. In this regard, we reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral attempts to change the peacefully established status of territories by force or coercion anywhere in the world. Such attempts undermine the rule of law, which protects all nations, especially the vulnerable, as well as global security and human dignity. It is unacceptable for an aggressor to profit from violating the United Nations Charter. A just and lasting peace cannot be realized without the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russia's troops and military equipment from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. There must be no impunity for war crimes and other atrocities. Justice must be done, and those who are responsible for the undeniable atrocities that have taken place must be held accountable.

Our commitment to supporting Ukraine will never waver. We have always been with Ukraine and will stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth for their briefings.

Russia is continuing its relentless attacks on Ukraine's ports and grain infrastructure in a deliberate attempt to strangle the Ukrainian economy, with total disregard for the impact on food supplies. That follows its cynical withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has driven up global food prices and put the lives of the world's most vulnerable people at risk. The cost of Russia's war to global food supplies is staggering. In just one month, it destroyed more than 280,000 tons of grain — enough to feed more than a million people for a year. Agriculture production costs have increased. Landmines have reduced the acreage available to farm. In front-line oblasts, households involved in agricultural production have been reduced by a quarter. As well as attacking the food supply, Russia is repeating its strategy of attacking critical infrastructure in winter, attempting to break the Ukrainian people's resolve by depriving them of electricity, heat, water and vital medical services.

Russia will not succeed. Ukraine's resilience and the support of its international partners will remain strong. The United Kingdom will continue to work with Ukraine and its partners to ensure that Ukraine is able to export its grain. The Unity facility launched last week between Marsh McLennan's United Kingdom division and the Ukrainian Government will provide affordable shipping insurance for grain and other critical food supplies from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Ships are sailing and Ukraine's grain is being exported. This week the United Kingdom hosted a global food security summit, galvanizing action to tackle the causes of food insecurity and malnutrition and unlock our diverse resources for a more resilient, food-secure future. We welcome Ukraine's summit next week, which will drive support for the Grain from Ukraine initiative.

As my Foreign Secretary said in Ukraine last week, Russia thinks that it can wait this war out and that the West will eventually turn its attention elsewhere. That could not be further from the truth. The United Kingdom and its partners will support Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes them to achieve victory and a just peace.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth, the representative and country director in Ukraine for the World Food Programme, for their informative briefings.

We are three months shy of two years of the military aggression against Ukraine. We deplore the fact that

it continues to affect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, while simultaneously disregarding the Charter of the United Nations, including principles such as multilateralism and the proscription of war as a way to resolve conflicts. We reiterate that the security of any one State is no more important than the security of any other. We want to remind everyone that the annexation of territory by force has no validity whatsoever and that the arguments used to justify this invasion have no legal basis. We also point out that all provisions of the International Court of Justice must be respected, regardless of whether they relate to Europe, the Middle East, Latin America or Africa. Furthermore, the members of the Council, particularly the permanent members, are the very first called on to respect the decisions of our Organization's main judicial body.

We deplore the fact that this aggression continues to exacerbate the risks of a nuclear accident, as well as narratives and actions that weaken the international disarmament architecture. We also deplore the impact that the war has had on civilian infrastructure, including agricultural and production infrastructure and food storage and distribution sites. We reiterate the need for all the parties to a conflict to fully comply with resolution 2573 (2021), on the protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

We acknowledge the work of the World Food Programme in Ukraine and its support for millions of people facing food insecurity brought about by the war. The support for internally displaced persons is also commendable. The Secretary-General has warned about the global consequences of the conflict since the invasion began, as it is disproportionately affecting those with the fewest resources, disrupting supply chains and taking the Food and Agriculture Organization Food Price Index to its highest level ever. Although grain exports are not food aid operations in and of themselves, they continue to play a vital role in alleviating food insecurity globally, and we therefore lament the fact that the Black Sea Grain Initiative was suspended four months ago.

Lastly, we urge everyone to examine alternatives for restoring peace and security in Ukraine, based on respect for its sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and extending to its territorial waters.

**Mr. Fernandes** (Mozambique): We thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth for their insights on this important issue.

The Council has met again and again to address the conflict in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the situation on the ground is worsening, despite all our calls from the Council and outside it for a cessation of hostilities. The reports from the battlefield indicate a stalemate. As we have said time and again, there can be no military solution to this conflict. The cost of the war is very high. It has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, food insecurity, human rights violations, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, large numbers of dead and injured and an arms race. Apart from the short-term impact, the expected medium- and long-term effects on the global geopolitical and economic order will be grave and felt all over the world.

The longer the conflict drags on, the more tragic the consequences will be for the contending parties, the region and the world, with a disproportionate impact on the least developed countries. A paradigm shift is essential. The Security Council should play a bridging role to build confidence and create the conditions necessary for dialogue to thrive. Let us give dialogue a real chance. The time has come, and the reality demands it. With that in mind, Mozambique once again calls on the contending parties to display the flexibility and political will needed to cease all hostilities and engage in constructive and direct negotiations without preconditions. In our humble assessment, political negotiations are the most effective and viable way to find a common and sustainable solution to this conflict that is agreeable to all.

**Mr. França Danese** (Brazil): I thank our briefers, Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Mr. Hollingworth, for their thorough updates, and I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in today's meeting.

We regret that, once again, the Council is meeting to discuss the war in Ukraine without any progress in the dialogue between the parties, either directly or indirectly, or the slightest sign of de-escalation of the conflict. The continuation of hostilities imposes immense suffering on the civilian population and risks exacerbating spillover effects. We call on all parties to adhere to international humanitarian law and take concrete steps to de-escalate hostilities. We urge all parties to pragmatically engage in talks with the aim of achieving a just and lasting peace. The pursuit of a peaceful solution to the crisis is a duty of all, including those with influence on the ground. Brazil welcomes the efforts of members of the international community

in that regard and remains willing to contribute to peace initiatives as soon as the parties are ready to re-establish dialogue, either directly or through third parties. We encourage parties to resume negotiations on specific issues, such as the safety of nuclear facilities and the resumption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative to reduce food security risks for millions, particularly in developing countries.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to sincerely thank Albania and the United States for convening this meeting — I say so without any irony whatsoever. Frankly, we ourselves were considering convening a meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine today, 21 November, because it is a symbolic day for the ongoing Ukrainian tragedy and a milestone in the context of the Ukrainian conflict. It was on this day 10 years ago that anti-Government protests in Kyiv began. Three months later, those protests resulted to a bloody anti-constitutional coup and an entire chain of subsequent tragic — not to say fateful — events for Ukraine. The outcome was a systemic crisis of the State, which today poses an acute threat to international peace and security. Since we have gathered here today, we deem it relevant to dwell on the events of that time in more detail.

As we all recall, the formal reason for the start of protests on 21 November 2013 was the sovereign and perfectly legitimate decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to suspend preparations to conclude an Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). That decision was not made under pressure, nor was it in the interests of Russia, as Maidan historiographers are trying to claim, but rather with the aim of ensuring Ukraine's national security. The country's leadership realized that it was objectively impossible to modernize the economy in a limited time in order to maintain its competitiveness with European manufacturers. In addition, signing such an agreement created objective difficulties for trade and economic interaction between Ukraine and Russia and other States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. All of that became obvious after the draft text of the Agreement, which had been developed behind closed doors, was published.

The fact that the Government, guided by national interests, made the decision not even to cancel but to simply postpone that decision, which had far-reaching consequences, causing a sharp and coordinated reaction on the part of radical right-wing Ukrainian forces.



Moreover, non-governmental organizations funded by the United States and its allies for many years became significantly more active. One of the architects of the Maidan coup, Victoria Nuland, admitted in an interview with CNN in 2014 that the United States has allocated \$5 billion for that purpose since 1991. It is clear that the loss of such an investment was not part of Washington's plan.

In the evening of 21 November 2013, so-called activists waving EU flags began to gather in Independence Square in Kyiv. Even a week prior to those events, on 13 November, a well-known figure in the Orange Revolution of 2004 — the first unsuccessful attempt to establish a pro-Western regime in Ukraine — by the name of Yuriy Lutsenko called on the opposition to unite and take mass action in case their demands for European integration were not met. Essentially, that was blackmail by a small yet loud and highly active and motivated minority that enjoyed unlimited support from the United States and its allies.

I will not go into details now about how radical nationalists, page by page, acted out the scenario of the Maidan coup prepared by the West. I will only say that its most important element was a criminal provocation of the radical opposition, which included the shooting of protesters in Maidan and resulted in the death of more than 100 people. It is well known today that those people were not killed by law enforcement officers. There were also instances of political fraud: the very next morning, the opposition disavowed the agreement on a transition period with Viktor Yanukovych, which had been signed with guarantees from Germany, France and Poland, and removed him from power in violation of the country's Constitution. Meanwhile, they also took over government buildings.

We will provide an opportunity for participants in those events to talk in more detail about what happened during a special Arria Formula meeting of the Council, which we will hold on 8 December.

Our Western colleagues turned a blind eye to that lawlessness, thereby becoming accessories to that original sin, due to which Ukraine is slowly but surely sliding into the abyss.

Needless to say, the bloody provocation of Maidan has yet to be investigated. Neither have there been investigations of such incidents as the burning alive of activists who disagreed with Maidan in the House of Trade Unions in Odesa on 2 May, or of the massacre

of civilians in Mariupol on 9 May 2014. We will certainly continue to do everything we can to ensure that the perpetrators of those crimes — many of whom do not even have to think about hiding under the current Government in Kyiv — receive the punishment they deserve.

Intoxicated by its own impunity and unlimited Western support, the Maidan junta began persecuting Russian-speaking Ukrainians, their rights and historical values, and set a course for the glorification of Nazi henchmen. The war criminals and collaborators Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera, who were responsible for the massacre of Jews, Poles, Russians and Ukrainians themselves during the Second World War, were named heroes of Ukraine. Ukrainian nationalists today are not even bothering to hide why exactly they revere their Nazi idols. The leader of the ultra-right-wing Svoboda party, Oleh Tyahnybok, sang their praises for having “fought the Muscovites, the Jews and other evil creatures who wanted to take our Ukrainian State from us.”

As a result, Crimea split from Ukraine. After people living in the south and south-east of Ukraine refused to submit to the new anti-popular regime, Kyiv launched a punitive operation against the civilian population of Donbas. Even after being pushed back and signing the Minsk agreements, the Kyiv clique missed its chance to restore the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, thereby sabotaging the implementation of that document. As we know, for Kyiv and its Western backers, the Minsk agreements became a smokescreen for preparations for war with Russia and accelerated armament. After all, as we also already know very well, Maidan was conceived solely as a means of weakening Russia in the interests of the West. The Ukrainians, as well as the European ambitions of some of them, were cynically exploited in order to prepare the scenario we are currently witnessing in the country, which pertains in no way whatsoever to actual Ukrainian interests.

Ukraine has missed the chance for peace at least twice already: once in the case of the Minsk agreements and again in March and April 2022, during the course of the special military operation. At that time, owing to pressure from the United States and Great Britain, the Zelenskyy regime refused to continue peace negotiations with Russia and chose the path of senseless war, down to the last Ukrainian, in a futile attempt to inflict a strategic defeat on a nuclear Power to please the West.

But we also remember another Ukraine, pre-Maidan — a country with which we are united by close historical, cultural and family ties. They are a people with whom we share a common religion and traditions, as the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church once again reminded the Council at the meeting we convened on 17 November (see S/PV.9481).

Today there is no doubt that, 10 years ago, Maidan became an event that divided the history of Ukraine into a before and an after, splitting the entire Ukrainian society. It was not a choice between archaic Russia and the progressive West, as Kyiv and Western capitals are now trying to present the matter, but a choice between civilizational identity on the basis of a historic affinity among Slavic peoples on the one hand and the complete loss of national identity and transformation into a puppet of the West, devoid of its own opinion and thoroughly riddled with corruption and monstrous manifestations of nationalism on the other. Today more and more Ukrainians are becoming aware of that, regardless of Western and Ukrainian propaganda seeking to keep them in the dark.

We can see that the Ukrainian people are emerging from that intoxication, realizing the disastrous nature of the choice made on their behalf and starting to ask the authorities the right questions. For example, why is the canonical Orthodox faith of millions of people in this country being prosecuted and destroyed, while the schismatic church created and backed by the current authorities is being imposed? Why is the Russian language, native for most Ukrainians, being artificially ousted from the Government and public sphere, whereas in Western civilized States — and Ukraine thinks itself one — the rights of minorities, including linguistic rights, are being strictly and rigorously upheld? Why are all the key decisions on defence, economy, foreign policy being made by the external sponsors instead of Ukrainians, and why are the country's fertile lands being bought up by foreign corporations? Why are Western defence companies making tremendous profits by supplying Ukraine with armaments, while Ukraine is being supplied with old cast-offs that NATO countries, in any event, wanted to get rid of? Why is the President of the country almost sending the elderly and the children to the front lines, while trying to hold on to power at any price by tightening the screws and intensifying repressions against any kind of dissent or opposition?

Unfortunately, a full-fledged discussion on those and other issues will probably not begin within Ukraine for as long as the Kyiv regime there feels the unconditional support of West, which continues to see the Ukrainian project as the best opportunity to weaken Russia, and for as long as the newly fledged dictator, Zelenskyy, continues to arrest or jail anyone who disagrees with him or even tries to get access to alternative news, let alone ask these questions.

Therefore, the only thing we see on the ground thus far is a frenzied desire by the Kyiv regime to continue with its doomed attempts to inflict defeat on my country. After the resounding failure of the so-called summer counter-offensive, with colossal losses, the using up of military equipment and the waste of hundreds of thousands of NATO munitions, Kyiv is now concentrating on launching strikes against peaceful citizens. And for that, the long-range munitions from the West are very good. The Kyiv regime is using the terrorist methods of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and is bragging about it. And in the absence of any readiness by Zelenskyy, his accomplices and Western puppeteers to talk about how we can get to a scenario where Ukraine is no longer anti-Russia and becomes a good neighbour with civilized development, we will continue pursuing the goals of our special military operation using military means. Every day, we come closer and closer to achieving those goals, with all the accompanying ramifications for Ukraine.

I would like to respond to the remarks of all those who today repeated the hackneyed mantra that Russia supposedly is striking against civilian infrastructure in Ukraine — while in reality those are strikes against military or related infrastructure — making life in this country unbearable. In that regard, I would like to draw the Council's attention to a recent piece of news in Israeli mass media and Agence France-Presse. The article speaks of 4,000 refugees from Israel with Ukrainian passports who decided to return to Ukraine because, according to them, it is safer there. I would like my colleagues on the Council to think about this: they prefer to return from Israel, where, as Council members understand perfectly well, it is much safer than in the Gaza Strip, which is currently being flattened right before our eyes.

But that is a situation that our Western colleagues prefer not to notice because of their double standards. So let me repeat my question to you. It is the same question that I posed at the previous Council meeting

on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9464) — how many meetings on the humanitarian situation in Gaza has the Council convened? Let me answer that question: not a single one. It is easier to push forward lies and fabrications about alleged Russian attacks against civilians in the country to which, I repeat, refugees from Israel want to come. I hope the Council understands how two-faced, pathetic and inadequate that looks. I would like to think so.

The tragic experience of Ukraine should serve as a warning for all countries where in recent decades the West planted its networks, consisting of tame non-governmental organizations and agents of influence, getting ready to use them for their narrow geopolitical purposes. We can see that having launched this clockwork mechanism — which remains dormant for the time being — the United States and its allies will stop at no crime and spare no victims. They will turn a blind eye to any, even the most heinous, human rights violations and continue to apply an egregious double standard.

It does not matter how long we hear, in this Chamber, about the so-called revolution of dignity — no one mentioned that today, by the way, even though today is its 10-year anniversary — and the strengthening of Ukrainian independence. It is clear that 10 years ago, Ukraine lost its dignity and independence, and it has not regained it because it has not yet overcome the original sin of the Maidan. And when it does, it will stand as a shameful black page in the history of Ukraine and the world as a whole and as a grim reminder of what it costs to reject one's own interests and fully subordinate oneself to the West.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Jenča and Representative Hollingworth for their insightful briefings, and I acknowledge the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine and the Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU).

As part of its illegal war of aggression, Russia has developed a devastating campaign of systematic air strikes against civilians and critical infrastructure. Those brutal attacks have one objective only — to inflict human suffering on Ukraine and its citizens by depriving them of electricity, heating, education, medical care and food, as well as destroying Ukraine's grain export capacities. The multilayered consequences of this war will take years to overcome and heal. It is estimated that 44 per cent of Ukrainians have

experienced being in a combat zone, and 69 per cent suffer from psychological distress.

Last week, Russian forces shelled a hospital and homes in Kherson, killing three people and injuring at least 13. Such attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure add to the growing evidence that Russia is committing war crimes, as reported by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.

As winter sets in, the continued attacks on energy infrastructure bring a new dimension to the humanitarian crisis. Last winter, thousands of Russian drones and missiles targeted power systems, leading to a severe energy crisis that left millions without electricity, water or heating. This year, the brutal and relentless pattern of Russian attacks has already begun. In recent weeks, Ukrainian energy facilities have been attacked at least 60 times with different types of weaponry.

On its part, Malta welcomes the Winter Response Plan of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to address specific humanitarian needs in Ukraine. We will continue to support the Ukrainian people by providing humanitarian aid and assistance as long as necessary.

Russia's unilateral decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative, as well as its campaign to deliberately attack Ukraine's grain storage and export facilities, has destroyed 300,000 tons of Ukrainian grain. That is a criminal act. It is clear evidence of how Russia continues to instrumentalize food and undermine global food security, as well as a cynical attempt to deprive Ukraine of income. In response to that, the EU solidarity lanes will continue to assist Ukraine and deliver an ambitious response to address global food insecurity.

We also express our grave concern about the recent attack against a civilian vessel in the Ukrainian Black Sea port of Odesa. That was the first-time civilians have been killed and injured on board a merchant ship. Russia must cease all attacks against Ukrainian seaports and allow freedom of navigation on the Black Sea.

Those attacks go against international humanitarian law, strictly prohibiting attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. We remain resolute in our position that the perpetrators of such atrocities must be held accountable, and we support all efforts to that end, including the ongoing International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice processes, as well as the

ongoing discussions on the establishment of a special tribunal on the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

In conclusion, we once again underscore our conviction that to achieve a just and lasting peace, Russia must immediately cease all hostilities. It must unconditionally and completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

With regard to the issue of Ukraine, China has always stood on the side of fairness, justice, peace and dialogue. We are committed to facilitating talks to achieve peace and a ceasefire. We call on the parties to the conflict to respond positively to the international community's call for peace and to work progressively to create the conditions necessary for a resumption of peace talks as soon as possible. The Ukraine crisis has dragged on and has resulted in varying degrees of damage to many components of major infrastructure in the conflict areas as well as severe shortages of supplies, difficulties in accessing essential public services such as water, electricity and heating, and a worrisome humanitarian situation. The parties to the conflict must abide strictly by international humanitarian law and refrain from attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, the international community and the relevant humanitarian agencies should step up their humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the crisis, accelerate repairs to civilian infrastructure, provide winter supplies and heating equipment to those affected and ensure basic livelihoods for the displaced. A prolonged and complex crisis in Ukraine is not in the interests of any of the parties, and developing countries are affected the most by the spillover effects. The imposition of unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction outside international law will only disrupt and destabilize global industrial and supply chains and delay countries' ability to meet the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We call on the international community to intensify its efforts. In particular, countries with major influence should play an active role in preventing the spillover effects of the crisis from continuing to spread, creating

an environment conducive to peace and putting the situation back on a track that can lead to a political settlement as soon as possible.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya** (Ukraine): I recognize Putin's envoy in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union. That country, which is now defunct but still present in the Charter of the United Nations, killed millions of people during the great famine that occurred between 1932 and 1933 in Ukraine. This Saturday we will pay tribute to the memory of the victims of the tragedy of the Holodomor, as we call it in Ukrainian. It was the result of a deliberate policy of starvation aimed at crushing any resistance to Moscow's rule in Ukraine and stamping out any aspirations of Ukrainians for independence. Just as it did 90 years ago, Russia is once again seeking to break Ukrainians' will to resist. Both Stalin and Putin chose a genocidal toolbox, as other methods of subjugating the Ukrainian people did not work. Stalin resorted to a total confiscation of food and to starving people to death. Putin ordered a full-scale military invasion. And the historical memory of the Holodomor is contributing to the Ukrainian people's resilience today. We are fighting the same aggressor that engineered the deadly hunger in Ukraine 90 years ago. Now it has a much more sophisticated toolbox at its disposal — all kinds of weapons, including missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles — but deliberate starvation remains one of its weapons, just as it was 90 years ago. This time, it is being used not only against Ukraine but the entire world, including the most vulnerable peoples in Africa and Asia.

The delegation of Ukraine has initiated a declaration by United Nations Member States on the occasion of the anniversary of the Holodomor, to be issued later this week. We believe that the Holodomor should serve as a reminder to present and future generations of the importance of unconditional respect for human rights in preventing the perpetration of such tragedies. Member States will also send an important message on the need to prevent the weaponization of food against a backdrop of the disruption of production and supply chains, which increases global food insecurity, especially for the most vulnerable.



Twenty years ago, the current boss of the Russian representative signed a joint statement, part of which I would like to cite.

“In the former Soviet Union millions of men, women and children fell victim to the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime. The Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor) took from 7 million to 10 million innocent lives and became a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people....

“Expressing sympathy to the victims of the Great Famine, we call upon all Member States, the United Nations and its special agencies, international and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, foundations and associations to pay tribute to the memory of those who perished during that tragic period of history.”  
(A/62/235, *annex II*)

It was originally signed 20 years ago by Sergey Lavrov, together with other Ambassadors to the United Nations, in November 2003. Where are they today? I am grateful to the Security Council members and other United Nations Member States that have already joined this year's declaration, and I invite others to do likewise. Perhaps the Russian delegation would like to join once again, since its boss, Sergey Lavrov, signed it in 2003.

Starvation, as one of Russia's methods of warfare, has encompassed various components since the first day of the full-scale invasion. The methods include blocking Ukrainian food exports, shelling Ukrainian ports and grain stores, mining fertile Ukrainian land and turning it into battlefields. For instance, due to Russia's blockade of Ukraine's coast, the processing of goods at Ukraine's seaports fell by 61.5 per cent. The sharp increase in world grain prices that followed the blockade was also on Russia's wish list as a grain exporter. Nevertheless, Ukraine remains committed to contributing to food security. The Black Sea Grain Initiative served as a powerful example of that commitment. Restoring Ukrainian maritime supplies of grain and foodstuffs helped to gradually stabilize and reduce world food prices, particularly for wheat and sunflower oil. In one year of the Grain Initiative's operation, Ukraine exported more than 33 million tons of agricultural products to 45 countries, with 60 per cent of the volume going to countries in Africa and Asia. The figures would have been much higher if Russia had not impeded the functioning of the Initiative before eventually withdrawing from it in July.

Instead, Russia has begun regular missile attacks on Ukrainian port infrastructure and grain stores. Since 18 July, 167 port infrastructure facilities and seven civilian vessels have been damaged and partially destroyed as a result of Russia's attacks on Ukrainian seaports. More than 20 civilians have been injured. On 8 November, Russia attacked a civilian vessel operating under the Liberian flag. As a result, one crew member was killed, and three crew members and a port employee were injured. Just today, only hours ago, the aggressor attacked the civilian infrastructure of Ukrainian ports with missiles. As a result of the missile terror, Ukraine has experienced a 40 per cent reduction in the export potential of its ports. Approximately 300,000 tons of grain have been destroyed. The export of grain cargoes to countries in Asia, Africa and Europe has been reduced by almost 3 million tons per month. Such actions, devoid of any military objective, only serve to exacerbate the global food crisis. Ukraine is committed to preventing Russia from instigating hunger worldwide.

That is why the peace formula proposed by the President of Ukraine last year encompasses food security as an integral part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The right to food is inalienable for all people, for all countries, along with the rights to life and liberty. Every country should be protected from famine. That is the ideology of the peace formula. While work on the peace formula is already under way, it is essential to curtail Russia's ability to wield food as a weapon even right now. As of mid-November, Ukraine had harvested nearly 76 million tons of crops, including more than 53 million tons of grain and more than 22 million tons of oilseed.

We are ready to continue food exports to the global market. While working for the restoration of free navigation in the Black Sea, Ukraine rejects any acceptance of Russian ultimatums regarding the grain deal. On 8 August, temporary routes for civilian vessels to and from the Ukrainian Black Sea ports came into effect. More than 116 vessels have already used the new, alternative sea corridor from the ports of Odesa, Chernomorsk and Pivdennyi. Ukraine effectively continues to implement the Black Sea Grain Initiative by using alternative routes. The most efficient in terms of grain export is the Danube corridor. Ukrainian grain has also been exported through Croatian ports. On 3 October, Lithuania agreed on a corridor for Ukrainian grain transit to the Baltic ports. On 10 October, a new grain corridor through Moldova and Romania was announced. On 17 October, the port of Riga received

the first test container train carrying Ukrainian agricultural products.

We are consistently working to increase the throughput of all corridors combined. The Government has approved new rules for exporting agricultural products to prevent abuse and violations of the law during the export process. Those rules also serve to protect businesses that comply with export legislation. Last year, the humanitarian initiative, Grain from Ukraine, was launched by the President of Ukraine and presented during the first inaugural international summit on food security, held in Kyiv on 26 November 2022. More than 30 countries and international organizations have joined the Grain from Ukraine initiative to help countries in Africa and Asia. Now Ukraine intends to send more vessels with humanitarian grain to African countries, in particular 25,000 tons to Nigeria. The Grain from Ukraine initiative will now apply to Ukraine's Danube ports. We call on countries from across the globe to join the initiative.

Among other issues, we can consider the creation of food logistics hubs in the countries of the global South for the supply of Ukraine's agricultural products. The second international summit of the Grain from Ukraine programme will be held in Kyiv on 25 November, under the auspices of the President of Ukraine. The upcoming summit's extended format will allow us to explore additional opportunities. We aim to agree on an algorithm for cooperation in the context of implementing joint projects for grain storage, primary processing and the transportation of agricultural products to recipient countries. We also welcome the global food security Summit that was held in London yesterday. We appreciate that the joint ministerial statement by the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates and Somalia has also highlighted the nexus between conflicts and food security, and emphasized that food must not be used as a weapon of war.

Yesterday, we also marked World Children's Day. The right to food is a human right, and, for children, proper nutrition is of fundamental importance. Well-nourished children grow and develop to their full potential. According to UNICEF, in 2022, an estimated 45 million children under age five — that is, 6.8 per cent — were affected by wasting, of whom 37.7 million were suffering from severe wasting. More than three quarters of all children with severe wasting live in Asia, and another 22 per cent live in Africa. By waging its unprovoked war against my country, Russia denies millions of children

in the most vulnerable countries their right to food and proper nutrition. We reiterate once again that as long as Russia's aggressive behaviour continues, global food security will remain under threat. Removing aggressive patterns from the Kremlin's mindset requires Russia's defeat in Ukraine. As soon as comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is achieved, our common efforts on food security will be more effective.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

**Mr. Skoog**: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the potential candidate country Georgia, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, all align themselves with this statement.

I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Security Council. There were other EU countries that would have liked to speak today, given how affected they are by the situation that we are discussing today. I would also like to thank the briefers for their presentations.

At the outset, I want to reiterate the EU's resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The consequences of the aggression have, I think, been made very clear by the two briefers today — the consequences both for Ukraine and for the global food security situation. I reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its inherent right to self-defence against the Russian aggression. I want to make two further points: first, Russia's targeting of Ukraine's critical infrastructure, how unacceptable that is and how it must stop; and secondly, the European Union's full engagement in efforts to address the global consequences of the Russian aggression.

Russia's ongoing systematic air strikes against civilian objects and critical infrastructure in Ukraine are unacceptable, and they must stop. Such intentional attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure add to the growing evidence of war crimes, as reported by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression

against Ukraine and other most serious crimes under international law. In the face of continued Russian attacks against Ukraine's civil and critical infrastructure, the EU will intensify our provision of humanitarian and civil protection assistance to Ukraine, including equipment such as power generators, power transformers, mobile heating stations and high-voltage and lighting equipment, to help Ukraine and its people face yet another winter at war. Via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, we have sent more than 5,000 power generators to Ukraine.

According to the 2023 United Nations humanitarian response plan, 11.1 million people are food insecure in Ukraine. Last week, we announced an additional €100 million in humanitarian support to those most vulnerable, especially in hard-to-reach areas. That will allow our humanitarian partners to provide essential services such as cash assistance, food, water, shelter, health care, psychosocial support and protection. It brings the total for EU humanitarian aid in response to Russia's war to €785 million. Unfortunately, humanitarian access remains critical, and the EU fully supports efforts by the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders to engage in negotiations with all parties to provide full, safe, unhindered and durable humanitarian access, in particular in areas under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation.

Russia's unilateral decision to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative, as many colleagues pointed out today, and its deliberate attacks on Ukraine's grain storage and export facilities, as well as its actions to hinder the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, show that Russia continues to weaponize food. By doing so, it deliberately undermines global food security. I stress the importance of security, stability and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, which is vital for sustainable grain exports.

We praise Ukraine for its unwavering efforts to resume grain exports via maritime routes, as we have just heard, including through the organization of the second International Summit on Food Security next week. The successful establishment of the Ukraine corridor for civil cargo ships has allowed Ukraine to export more than 1.5 million tons of food, thereby contributing to enhancing global food security. We commend efforts by Ukraine and the private sector to put in place an insurance scheme that reduces the costs of that route. Through Ukraine's own Grain from Ukraine programme, more than 170,000 metric tons of grain have been donated to

countries in need, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen. We condemn the devastating attack on a civilian cargo ship in the Ukrainian port of Pivdennyi earlier this month.

The EU supports all efforts, including those of the United Nations, to facilitate exports of Ukraine's grain and other agricultural products to the countries most in need, notably in Africa and the Middle East. We will also further enhance the capacity of the EU's solidarity lanes to facilitate transit and export via land routes to world markets, which have enabled the export of more than 57 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products so far. In addition, we will continue to deliver on our ambitious response to address global food insecurity. Together with our member States, we are providing €18 billion in grants to countries and people in need, including humanitarian and food assistance.

Tragically, the weaponization of food is nothing new. Every year, towards the end of November, as we heard today, Ukraine commemorates the Holodomor famine and its victims. This year, it is the ninetieth anniversary of the Soviet Union's use of hunger as a weapon against the Ukrainian people. The EU and its member States join Ukraine in honouring the millions of victims of that terrible crime. If we do not educate ourselves about our history, we risk repeating our mistakes. That is why we support Ukraine's initiative of a joint declaration, and we call on all other United Nations members to support it as well.

In conclusion, I emphasize that the EU will continue to provide strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes. We will continue our intensified diplomatic outreach efforts and cooperation with Ukraine and other countries to ensure the widest possible international support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's peace formula.

**The President** (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to note that the following delegations have submitted written statements: Estonia and Denmark. These statements will be circulated to Council members and will be issued as official documents of the Security Council.

*The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.*