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New York

President: Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield/Mr. Kelley (United States of America)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Koudri
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mr. Yamazaki
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokar Drobič
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Paul Beresford-Hill, Permanent Observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Doughten.

Ms. Doughten: I thank members for this opportunity to update the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

This discussion is particularly urgent as the conflict and its catastrophic impacts grind on into another winter. Daily attacks continue, inflicting death, injury and untold suffering on ordinary Ukrainians, and destruction and damage to civilian infrastructure. Near the front line, people live life on the edge. They face constant shelling and impossible choices: flee in perilous conditions, leaving everything they have, perhaps for the second or third time, or stay and risk injury or death. This is no idle concern. Dozens of civilians have been killed in recent attacks in the regions of Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kherson, joining the thousands whose lives have already been claimed by this brutal war. And as the use of long-range weapons has steadily increased since July, so has the civilian toll. A particularly deadly increase occurred in November. Last month, long-range weapons killed

65 civilians and injured 372 across 11 regions of Ukraine — double the numbers from October.

As temperatures start to drop as low as -20°C in some places, our concern for civilians intensifies, particularly in the light of widespread damage to critical infrastructure. Since March, Russian armed forces have been conducting repeated, large-scale, coordinated attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. According to the United Nations Development Programme, more than 60 per cent of energy generation facilities have now been damaged. Going into the coldest months of the year, civilians' access to electricity, gas, heating and water has been severely affected. That impact has been exacerbated by a simultaneous — and equally egregious — increase in attacks harming humanitarian operations. Humanitarian offices, vehicles, storage facilities and relief supplies have all been damaged. And humanitarian workers have not been spared. This year, the number of humanitarian aid workers killed in Ukraine has almost tripled — from four in 2022 and five in 2023, to eleven so far in 2024.

Across Ukraine, some 14.6 million people currently need humanitarian assistance, and 10 million have now been displaced. Of those, 3.5 million are being hosted in communities across every one of Ukraine's 24 regions and approximately 6.8 million are refugees in other countries. The displacement is having a disproportionately negative impact on women and girls, particularly older women. Their exposure to gender-based violence has been heightened, and their access to support services hindered.

Grappling with the freezing conditions and the dangers posed by missile attacks, the humanitarian community is doing all it can to provide people with the support they need. In 2024, more than 630 humanitarian organizations have provided at least one form of assistance to 7.7 million people across Ukraine. That includes essential support for the most vulnerable — the elderly, those with disabilities and displaced people living in collective centres or along the front lines. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and our humanitarian partners are working to increase funding to women's organizations, recognizing their critical role in the provision of life-saving care and safe spaces and in advocating for women's rights amid conflict. Under the 2024–2025 winter response plan, aid workers have also provided winter-related assistance to more than 144,000 people so far. Thirty-three per cent are older and 9 per cent are people with disabilities. The

assistance includes essential household repairs, support for water and heating systems and access to safe and warm shelter for those who are displaced.

We are extremely concerned about the plight of the estimated 1.5 million civilians who are in need of support in parts of the regions of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya under Russian Federation occupation. We remain unable to reach them at any adequate scale. The failure to deliver assistance in those areas could have dire consequences, especially in winter. As we have said before, under international humanitarian law all parties must allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need and ensure that humanitarian personnel have the freedom of movement required for their work. It is crucial for us to be able to bring relief to those who need it, wherever they are. Let me explain what we need from the international community.

First, we need unequivocal commitment to and compliance with international humanitarian law, encompassing the protection of civilians and civilian objects, including humanitarian personnel and assets, and unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need.

Secondly, we need funding. So far in 2024, donors have generously contributed almost \$2 billion to the humanitarian response. However, there is still a substantial \$1.1 billion shortfall. To sustain humanitarian operations in an increasingly complex and dangerous environment, we urgently need donors to increase and accelerate flexible funding for the response going into 2025.

Thirdly, as long as this intolerable war persists, civilians will continue to suffer its severe consequences. What Ukraine and its people need is an end to this devastating war.

The President: I thank Ms. Doughten for her briefing.

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

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Lisa Doughten, from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for her briefing.

Russia has now been waging its war of aggression against Ukraine for more than 1,000 days, in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations and international

law. It has been deliberately targeting civilian populations and property in violation of international humanitarian law for almost three years. France condemns Russia's indiscriminate strikes, which it continues to intensify against civilians, as happened once again on 10 December in Zaporizhzhya, as well as against Ukraine's energy infrastructure. More than half of Ukraine's electricity generation capacity has now been destroyed or damaged, forcing the Ukrainian people to face a third winter of war in the cold.

Russia's deep strikes, far from the front lines, are not aimed at a direct military objective, but at civilian infrastructure that meets the basic needs of millions of Ukrainians. They are violating international humanitarian law. We reiterate that Russia is obliged to comply with international humanitarian law and the humanitarian principles of distinction and proportionality, and to cease its deliberate strikes against civilians and civilian infrastructure.

France condemns the war crimes committed in Ukraine. Russia has been using sexual violence as a weapon of war. It has forcibly transferred and deported Ukrainian children. It has once again been singled out in the Secretary-General's latest annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384). It is responsible for multiple human rights violations in the occupied territories and for violations of international humanitarian law against Ukrainian prisoners of war. The fate of 1.5 million Ukrainians in the occupied territories is a cause for concern, and Russia must allow humanitarian organizations access to that population.

France has been supporting Ukraine and its neighbours in dealing with the humanitarian consequences of the conflict since the first day of Russia's war of aggression. We have mobilized more than €400 million to meet emergency humanitarian needs and ensure the rehabilitation of essential infrastructure. We remain determined to continue to help Ukraine as intensively and as long as necessary so that it can exercise its right to self-defence and so that Russia's war of aggression can be defeated. France remains committed to respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

France welcomes Ukraine's successful completion of its ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We reaffirm our support for the International Criminal Court and the Ukrainian courts in ensuring that those responsible for

the crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine are held to account. Respect for those rights is an integral part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Doughen for her briefing.

Since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine more than 12,000 civilians have been killed and 26,000 wounded. The deaths of combatants number in the hundreds of thousands. Nearly 4 million people remain internally displaced and more than 6.8 million have fled Ukraine. In Russia's Kursk region, 130,000 civilians have had to be evacuated because of the hostilities and many have lost their lives. Forty per cent of the Ukrainian population is dependent on humanitarian assistance and more than 55 per cent of them are women and girls, many of whom face risks of gender-based violence and exploitation. More than 60 per cent of the country's power generation facilities have been damaged, leaving millions of people without access to electricity and heating in the harsh winter.

Children have been among the most vulnerable victims of the conflict. The psychological impact of living under constant bombardment, together with displacement and the loss of loved ones, is immeasurable. The implementation of psychosocial support programmes, as well as the strengthening of child protection networks and the full participation of women, must be central pillars of post-conflict recovery initiatives. There is a real and constant threat to the civilian population, especially in the communities closest to the front lines of this unjustifiable war.

In that context, the work of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations has been a beacon of hope for millions. I would like to convey Ecuador's profound thanks to all the humanitarian actors operating in Ukraine, and to reiterate our call for the implementation of resolution 2730 (2024), as well as all resolutions related to the protection of humanitarian personnel. As the penholder responsible for the Ukraine humanitarian dossier for the past two years, Ecuador has advocated for a people-centred approach and for easing human suffering during a critical time for the world, with a surge in conflicts in which global norms and structures designed to protect civilians have been deliberately eroded. Ecuador will continue to insist on the parties' obligation to protect the civilian population, safeguard civilian infrastructure and comply with the principles

of distinction, proportionality and precaution, as established under international humanitarian law. The recent attack on International Atomic Energy Agency personnel en route to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is deplorable, and we call on the parties to act with the utmost restraint in order to avoid a nuclear catastrophe, including an unintended one.

Although Ecuador's term as a member of the Council is about to end, our commitment to the principles we have defended remains firm. On 24 February 2022, the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations — the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of a State — were violated. And the invasion of Ukraine further defied another fundamental principle of international law, which is the invalidity of territorial conquest through the use of force. Ecuador believes firmly that even during military action, the ongoing efforts to take diplomatic and political steps to resolve the issue must be enhanced. The civilized conscience of humankind and all the nations of the world reject war. In responding to that plea, diplomacy must be fully deployed in the search for peaceful and good-faith solutions. History has taught us that in order to bring about genuine peace, we must look at the root causes of a conflict as well as the circumstances that exist now and that will exist in the future. Despite the parties' obstinate determination to settle conflicts militarily, we must continue to seek negotiated solutions that make peace possible through the re-establishment of the rule of law. This war has gone on for far too long, and as it escalates, the casualties and the levels of suffering will only increase.

In conclusion, I reiterate Ecuador's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to bring about peace, and I once again urge the Council and the international community to ramp up diplomatic efforts to end this war and exorcise the spectre of a nuclear threat. The people of Ukraine, the people of Russia and the world demand and deserve peace.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We see today's meeting as a desperate attempt by the sponsors and puppeteers of the Kyiv regime to keep the issue of Ukraine afloat in the Security Council at a time when it seems clear that most of the international community is losing interest in it. That is no surprise, considering that President Zelenskyy, who recently passed his expiry date, has succeeded in so discrediting the Kyiv authorities that only Ukraine's accomplices who inspired and supported the

anti-constitutional coup d'état in February 2014 dare to express support for them today.

As we have all had the chance to see, the former comedian's chief efforts have lately been aimed at ingratiating himself with the Republican team, the winners in the United States elections. In an attempt to shift the focus from the Kyiv Government's bet on the Democrats, Zelenskyy and his associates have been traveling relentlessly around the United States and its main satellites with outstretched hands, trying to ensure that the new Administration will not throw them under the bus. The sour faces of officials in Kyiv are due not to the fact that so far they have been unable to secure a new stamp of approval for their reign or to the signs of the inevitable decline in their military support, but primarily by the prospect of an audit of the American funds already spent on Ukraine. We have repeatedly warned that that is the worst possible scenario for the thieving Ukrainian authorities.

That was essentially confirmed recently by Kash Patel, the United States President-elect's nominee to head the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who has said that if appointed, he intends to ask Congress to investigate where the money has gone. He says that the American people are owed that answer, and that the Government cannot be trusted if it does not report on what such large sums are spent on. Patel has also said that he intends to find out whether the Ukrainian President invented security threats to obtain financial aid from the United States. It is notable that the Western and few remaining Ukrainian independent media outlets are united in their assessment that such a probe does not bode well either for the Ukrainian actor-in-chief or for his Democratic accomplices. Not surprisingly, they are genuinely frantic. Biden's National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan, has said plainly that the outgoing Administration will do everything in the time it has left to provide Ukraine with all possible means to strengthen its position on the battlefield. Above all, he said, that means

“a massive surge in the military equipment that we are delivering to Ukraine so that we have spent every dollar that Congress has appropriated to us by the time that President Biden leaves office”.

Let us recall that this is about an “appropriation” of \$6.5 billion. However, as Western experts have pointed out, we are not talking about actual deliveries of weapons to the Kyiv regime — which are practically

impossible to achieve in such a short time — but merely the standard carving up of the pie and the kickbacks, which the incoming Trump Administration intends to stop. We advise everyone to stock up on popcorn. The coming brouhaha will be no joke. We will talk in detail about the whole situation and the key role of Western arms supplies and support in keeping the criminal Kyiv posse afloat at a separate meeting that we have requested for 20 December.

According to a recent Gallup poll, more than half of Ukrainians are in favour of ending the conflict as soon as possible and are ready to accept the inevitable territorial concessions. Given the bias of Western sociologists, there is every reason to believe that the actual numbers are much higher. The true mood in Ukrainian society is reflected by the more than 100,000 defectors and by Ukrainians' total unwillingness to fight for a corrupt and inhuman regime that usurped power in Ukraine in violation of the country's Constitution. There is also the fact that Ukrainians who are fleeing the arbitrary rule of the authorities are trying to move to Russia en masse or rejoin the former Ukrainian territories that have become Russian entities.

Recently, sensing the people's mood and the extreme lack of encouraging signs from Washington, the leader of the Kyiv junta has noticeably lowered expectations, advocating the victory plan less and less, while spouting every possible kind of idea for a potential settlement of the crisis. No one should be misled by these ostentatious peace proposals, as all of them are first of all rehashes of the so-called Zelenskyy formula and secondly are unrealizable in practice, because they do not address the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis. In fact, all of Zelenskyy's proposals, like the opinions of a number of flip-flopping Western politicians, boil down to freezing the conflict along the line of contact while giving up the territories that are now part of Russia and providing security guarantees for an “independent Ukraine” within the new borders. The latest addition to the “wish list” of the man in the green military jacket is for an invitation from Joe Biden, before he leaves the White House, to admit “the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders” into NATO, with the Alliance's guarantees being extended “to the part that Ukraine controls, with potential for future expansion”. Leaving aside the irrationality of that “awesome new idea”, we should remind everyone once again that there are no plans for freezing the conflict that work for Russia. The

Minsk agreements made it very clear that neither the West nor the Kyiv junta can be trusted, and we are well aware that the whole point of such “exercises” is to give the Kyiv regime the respite it needs from the battlefield to rearm and lick its wounds. Any role for NATO in settling the Ukrainian crisis is out of the question. The Alliance and the prospects for Ukraine’s membership of it have from the very beginning been part of the problem, not part of the solution.

In analysing the new mindset suddenly demonstrated by the Ukrainian authorities as they continue in their expired term, we urge everyone to judge by their deeds, not their words, at which point everything becomes clear. Through its actions, the Kyiv regime continues to choose the path of confrontation and raising the stakes. That is clearly evidenced by the ongoing strikes using Western precision weapons, including those on 11 and 13 December against military facilities in Taganrog and Orel, using long-range Western missiles. Let me remind members how Donald Trump assessed those escalating actions of Zelenskyy in his interview in *Time* magazine the other day. He called the decision “crazy” and an escalation, saying,

“I disagree very vehemently with sending missiles hundreds of miles into Russia. Why are we doing that? We are just escalating this war and making it worse.”

We hope those words from their President-elect will elicit comments from our American colleagues today.

The unwillingness of the expired Ukrainian leadership to move towards peace was also evidenced by the fact that they rejected Hungary’s proposal to establish a Christmas ceasefire and exchange prisoners. We, for our part, drew up a list for exchange on the same day, but Zelenskyy in his customary boorish manner categorically rejected the initiative, once again refusing to take back more than 600 Ukrainian servicemen who have been in Russia for more than a year. It is no secret that the Kyiv regime cares nothing for the ordinary Ukrainians who have been forcibly conscripted and ended up on the front line. It is only interested in trading for fighters from nationalist battalions and the foreign mercenaries who have taken part in hostilities against Russia.

The last thing I want to remind everyone about the pseudo-peace initiatives of the “expired” President is that his October 2022 decree banning negotiations with the Russian leadership has still not been revoked.

Members can draw their own conclusions about the genuineness of his announcements and appeals. We are not ruling out the possibility that it is all just a smokescreen for yet another escalation, as happened in July and August of this year before Ukrainian fighters and marauders invaded the Kursk region.

We would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of our colleagues to an incident involving an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) secretariat vehicle. On 10 December, during a planned rotation of the Agency’s experts at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the Armed Forces of Ukraine hit a vehicle that was transporting IAEA staff. A Russian motorcade that was returning after delivering experts to the line of contact was also attacked. Thankfully, there were no injuries. During rotations, and that was the twenty-fifth, Russia has undertaken obligations to ensure a truce and provide the staff with security guarantees. Ukraine has repeatedly violated those obligations, specifically in June and November last year and April of this year. According to IAEA information circular no. 264, the incident occurred when the personnel were driving through Ukrainian-controlled territory to the point where they were supposed to cross the line of contact. The driver saw a drone approaching from behind, which is from the north, where Ukrainian formations are stationed. Let me clarify that that occurred in the run-up to an extraordinary session of the IAEA Board of Governors convened by Ukraine. We firmly condemn that provocation by the Kyiv regime, which put at risk the lives of the staff of an international organization and Russian servicemen who are ensuring the safety of personnel during rotations. We call on international organizations and the international community to condemn yet another incidence of Ukraine’s flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.

I also cannot omit to comment on the egregious incident that occurred on 10 December, when the Solomianskyi District Court in Kyiv sentenced the Ukrainian human rights defender Elena Berezhnaya. This world-famous 70-year-old civil rights defender and anti-fascist activist was sentenced to 14 years behind bars with confiscation of property. Before that, she had spent more than two and a half years in a pre-trial detention centre, where she was tortured. Let me remind members that the Zelenskyy regime filed proceedings immediately after Elena spoke at an informal Arria Formula meeting called by Russia on 22 December 2021. The basis of her sentence was

a letter she sent to the United Nations, which I quoted at a General Assembly meeting on 28 March 2022. In other words, before our very eyes, the Kyiv regime is cracking down on a human rights defender because she spoke at our invitation here at the United Nations and submitted a letter to our Organization criticizing the human rights situation in Ukraine. I wonder whether today any of our Western colleagues, who in other situations are so concerned about the safety of speakers invited to the United Nations, will show a shred of conscience and civic courage and give an honest assessment of Zelenskyy and his posse's actions.

We hope that Council members who really want peace in Ukraine will have no illusions after our statement today about what Zelenskyy and his clique are really trying to achieve and how far they are from bringing peace to their country. They are ready to sacrifice all their citizens, to mobilize women and children in order to hold on to power and evade punishment for crimes they have committed against their people. However, the end of their criminal and insatiable regime is near, the front line is coming apart at the seams, the territory under Ukraine's control is shrinking by the day and the citizens of Ukraine are ever more actively agitating for peace and refusing to go to war. Our conditions for ending the conflict are clear, logical and have nothing to do with the surrogate formulas that do not address the threats to Russia emanating from the Kyiv regime and that Kyiv's Western allies have been increasingly promoting of late. As long as that continues, we will continue to pursue the objectives of the special military operation by military means and respond to the Kyiv regime's provocations, just as we did on 13 December.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank Ms. Lisa Doughten from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for her valuable briefing.

As we are meeting today, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine unfortunately continues unabated and is claiming innocent civilian lives in a protracted war, with numerous consequences for both Ukraine and Russia. Meanwhile, there are no prospects for a peaceful settlement between the two parties.

Reports abound of heavy losses of life, property and infrastructure, including energy infrastructure. The targeting of energy infrastructure is causing serious damage, especially during the harsh winter, resulting in intolerable conditions that are particularly

hard for women and children. The targeting of energy infrastructure is also disrupting supply chains and vital facilities such as health and educational institutions, exacerbating the impact on civilians. Worse still, the war is still responding to a logic of confrontation, escalation and polarization, and both parties are still looking for ways to strengthen their military capabilities in order to gain a better position in a war that, like all other wars, will have no winner.

As always, Algeria continues to call for sobriety, pause and restraint, as well as making the lives and safety of civilians top priorities, and for both parties to strictly abide by the rules of international law, including international humanitarian law, which prohibit the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We will continue to call for de-escalation and for constructive and inclusive dialogue aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace. We reaffirm our firm belief that this conflict will not be resolved with weapons but through negotiation and the willingness of the two parties to overcome their differences and find a peaceful settlement to end the war.

In that regard, we renew our call to both parties to give diplomacy a chance and engage in inclusive, constructive negotiations aimed at putting an immediate end to the hostilities and finding a just and lasting solution based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, whose supremacy we all believe in, while taking into account the legitimate security concerns of both parties. We also call on the international community to redouble its diplomatic efforts aimed at creating an environment conducive to negotiations, without polarization or narrow geopolitical considerations.

In conclusion, Algeria reiterates its unwavering commitment to supporting any international efforts aimed at finding a peaceful political solution that is acceptable to both parties, ending the war and restoring safety to the entire region.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to express my gratitude to Director Doughten for her timely briefing. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in today's meeting.

Ukrainians are once again enduring harsh winter conditions brought on by Russia's merciless attacks. The targeting of critical infrastructure has been Russia's main tactic throughout this unjustifiable war.

The fact that Russia does not spare residential areas, health and education facilities or cultural sites clearly demonstrates the immoral and illegal nature of this war. Russia has been increasingly relying on North Korean munitions and troops in the war, and we are carefully watching the recent news reports that at least 30 North Korean troops have been killed or wounded in the Kursk region. Against that troubling backdrop, I would like to make the following points.

First, we condemn Russia's widespread, systematic and disproportionate attacks on energy infrastructure, which are aggravating the humanitarian situation in Ukraine by significantly damaging electricity generation and transmission capacity in Ukraine. We are appalled by Russia's massive aerial attack on energy facilities across Ukraine last Friday, which involved about 90 missiles, including one from North Korea, and more than 200 drones. It is part of Russia's recent escalated strike campaign targeting energy infrastructure, which picked up pace in March. Indeed, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Ukraine has lost about 65 per cent of its power generation capacity — which is enough to supply more than 20 million people in the most advanced countries. That immense destruction of energy infrastructure leads to the disruption of other essential services such as heating, water supplies and sanitation. It has also seriously jeopardized public healthcare and education systems.

Secondly, we emphasize that targeting civilian infrastructure indispensable to the survival of the civilian population constitutes a clear violation of international humanitarian law, as articulated in article 54 of the first Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions. It is in that context that the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine concluded that Russian armed forces had committed the war crime of inflicting excessive incidental death, injury or damage. In that regard, my delegation supports the international efforts to hold those responsible for such atrocities accountable.

Thirdly, we are deeply worried about risks to the stable operation of nuclear power plants, as Russia has recently stepped up its attacks against substations and transmission facilities directly connected to nuclear power plants in Ukraine. That has led to a significant reduction of electricity generation in Ukraine, and it even risks the most devastating consequences that this war could possibly cause — a grave nuclear accident.

In that regard, we echo the International Atomic Energy Agency Director General's concerns about the safety of Ukraine's nuclear power plants. Russia must immediately cease its attacks on them.

Russia's illegal invasion has already caused the people of Ukraine intolerable suffering. Moreover, its effects continue to reverberate across the global community, undermining energy and food security worldwide. Russia must end this war by immediately withdrawing its troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. For its part, the Republic of Korea is committed to joining the international community's efforts to support Ukraine on the basis of our bilateral Ukraine peace and solidarity initiative.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I would like to thank Director Doughten for her briefing.

Wherever we look we see signs of the war intensifying. In the past year, the situation on the ground has been continually worsening for the civilian population, with a significant increase in civilian casualties. The Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine verified more than 1,400 deaths and injuries in September alone, the highest number in two years. Civilians in front-line and displaced communities are already facing dire living conditions, and with winter setting in, the situation is deteriorating by the day. While the humanitarian needs of the civilian population are growing, humanitarian access is in peril as a result of increasing insecurity and attacks against humanitarian facilities. The World Food Programme alone has reported losing access to 160 front-line communities. In the more than 1,000 days of the war, the World Health Organization has verified more than 2,100 attacks against healthcare facilities, a direct violation of international humanitarian law. And in 2024 the casualties of health workers and patients from those attacks have nearly tripled compared to last year.

At the same time, Russia is continuing its campaign of destruction of Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure. Since the last time we met on this topic in September (see S/PV.9731), more than 5,000 air, missile and drone strikes have been recorded across Ukraine. The figure has almost doubled in comparison to the same period in 2023. Many of those attacks have been targeting energy infrastructure, decimating Ukraine's power- and heat-generation capacity. Eight power plants and more than 800 heat-supply facilities are all gone. Now Russia has moved onto the power grid

again. Nearly 200 missiles and drones were launched late last month, leaving more than a million households without power.

The situation further deteriorated just a few days ago. As temperatures plunged below 0°C across Ukraine, Russia launched one of its largest aerial attacks, with nearly 300 drones and missiles — once again directed against civilian energy infrastructure. Those hideous attacks are clearly not directed against legitimate military targets and are an evident violation of international humanitarian law. Grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law must not go unpunished, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

The attacks against the energy grid are raising severe concerns about the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. Slovenia strongly condemns those attacks. A stable electricity grid is essential to ensure nuclear safety at Ukraine's operating nuclear power plants. A nuclear accident in the midst of war would be catastrophic for Ukraine and devastating for the wider region and would have global impacts. The Council should make every effort to prevent such an accident.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Ms. Doughten for the update and echo her concern about the grave humanitarian impact of the war.

The sobering statistics heard this afternoon once again serve to underscore the fact that civilians are bearing the brunt of the conflict. Despite repeated calls by the international community for full adherence to international humanitarian law and the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality, civilians continue to be harmed in indiscriminate attacks, and civilian infrastructure destroyed.

Moreover, the continuous attacks against energy infrastructure heighten concerns about more power outages in the cold winter months. Those attacks have already disrupted access to essential services across Ukraine, impacting the most vulnerable: older people, low-income households, people with disabilities and those who are internally displaced.

The situation cannot be allowed to continue. The parties must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the prohibition on deliberate and direct attacks against civilians and other protected persons and objects. We call for immediate action to ensure full and unhindered

humanitarian access, including in occupied areas, and call upon the international community to use whatever influence possible to urge the parties to comply with their obligations under international law.

Guyana also registers its grave concern about the precarious situation surrounding Ukraine's Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the fact that attacks have not only been directed at the plant but, more recently, against an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) vehicle and staff. We deplore such attacks and demand that the parties to the conflict take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of IAEA staff and property and to safeguard the integrity of the plant.

Guyana again stresses the urgency of resolving the conflict through peaceful means. The longer it is allowed to continue will only heighten the risk of even graver consequences for all concerned.

We further reiterate our call for the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and for the parties to commit to a serious political and diplomatic process towards ending the conflict. The parties must be encouraged to engage in good faith and to bring an end to the suffering of the millions of men, women and children in Ukraine and Russia. Pending the outcome of such a process, the parties must prioritize the rule of law and the welfare of civilians.

In conclusion, Guyana stresses the urgency of resolving the conflict through peaceful means. We remain supportive of all efforts by the Secretary-General and other willing partners who have been working diligently towards peace, and we are prepared to do our part.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Ms. Doughten for her sobering briefing.

During the past four weeks, we have continued to witness a steady and increasing escalation in Russia's illegal war of aggression in Ukraine. The list of escalatory measures is deeply concerning. It includes the launching of several missile and drone attacks against Ukrainian cities — including the capital, Kyiv — and the deployment of a new ballistic missile on the battlefield.

The systematic targeting of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, in particular energy infrastructure, is unacceptable. Those attacks are being conducted

with the sole intention of damaging Ukraine's energy capacity amid the ongoing cold temperatures, with winter only days away.

The Council must reiterate in no uncertain terms its call on all parties to fully uphold international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. The international community must stand with Ukraine while it prepares to face another winter engulfed in a conflict with a relentless barrage on its energy infrastructure.

Malta continues to call for full and unfettered safe access for all humanitarian workers currently operating on the ground in Ukraine. The updates of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the humanitarian needs of the Ukrainian people are sobering. The war has displaced more people in Europe than anything we have witnessed since the Second World War.

Malta also reiterates its deep concern regarding the provision of military assistance from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran to the Russian Federation, as well as the deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the front lines in Ukraine. We call on all States to stop supporting and enabling Russia's illegal war of aggression.

We also reiterate the need for full accountability for all crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine and reaffirm our support for the ongoing work of the International Criminal Court, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the Register of Damage for Ukraine. Furthermore, we reiterate our support for the establishment of a special tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

The Council must redouble its efforts and strive to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. During the remainder of our term on the Council and beyond, we will continue to support all efforts aimed at achieving such goals. Until then, Ukraine has a right to defend itself under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to immediately end the war it started and to withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Doughten for her briefing.

As the crisis in Ukraine drags on, ordinary people continue to suffer immensely. In conflict areas, much large-scale infrastructure has been damaged; food and other daily necessities are severely lacking; and basic public services such as water, electricity and heating are difficult to guarantee. According to statistics from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, more than 14.6 million people in Ukraine are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and 3.5 million people have been displaced as a result of the war.

Less than half of the 2024 humanitarian appeal for Ukraine has been fulfilled. As another winter approaches, people are struggling to survive the war and the severe cold — the humanitarian situation is very worrisome. China once again calls on the parties to the conflict to exercise calm and restraint, to strictly observe international humanitarian law and to refrain from attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure. We call on the international community and humanitarian organizations to provide humanitarian assistance based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence so as to ensure the basic livelihoods of displaced persons and that people in conflict zones can live in relative peace and warmth during the winter.

Recently, an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safety and security team stationed at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant was attacked by a drone during rotation. China expresses its serious concern about that incident. We appreciate Director General Grossi's seven pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict and the five principles to ensure the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and we urge all parties not to take actions that endanger the safety of nuclear facilities and IAEA staff.

There is no winner in conflict and war, and military means cannot bring lasting peace. An early ceasefire and a political solution are in the best interests of all parties and are the only feasible way to resolve the crisis. In view of the recent intensification of the war on the ground, I would like to reiterate China's adherence to the three principles of no spillover from the battlefield, no escalation of the fighting and no incitement of conflict by any party. Currently, the international community's discussions surrounding the crisis in Ukraine are increasingly focusing on negotiations and

moving closer to peace. Some peace ideas and plans have surfaced in the media and, recently, both parties to the conflict have issued political signals towards negotiations. We call on both sides to meet each other halfway and start peace talks at an early date. We call on the international community to provide support and create favourable conditions for forming synergy in promoting peace and negotiations, in a joint effort to de-escalate the situation.

China's position on the Ukraine issue — namely, promoting peace talks and a political settlement — has been consistent. We insist on working for peace and promoting talks. We always maintain that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed, the legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously and all efforts conducive to the peaceful resolution of the crisis should be supported. We have actively engaged in shuttle diplomacy, initiating the establishment of the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis in the United Nations with countries of the global South, such as Brazil. We have only one goal in mind: to mobilize voices for peace, promote consensus for peace and support efforts for peace. We hope that the dawn of peace will arrive soon and that the people who have suffered so much from the war will soon return to a life of peace and tranquillity. China will continue to make unrelenting efforts together with the international community, including the global South, to achieve a political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Ms. Doughten for her briefing, and I welcome the participation of the representative of Ukraine and other colleagues in this meeting.

It is a tragedy and an outrage that once again, we are having to address the appalling impacts of Russia's illegal invasion. I would like to make three points.

First, the humanitarian cost of Russia's barbaric war has been immense. This year, 14.6 million people — 40 per cent of Ukraine's population — required humanitarian assistance. At least 10,000 civilians have been killed and more than 18,500 injured. Six million Ukrainian refugees are registered across Europe, and 3.6 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine.

This winter, following a total of 12 major strikes on their energy system in 2024, Ukrainians face limited access to power, water and heating. The most recent of

those came last Friday. Over the course of those attacks, all three of Ukraine's operating nuclear power plants were forced to reduce generation, and millions have been left without power. The targeting of substations providing electricity to nuclear plants directly threatens the safety of Ukraine and the wider region.

In that regard, we welcome the resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors last week. Russia's suggestion to the IAEA is that the solution to the threat that Russia itself is causing is to put the affected power stations into cold shutdown. That suggestion cynically ignores the further humanitarian impact that that would have on the civilian population. The solution is simpler — Russia should cease those reckless attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure and adhere to the seven pillars of nuclear safety and security of the Director General of the IAEA.

Secondly, recent Russian operations have triggered significant displacement in the east, including of the elderly and less mobile and of people with disabilities requiring specialized assistance. People are hiding in basements, with no access to services. The humanitarian operating environment remains increasingly difficult. Russia continues to block meaningful access for humanitarian organizations to occupied areas. Over the past two months, the number of security incidents directly affecting aid delivery significantly increased.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom is providing \$126 million in humanitarian aid this year, bringing our total contribution to more than \$576 million. We have also contributed more than \$80 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund since the start of the full-scale invasion and committed nearly \$467 million in grants and loans overall to the energy sector. Continued provision of air defence to defend Ukraine against Russian strikes remains vital.

In conclusion, we call on the Russian Federation to uphold its commitments under the Charter of the United Nations by withdrawing its troops from Ukraine and ending this brutal war.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): Let me thank Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), for the very insightful briefing.

Nearly three years have passed since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, and the heavy bombardments and air strikes continue to cause civilian casualties and widespread destruction. Homes, schools, hospitals and vital civilian infrastructure, including energy systems, have been severely damaged, leading to an ongoing and dire humanitarian crisis. As we enter yet another winter season in Ukraine, Sierra Leone underlines the critical need to address the impact of the conflict on Ukraine's infrastructure, particularly its energy systems, and the immense challenges that that poses for civilians during the winter months.

According to the Wilson Center, Ukraine is facing a severe energy crisis this winter, exacerbated by attacks on its energy infrastructure in March, April and August 2024. With a peak demand of 18 gigawatts on freezing days — that is, -10°C/14°F — only 12 to 13 gigawatts will be available, and even with 1.7 gigawatts of potential imports from Europe, there remains a significant shortfall. Daily blackouts could last 10 to 12 hours, with the situation worsening as a result of further attacks. Those prolonged outages will strain critical services, including water supply, ultimately placing lives at risk.

The extreme cold this winter will further exacerbate the toll on the population and put tremendous pressure on an already overstretched healthcare system. The lack of heating, electricity, water and gas will make daily life unbearable, particularly in high-rise buildings that rely on electricity for elevators and water pumps. That may trigger a renewed wave of internally displaced persons and refugees, as some areas of Ukraine could become uninhabitable.

It is reported that Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been targeted regularly since the start of the conflict in 2022, with significant damage to substations power plants and transmission lines. The occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant alone has reduced Ukraine's power generation capacity by 6 gigawatts.

The extent of the damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure is stark. Since 2022, 18 combined heat and power plants, 800 heating facilities and critical gas storage systems have been damaged. In 2024 alone, more than 400 missile and drone strikes have targeted energy sites, including seven thermal plants, four hydroelectric plants, 17 substations and a gas storage facility, resulting in a 9-gigawatt loss in capacity. By August 2024, nearly 50 per cent of energy facilities were

offline, requiring an estimated \$1 billion for repairs. A major attack in August left 8 million households without power, marking Kyiv's first blackout since 2022.

Sierra Leone is therefore deeply concerned about the devastating impact that the continued targeting of energy infrastructure has had on the provision of essential services to Ukrainian civilians. The International Energy Agency (IEA) reports that Ukraine faced a significant power deficit over the summer of 2024, when generation capacity fell 2.3 gigawatts short of peak demand despite electricity imports from neighbouring countries. That summer deficit led to daily power cuts across Ukraine, disrupting daily life and economic activity. While Ukrainian citizens have shown resilience in the face of those hardships, the lack of electricity for essential services, such as elevators and water pumps, made life increasingly difficult. The full effects of that crisis were partially masked by warmer weather during the summer, but as winter sets in the situation is going to get worse.

Sierra Leone echoes the IEA's assessment that Ukraine's energy infrastructure is extremely fragile heading into this winter season. Despite the ongoing repair efforts, much of the lost capacity may not be recoverable and the pace of repairs may not keep up with the scale of new damage from further attacks. We are therefore deeply concerned that the further destruction of energy infrastructure will exacerbate the challenges that civilians face this winter. According to OCHA's report of 30 October 2024, this winter is expected to be the most difficult for Ukrainians since the conflict began. The harsh winter, which can last up to six months, brings temperatures that can drop as low as -20°C, with an average range of -4.8°C to 2°C. All regions of Ukraine experience temperatures below -10°C during the winter months. To address those winter-specific needs, the humanitarian community has launched the 2024–2025 winter response plan, appealing for \$492.1 million to assist 1.8 million people with critical winter-related support. Sierra Leone calls on the international community to support that plan.

In the light of the devastating impact on civilians, we call on all parties to the conflict to adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, in particular energy facilities. We urge all parties to prioritize the protection of critical infrastructure in order to prevent further harm and ensure the restoration of essential services for the

well-being and stability of the civilian population. We reiterate our call for immediate steps towards a cessation of hostilities and for the parties to engage constructively in good faith to find a political and diplomatic solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Lisa Doughten of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for her briefing.

Over the past two years, Switzerland has repeatedly expressed its views on Ukraine in the Council. The Ukrainian people have always been at the centre of our concerns and today is no exception. More than 14 million people in Ukraine are currently in need of humanitarian aid. The number of civilian casualties now surpasses 40,000 and more than 10 million people have been displaced and become refugees. Persistent bombing has created an environment of fear and uncertainty. Winter threatens to exacerbate the already precarious humanitarian situation. While temperatures have dropped below zero, Russian attacks continue to disrupt essential services. The attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, the latest of which occurred just a few days ago, are particularly worrisome. They have led to power cuts across the country and the loss of access to essential services such as water and heating. More than half of Ukraine's energy facilities have been destroyed or damaged. Switzerland condemns those systematic, large-scale attacks, which may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Allow me to highlight three priorities of my delegation.

First, respect for international humanitarian law must be ensured. The principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality must be respected by all parties to the conflict at all times. Reports from the human rights monitoring mission and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine indicate that attacks on power infrastructure probably violate those fundamental principles. Switzerland calls on Russia to cease those attacks immediately. Accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be ensured. In that regard, we take note of the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court and reiterate our support for the Court.

Secondly, humanitarian needs must be addressed. Months of systematic attacks on civilian infrastructure are threatening access to basic services, severely hampering the supply of water and electricity. Power cuts are disrupting daily life throughout the country, affecting millions of people and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, including the elderly, disabled persons and internally displaced persons. They prevent access to education and healthcare and hamper communication. Switzerland is therefore stepping up its efforts to protect the most vulnerable in line with the United Nations winter response plan for Ukraine.

Thirdly, nuclear safety and security must be ensured. Damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure poses a serious risk to nuclear safety. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has stressed the need for a stable electricity grid to ensure the safe operation of nuclear facilities. Switzerland urges all parties to fully respect international law and adhere to the seven pillars for nuclear safety and security, as well as the five principles established here in the Council. We reiterate that the safety of all IAEA experts on mission is of the utmost importance and condemn the attack against them on 10 December.

The consequences of the war for the Ukrainian population will be felt for months if not for years. Switzerland commends the tireless efforts of humanitarian actors, including the indispensable contribution of the Ukrainian organizations and volunteer who often risk their lives as they continue to provide vital assistance to people in need. We pay tribute to the more than 50 humanitarian workers who have been killed or injured in Ukraine this year. We call for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all civilians in need, including near the front line and in occupied territories. The protection of humanitarian personnel is essential to ensure that aid reaches those who need it most.

The protection of civilians remains a fundamental priority. We reiterate our call on Russia to halt its military aggression and withdraw its troops from all Ukrainian territory. True to its commitment made at the first Ukraine peace summit held this summer, Switzerland will continue to support efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. After our term on the Council, the Ukrainian people will remain the object of our concern and support.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I would like to thank the United States for organizing this meeting and Ecuador and France for requesting it. We extend our appreciation to Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for her insights on this matter. We also welcome the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to this meeting.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine continues to be a source of profound international concern. Its impact extends far beyond immediate military confrontations, manifesting itself in severe disruptions to critical infrastructure, unprecedented geopolitical tensions, systematic violations of international humanitarian law, extensive humanitarian crisis and potential nuclear security risks. The violation of human rights and disrespect for the international legal regime on the protection of the civilian population and critical civilian infrastructure highlight the devastating and ever-mounting impacts of the protracted conflict. Its consequences are particularly acute in Ukraine's energy sector, where civilian populations face extreme vulnerabilities, especially during the challenging winter months. Moreover, the global repercussions include significant energy market volatility, supply chain disruptions and widespread economic uncertainty. As long as the conflict drags on, the consequences will inevitably continue to have far-reaching and dramatic consequences on various fronts.

We would like to emphasize three fundamental principles.

First, all parties must recommit themselves to ensure the protection of civilians, fully adhering to international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including relevant Security Council resolutions.

Secondly, the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality must be scrupulously adhered to and upheld by all parties.

Thirdly, we reaffirm the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency's seven pillars for nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict, as outlined by the Agency, and the five principles for ensuring nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

The persistent reliance on military solutions has demonstrably perpetuated a destructive cycle of violence and instability. The harsh reality conclusively

shows that military approaches are neither sustainable nor productive. Continuing to ignore that fundamental truth is no longer tenable. There is no doubt that the time is now to give peace a genuine chance. That means a resolute commitment to a political solution, prioritizing open dialogue over conflict and working tirelessly to establish a lasting and just peace. It is against that backdrop that Mozambique continues to advocate unwaveringly for a political and negotiated solution as the only viable path forward to end the conflict and lay the groundwork for a lasting and sustainable peace between the two neighbouring countries. In that context, we urgently call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, an immediate return to direct and meaningful negotiations and the prioritization of saving lives and dignity over continued conflict.

Finally, the moment has unequivocally arrived to give peace a genuine chance. That demands a resolute commitment to political dialogue, prioritizing diplomatic engagement over military confrontation, and working tirelessly to establish a lasting and just peace between the neighbouring countries.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I thank Ms. Doughten for her sobering briefing.

Since the day Russia started its aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, lives have been upended, cities shattered and the very principles of sovereignty and peace systematically trampled upon. Russia's unprovoked aggression continues to devastate critical civilian infrastructure, in particular Ukraine's energy systems. Last Friday, in a brutal continuation of the massive strikes on 17, 27 and 28 November, Russia unleashed hundreds of missiles and drones on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Those merciless attacks caused widespread power outages, leaving millions of people without electricity or heating, and severely damaged key power plants and substations. We are appalled by the scale of the devastation and strongly condemn the attacks by Russia. Such attacks further exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in the harsh winter. Alarming, the situation has entered a dangerous phase with the deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Russia, who are now engaged in combat against Ukraine. We are deeply alarmed about the deepening cooperation between the two. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the unlawful, unjustified and unacceptable military cooperation, in disregard of all relevant Security Council resolutions.

The deliberate targeting of energy infrastructure is deplorable and has far-reaching consequences. Beyond energy systems, the ripple effects have impacted other facilities, including medical centres, straining already overstretched emergency services and placing first responders in grave danger from secondary strikes while they carry out life-saving missions. In that context, my delegation is deeply troubled by Russia's clear and persistent disregard of international law, in particular international humanitarian law. Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure constitutes a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law. The global community must ensure that those responsible face justice by holding to full account the perpetrators of international humanitarian law violations and other egregious acts.

Japan has been unwavering in its commitment to assist Ukraine in addressing the grave challenges stemming from the attacks. Last month, Japan delivered a substantial package of power-related equipment to Ukraine, including one gas turbine and 15 variable frequency drives for water pump facilities to Kharkiv, two gas-piston co-generation units for Odesa and 32 small-scale power generators for Kharkiv's municipal agency for water resources. Those efforts will mitigate the severe impact of winter conditions on the civilian population. The international community must act collectively to assist Ukraine in addressing urgent needs and rebuilding its critical infrastructure. Japan once again strongly demands that Russia withdraw from Ukraine immediately and unconditionally. Japan also reaffirms its unwavering solidarity with the Ukrainian people and will continue to stand by Ukraine, advocating for the protection of civilians and the restoration of essential services.

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

I thank Lisa Doughten for her briefing.

In December, the weather in Ukraine hovers below freezing. It is not uncommon for the temperature to drop at night to -4°F — that is -20°C. Just three years ago, before the country was consumed by Russia's brutal, senseless war, Ukrainians could avoid the snow, the wind and the damp. But now, as Russia continues to attack Ukraine's energy grid, the cold is inescapable.

Yet paradoxically, instead of addressing that issue today, Russia's Permanent Representative uses his time to attempt to interpret what he believes to be the

policies of the next Administration, something that is not in his purview, in particular when he cannot explain Russia's own policy of aggression against Ukraine. Since March 2024, Russia has destroyed approximately half of Ukraine's power-generation capacity, leading to rolling blackouts that affect every Ukrainian across the country. Some 3.5 million of those people are living without power at all. For those whose windows and roofs have been lost to Russian strikes, there is little they can do to keep out the frigid air.

Those attacks, including drone strikes and now cluster munitions, have only increased in frequency in the past few months. Just days ago, Russia launched one of the largest aerial assaults yet, using drones and missiles to target Ukraine's energy grid and other critical infrastructure. In just one day, Russia took out 2 gigawatts of power availability. That is enough power for more than 1.5 million homes. Ukraine's energy workers are working heroically to keep their countrymen warm. But despite their efforts and despite assistance from the United States and other international partners, the power generation deficit that Russia has created in Ukraine will likely persist long into next year, leaving Ukrainian households with power outages of up to 20 hours per day. And then there is the potential risk of nuclear disaster posed by Russia's reckless seizure and occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Of course, we know that the weaponization of energy is just one facet of Putin's war of conquest. Over the past three years, Russia has killed more than 12,000 civilians, nearly 28,000 more have been injured and millions have been displaced in attacks on schools and shops, homes and hospitals. Still others have been forcibly transported into Russia — children, stolen from everything they have ever known, and many are still missing to this day. As discussed earlier this month, those atrocities were orchestrated and overseen at the highest levels of the Russian Government — war crimes and crimes against humanity, unleashed in systematic violation of Russia's obligations under international law to protect civilian life and civilian infrastructure.

Russia is not acting alone. It relies on Iran for drones and other weapons, launching record numbers of Iranian Shahed attack unmanned aerial vehicles at Ukraine's power grid. It relies on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for missiles, ammunition and soldiers, positioning North Koreans on Russia's front lines, under the command of the Russian military. It relies on China to maintain its war industrial base

by supplying it with machine tools, microelectronics and other weapons components, and to give it political cover, including right here in the Security Council.

Thanks to Russia and its enablers, Ukraine is experiencing a humanitarian crisis, but this humanitarian crisis is not limited to Ukraine. Russia's assault on agriculture has threatened food security for tens of millions of the world's most vulnerable people, especially in the Sahel. That destruction is compounded by Russia's attacks on merchant ships in the Black Sea and surrounding seaports, which have killed or injured dozens of people and only further impeded the delivery of much-needed grain. Innocent Ukrainians and innocent people all across the world are paying the price for this war of conquest. They did not ask for this war and they cannot stop it. The one who can is Putin. Putin can at any time end the conflict that has not only killed Ukrainians but hundreds of thousands of Russians, too — soldiers who could have been home with their families but instead were tossed into a senseless conflict.

It goes without saying: Russia must withdraw its forces from the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Russia must pay for the damage it has caused in Ukraine through its violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations. I am not naive. Years of these demands have yet to change Putin's behaviour. This is someone who pays no heed to the legal obligations to which his country is bound. This is someone who does not care about the human cost of this war, does not care about people who are freezing or hungry, does not care about the hundreds of thousands of casualties his own people have suffered. This is someone who has escaped accountability, whose imperial ambitions continue despite his abject failure to conquer Ukraine or overthrow its democratically elected Government.

But I know that, while justice in this case may be deferred, it will not be denied. Nations worldwide that value the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, justice and human lives stand with Ukraine for a just and lasting peace. When — not if, but when — Ukraine achieves that just and lasting peace, Russia will need to answer for its unlawful actions. Winter has arrived in Ukraine and its people are bracing for the dark, cold months ahead. But let us be inspired by their resolve and their willingness to defend their homes, their freedoms, their very identities, even in the direst of circumstances, and maintain our resolve,

too. Let us continue to demand that Russia end the killing and the war. Let us stop at nothing to ensure the accountability of those who wage it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): You, Madam President, just spoke in your capacity as the representative of the United States. I would like to provide a brief response to that statement.

The United States has accused China and it is not in line with the facts. We cannot accept that. That fact is that the United States itself — not China — is supplying weapons to the battlefield in an attempt to prolong the war. China did not contribute to creating the Ukraine crisis. It is not a party to the conflict itself. Since the outbreak of the war, we have been calling for peace, working for peace and promoting peace talks. I would like to urge the United States to work with China and the broader international community to end the war as soon as possible in order to pursue a political settlement to the conflict.

Before I conclude, I would like to remind you, Madam President, as the representative of the United States, that you need to pay attention to the fact that the situation has evolved with regard to the Ukrainian issue. Statements from the United States should also be updated in line with the changing situation.

The President: I shall now make a further statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States of America.

I appreciate China's response to our statement, but our statement was not an accusation, it was a fact — China is providing sustenance and support for Russia's efforts in Ukraine. What we all want to see in Ukraine is peace, and that peace is Putin pulling his troops out of Ukraine.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I will be very brief. China has not provided any lethal weapons to any party to the conflict. We have always

exercised strict control over dual-use items. China is willing to work with the international community to achieve peace as soon as possible. In fact, that is what we have been doing, and we hope that the United States will do the same.

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

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I recognize here the residual presence of the representative of the Russian delegation in the seat of the Soviet Union — as the capo-regime that keeps selling everyone popcorn. Today, in a very perverse way, he is trying to take on the mantle of the future Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) spokesperson. No doubt the founder of the FBI, known as “Charlie the Crook Chaser”, is turning in his grave, ready to chase Putin’s envoy.

We are grateful to France and Ecuador for initiating this meeting to highlight the dire humanitarian consequences of the Russian invasion for the people of Ukraine.

The onset of the cold winter season has again exposed the fact that Russia’s practices against Ukraine’s civilian population amount to acts of genocide. By targeting critical energy infrastructure in an attempt to deprive Ukrainians of electricity, heat and running water, Russia deliberately inflicts on them living conditions calculated to bring about their physical destruction in whole or in part. Such acts fall under one of the definitions of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Last Friday, on 13 December, Ukraine faced one of the largest attacks yet against its energy system — 94 missiles and 193 drones targeted critical energy facilities across the country. It is worth noting that our air-defence systems, including F-16 fighter jets, successfully intercepted 84 of those missiles. We reiterate our profound gratitude to all the allies who continue to bolster Ukraine’s defence capabilities. Their contributions are not only acts of solidarity but also critical measures for the prevention of genocide — a noble and principled commitment that will forever be held in esteem by history. It is alarming that Russia again targeted facilities that are crucial for the stable operation of Ukraine’s nuclear power plants. Five of the nine operating reactors had to reduce power following Friday’s attack. It speaks volumes that that happened less than 24 hours after the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors adopted a resolution entitled “Implications of Unstable Energy Infrastructure Critical to Safety and Security of Nuclear Power Plants”. Ukraine is grateful to all the States that voted in favour of that resolution.

It is clear, however, that when dealing with Moscow, the strength of diplomacy must be backed by the strength of weapons and sanctions. Moreover, Russia attacks not only Ukrainian energy facilities but also IAEA convoys, as it did on 10 December on a road in the Zaporizhzhia region. Last Friday’s strike was the twelfth carried out by Russia against our energy infrastructure in 2024 alone. For those strikes, Russia used about 1,100 missiles — both cruise and ballistic missiles. I reiterate that that is the number of missiles launched against energy facilities only. Russia continues to use munitions containing toxic chemicals and we have documented such 4,950 cases since February 2023. More than 2,000 Ukrainian servicemen have suffered from chemical poisoning. Today the Security Service of Ukraine issued a notice of charges against Russian Lieutenant General Kirillov, who ordered the use of chemical weapons against Ukraine’s servicemen.

Many other deadly weapons remain in Russian stockpiles, mostly from the Soviet era. Guided aerial bombs are among the deadliest of those. In just one week, Russia launched nearly 500 guided aerial bombs on Ukrainian positions and residential areas of Ukrainian cities. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, during the period of September–November alone, Russia’s guided aerial bombs killed 108 civilians and injured 755 others in Ukraine, representing 25 per cent of all civilian casualties in that period. Modifications to those weapons have extended their range, exposing cities at a distance of several dozen kilometres from the front line to unprecedented threats. Last week, the city of Zaporizhzhya sustained two terrorist attacks by Russia. On 6 December, a guided aerial bomb killed 11 local residents. Eight victims were burned to death in their cars following the explosion, including 14-year-old Tanya and 11-year-old Katya, and 24 civilians were injured, including three children. Four days later, on 10 December, Russia again attacked Zaporizhzhya, this time with an Iskander ballistic missile, hitting a private medical facility and nearby buildings; 11 people were killed, including four medical workers, and 22 others were injured.

The Kremlin also deliberately targets humanitarian personnel. Since February 2022, Russian forces have killed at least 99 Ukrainian rescuers and injured about 400 others. The deliberate targeting of civilians, children and first responders is a war crime, which underscores the need for the international community to hold Russia accountable and intensify efforts to protect Ukraine's most vulnerable populations.

Humanitarian support is vital for Ukraine. We commend the work of the United Nations humanitarian team in Ukraine and express our gratitude to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and other United Nations agencies for their active engagement in addressing the ongoing humanitarian crisis. We also deeply appreciate the support provided by our global partners and donors. We call on them, along with United Nations agencies and stakeholders, to keep Ukraine at the centre of the global humanitarian agenda, alongside other affected regions.

As long as Russia's war of aggression against my country lasts, ordinary people will bear the heaviest burden. That is why achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations remains a key priority for Ukraine — and I believe, for the entire civilized world. That vision stands in stark contrast to what Russia demands under the guise of peace proposals. It is a demand to capitulate and voluntarily surrender our sovereignty — and that will never happen. Does anybody believe that Russia is interested in genuine peace, while claiming for itself the territories it has occupied and even those it has failed to occupy? It is just testing the strength of the democratic world's resilience, or rather its weakness. And if such weakness is demonstrated in the case of Ukraine, the world should be ready for new waves of Russian aggression sooner rather than later. Moscow will restore its offensive capabilities and learn from its mistakes. And then it will attack again, especially if Ukraine can no longer serve as a shield standing in the way of Russian aggression.

The pace of Russia's rebuilding of its war machine will depend on how effectively the sanctions are preserved and enforced or on how many loopholes allow Moscow to bypass the current restrictions. Fossil fuel exports are a key source of funding for aggressive

regimes. In 2023 alone, Russia earned \$188 billion from oil exports. Recently, our intelligence released a dossier on 238 tankers in a shadow fleet of oil tankers, which consists of more than 1,000 ageing, poorly maintained vessels with convoluted ownership structures. With a combined deadweight of more than 100 million tons — roughly 17 per cent of the global oil tanker fleet — it represents a global challenge that literally fuels the Russian war. The shadow fleet is also a real ecological time bomb that could go off at any moment. That was demonstrated yesterday in the Kerch Strait, where two Russian tankers had crashed — one of them simply split in half. The disaster caused an oil spill reportedly amounting to 4,000 tons of oil products. Given the poor technical condition of the Russian shadow fleet, the recurrence of such a disaster is only a matter of time if decisive action is not taken to deprive Russia of such a tool.

As we approach the third anniversary of the so-called three-day military operation, it is obvious that Putin cannot defeat Ukraine militarily. Now, he and his generals are throwing all available reserves onto the battleground in an attempt to grab more land, regardless of the losses. In October and November, Russian losses reached unprecedented levels, exceeding 40,000 soldiers per month. Remarkably, it follows from the Russian statements that those soldiers are dying in Ukraine's Donbas region in a war against the United States, not against Ukraine. Moreover, Russia claims it has been attacked by the United States. Those who would consider that to be nonsense would be right. But such nonsense, circulated most recently by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov on the sidelines of the thirty-first Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, held in Malta, serves a calculated purpose. By publicly labelling Ukraine's allies as Russia's primary enemies, the Kremlin sends a message of intimidation: that it could do to them what it is doing to Ukraine. The genocidal destruction of energy infrastructure and the medium-range ballistic missile strikes are tools to intimidate the free world and discourage it from supporting Ukraine,

However, those threats reveal that Putin himself is driven by fear. In truth, he dreads engaging directly with Ukraine's allies. That fear will persist as long as our allies demonstrate their unwavering resolve by supporting us, in particular by enabling Ukraine to dismantle Russia's aggressive capabilities, especially on Russian territory. The only factor that may alleviate

Putin's fears is our own weakness and readiness to capitulate, and that will never happen. Putin's envoy may issue threats to the Council and indulge in the delusion of representing a super-Power. However, the reality is starkly different: Russia's overextended neo-imperial ambitions are steadily unravelling. The Kremlin's intervention in Syria has culminated in failure and the collapse of its ventures in Africa will follow. Putin's supposed small, victorious war against Ukraine will meet the same ignominious end. He knows that, just as he knows that his portraits will soon be reduced to tatters — not only in Syria but in Russia itself. The world must not succumb to the Kremlin's bluff. Peace can and will be secured through strength, for strength remains the only language that an aggressor comprehends.

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

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

We align ourselves with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

Russia remains in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, disregarding multiple General Assembly resolutions, including resolution ES-11/6, entitled "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine", which was adopted in February 2023 with a majority of 141 votes. Russia also violates the order of the International Court of Justice to immediately suspend all military operations in Ukraine.

The suffering that Russia continues to inflict on Ukrainian civilians is intolerable. Contrary to its claims, Russia is systematically attacking the civilian population, often targeting rescue and humanitarian workers. There have been more than 280 incidents involving humanitarian operations and aid workers on the territory of Ukraine in 2024. In that regard, we reiterate our appreciation and support for United Nations humanitarian assistance and the work of the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and other agencies and their devoted representatives in Ukraine, who are engaged in providing support to war-affected populations. Since 2022, millions of refugees from Ukraine escaping Russia's brutal war of aggression have crossed borders into neighbouring countries. Of the more than 6 million refugees in Europe, more

than 130,000 have received refuge in the Baltic States. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are working closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on the refugee response plan in order to ensure the provision of critical protection services and humanitarian assistance.

The Baltic States strongly condemn and are deeply concerned about Russia's escalating deliberate attacks on the civilian population in Ukraine. We urge Russia to respect its commitments under international humanitarian law and protect civilians and humanitarian personnel in all circumstances. Particular attention should be given to the protection of the rights, safety and well-being of Ukraine's children, especially those who have been forcibly deported to and illegally adopted in Russia. We demand their safe return and accountability for the perpetrators. According to the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, Russia is expanding its means of and methods for targeting civilians. Verified data reveals a stark escalation — from January through November 2024, modified glide aerial bombs killed 341 civilians and injured 1,803 more. There has been a threefold increase in fatalities and a sixfold increase in injuries as compared to 2023. Those aerial bombs carry large amounts of explosive material, making them highly destructive in urban areas.

Russia continues to target Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure, even as the harsh winter intensifies. In a recent attack, Russia launched 93 missiles and 200 drones — including a North Korean missile — at Ukraine's electricity generation and distribution facilities. That resulted in massive power outages, critically impacting facilities involved in the conversion and transmission of electricity from nuclear power plants. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that five of Ukraine's nine operating nuclear reactor units have been forced to reduce their power output. In total, Russia has already damaged 80 per cent of Ukraine's energy infrastructure. The aim is clear: to destroy the Ukrainian economy and break the resilience of the Ukrainian people. We condemn Russia's deliberate attacks against IAEA staff members, which demonstrates its complete disregard for international law and the safety of nuclear facilities and personnel.

Recently, there has also been a sharp rise in the execution of Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russian armed forces. The Baltic States demand full accountability, including the implementation of the

arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against Vladimir Putin and Maria Lvova-Belova for their involvement in the war crime of child abduction and against Sergei Kobylash and Viktor Sokolov, as well as against Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, for the war crime of directing attacks at civilian objects and the crime against humanity of inhumane acts under the Rome Statute.

The Baltic States also reiterate our condemnation of North Korea, Belarus and Iran for their part in the aggression. We call on all States to cease supporting Russia, including by preventing the provision of dual-use goods. We continue to urge China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, to exercise its influence and stop Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine.

We reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's legitimate right to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Baltic States will continue to stand by Ukraine until victory, fully supporting Ukraine's peace formula. Our priority is Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as holding Russia and its accomplices — including top political and military leadership — fully accountable. Only a just peace can be truly sustainable.

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

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

We thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for yet another alarming briefing. We commend the bravery and professionalism of all humanitarian workers.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has caused immense human suffering. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are nearly 4 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine, and 6.8 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded globally. With sub-zero temperatures, a staggering 14.6 million people in Ukraine are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

Over the weekend, we saw yet another Russian wave of missile attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Not only do such attacks expose civilians, hospitals and schools to the harsh winter conditions, but they also endanger the safety and security of Ukraine's

nuclear sites — as those sites require a secure off-site power supply. Throughout the war, Russia has shown a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law. Humanitarian access to occupied areas has been denied, civilians and civilian objects have been consciously targeted, children have been forcibly abducted and prisoners of war have been systematically tortured.

Those countless violations of international humanitarian law illustrate that Russia has chosen terror to achieve its political goal: the subjugation of Ukraine and the annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory. Over the years, we have heard different attempts by Russia to justify its aggression. Claims that Ukraine or NATO were poised to attack Russia served only one purpose: to hide the simple truth that Russia's actions were nothing but a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

As the aggression continues, we need to remind ourselves that this is a Russian war of choice. Russia could end it tomorrow. The international community must remain firm in its support for a just and sustainable peace in line with international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. Any illusion that Russia advocates a more equitable, just, and fair world must be dispelled. When the international community sought to revitalize multilateral cooperation through the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), Russia attempted to derail it. When Ukraine prepared grain shipments to mitigate the global consequences of the aggression, Russia cynically targeted ships and port infrastructure in Odesa to stop the deliveries.

Ukraine and its partners have been ready for peace since day one. However, a settlement in which aggression is rewarded or independent States are denied the right to decide their own security arrangements risks being neither sustainable nor conducive to international peace and security. Until a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace has been reached, in line with international law and the Charter, we demand that Russia ensures safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. We demand that Russia cease its attacks on civilians and civilian objects. And we demand that Russia allows the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Russia's aggression and violations of international humanitarian law must come to an end.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: 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, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Andorra and Monaco, align themselves with this statement.

I thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its briefing. It reminded us of the devastating humanitarian toll of Russia's war of aggression. The EU commends the courage and professionalism of all humanitarian workers risking their lives to alleviate human suffering.

In the coming weeks, many families in Ukraine would traditionally be celebrating the holidays together, in the safety and warmth of their homes and with their loved ones. But, for far too many, this period will instead be marked by mourning for lost friends and family members. For them, that is the reality of the illegal war.

We once again call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its large-scale and systematic attacks against Ukraine's civilian and energy infrastructure. Russia's plan to weaponize energy in order to pressure the Ukrainian people is unacceptable. This year, civilian casualties are at their highest level since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 12,000 civilians have been killed. Deliberately targeting civilians or civilian infrastructure is a war crime. Those attacks also endanger nuclear safety and security, as nuclear sites need a secure off-site power supply.

In the territories it currently occupies, Russia's large scale human rights violations are well-documented, including by the United Nations. We have also frequently heard in this Chamber how Russia has cut off an estimated 1.5 million Ukrainians from humanitarian aid. We call on it to respect its obligations under international law in the territories it temporarily occupies and to facilitate full, safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access.

We are equally alarmed at Russia's treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees, as many others mentioned in this Chamber. The United Nations has confirmed widespread and systematic

torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence. There are numerous reports of executions by Russian forces. The European Union condemns prisoners' lack of access to the outside world and the denial of access for the International Committee of the Red Cross and other independent monitors. International humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, must be fully respected. We reiterate that Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging this war of aggression and for other crimes under international law, such as the ones I have mentioned.

Humanitarian action in these winter months is particularly important, both within Ukraine and among Ukrainian refugee populations in neighbouring States. As is the case for all crises around the world, the EU and its member States continue to contribute generously. We call on all nations to step up their support as well.

In Ukraine, we are providing an additional winter support package to repair damaged energy infrastructure, to improve connectivity within Ukraine and from the EU and to stabilize the energy system. In line with our long history of support for mine clearance, we are also increasing humanitarian mine action, taking into account that Ukraine is one of the countries most affected by landmines and that the risks to civilians, especially children, are amplified when those dangers are buried under snow and ice.

We urge third countries to cease all assistance to Russia's war of aggression. That includes not only direct military support but also the provision of dual-use goods and sensitive items that sustain Russia's military industrial base. The EU strongly condemns the deepening military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia. The deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea troops in Russia's illegal war of aggression blatantly violates Security Council resolutions. It represents a unilateral hostile act by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, at the reckless invitation of Russia, with grave consequences for European and global peace and security.

During these cold winter days and nights, our thoughts go out to the brave, resilient Ukrainian families suffering under an illegal and unprovoked foreign aggression and exercising their inherent right to self-defence. No one wants peace more than the Ukrainians. As a new year arrives, now, more than ever, we urgently need not

just any peace, but a comprehensive, just and lasting peace anchored in the Charter of the United Nations.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I would like to thank Ms. Lisa Doughten of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for her informative briefing.

It is very clear that the humanitarian situation in many areas of Ukraine continues to deteriorate, owing to Russia's deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. The war has affected millions of people, including the most vulnerable groups, and forced them to flee their homes, because Russia deliberately desires that. What worries us the most is that Russia continues its relentless attacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure, including energy, heating and water supply systems and the healthcare and emergency services. Those attacks are inflicted both by physical missile strikes and cyberattacks. The destruction of energy infrastructure is making the living conditions of Ukrainians untenable this winter, so that countless schools, hospitals and homes have no heating or running water, as we heard today. We call on Russia to stop its attacks immediately. We remind the Russian leadership that international law prohibits the intentional targeting of civilian infrastructure essential for the survival of the civilian population. Deliberately targeting civilians or civilian infrastructure is a war crime.

We are concerned by the horrific treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees that has been confirmed by numerous human rights mechanisms, such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Moscow Mechanism. We are also appalled by the daily reports of the crimes committed by Russian forces, including widespread and systematic torture, ill-treatment, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and the forcible transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia, where they are being coerced into accepting Russian citizenship. Those are all violations of basic international humanitarian law. Poland supports all multilateral and national efforts to hold Russia accountable for those violations through relevant judicial institutions and compensation mechanisms.

The humanitarian response is facing increasing challenges owing to the risks to safety and the worsening conditions on the ground. We call for the further mobilization of efforts to support all humanitarian actors operating in Ukraine, including United Nations-affiliated agencies, international organizations and local non-governmental organizations. Urgent assistance is needed to rebuild power grids and heating and water systems, conduct humanitarian demining, and provide supplies for repairing and strengthening shelters. We must prioritize humanitarian access, ensure protection for persons in vulnerable situations — including women, children and persons with disabilities — and provide comprehensive support for rebuilding efforts in Ukraine.

As a close neighbour, we are focused on helping Ukraine, which is struggling owing to the unlawful aggression directed mainly against its civilian population. Since 2022, Poland has delivered assistance to the nearly 4 million Ukrainians who crossed our borders immediately after the start of the Russian full-scale invasion. We have served as a medical, energy and logistical hub for the transfer of European Union aid to Ukraine and provided energy support to prepare for the winter. We have also made financial contributions to various programmes and funds, including the Ukraine humanitarian fund, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In conclusion, Poland is fully determined and will not give up on its efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. We will provide further support to our neighbours in need.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Beresford-Hill.

Mr. Beresford-Hill: I would like to express my gratitude to the United States for calling this meeting and to the representatives of France and Ecuador for their interest in and commitment to the humanitarian concerns of the people of Ukraine. I would also like to thank Ms. Lisa Doughten for her very inspiring and very relevant briefing.

Since the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, the Sovereign Order of Malta has been at the forefront in providing humanitarian aid to the Ukrainian population. Our work there has had an impact on more than 4 million individuals, resulting in the disbursement of more than €60 million in aid and resources, delivered

and distributed at more than 70 locations. At the moment, we have more than 1,000 volunteers and relief workers active in Ukraine, providing humanitarian aid to those in need. We recently held a conference at our government headquarters in Rome to review humanitarian operations in Ukraine, where we heard from doctors, volunteers, psychologists and other professionals who are working with us throughout the country. I would like to share one takeaway from that conference with the Council.

Relentless bombing, the destruction of infrastructure and the fear of repeated hostilities, coupled with the absence of adults — who are either deceased or serving in the armed forces — is creating a generation of traumatized Ukrainian children, whose futures will be marked by evolving mental health issues. Any child psychologist will say that children need a healthy, safe and secure environment in order to grow, not only physically but mentally. Across the world, we have become aware of the sheer immensity of mental health issues, particularly as they affect young people. The United States National Institute of Mental Health reports that almost 50 per cent of teenagers struggle with mental health issues, while 22 per cent of those have severe impairments. Similar statistics are reported in many countries. Those statistics reflect the situations of young people raised in relatively safe environments who do not experience the effects of war or internal conflict. Let us imagine, therefore, the immense damage being done to children and young people in war-ravaged environments, as experienced across Ukraine.

Order of Malta psychosocial professionals have worked with tens of thousands of Ukrainian young people over the past two years in a variety of social and therapeutic environments, and they continually report on the underlying traumas and anxieties that are shaping the worldview of those children, who will soon be adults. Summer camp opportunities, play centres and group and individual counselling can only do so much. As long as bombs are dropping and homes are being destroyed, with families living in fear, and as long as the country's focus is diverted from the normal affairs of State, then the emotional and psychological future of the country will be at risk. According to the Ukrainian Government, more than 3,800 educational facilities in the country have been damaged or destroyed, severely interrupting access to education for millions of children. Only two of the 700 schools in Kharkiv are delivering in-person learning. Most children there are studying online. Others attend classes in five metro stations that have been converted into underground schools.

The rebuilding of cities and towns will happen over time. The rebuilding of lives and minds is a far more complex process. We can begin only when we have peace, but we also know that, while bodies heal or adjust, establishing mental equilibrium is an ongoing process that often takes a lifetime. The sooner we find a peaceful solution to the conflict, the sooner the next generation of Ukrainians will find its way.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.