



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

8970th meeting

Monday, 21 February 2022, 9 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

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| Albania | Mr. Hoxha |
| Brazil | Mr. Costa Filho |
| China | Mr. Zhang Jun |
| France | Mr. De Rivière |
| Gabon | Mrs. Ngyema Ndong |
| Ghana | Mr. Agyeman |
| India | Mr. Tirumurti |
| Ireland | Ms. Byrne Nason |
| Kenya | Mr. Kimani |
| Mexico | Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu |
| Norway | Ms. Juul |
| United Arab Emirates | Mrs. Nusseibeh |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Dame Barbara Woodward |
| United States of America | Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield |

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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

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

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

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: It is with great concern and sadness that I brief the Council this evening on the unfolding dangerous situation in and around Ukraine.

In his statement today, the Secretary-General was clear. The Secretary-General considers the decision of the Russian Federation to recognize the independence of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to be a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We very much regret this decision, which risks having regional and global repercussions.

We also regret the order today to deploy Russian troops into eastern Ukraine, reportedly on a peacekeeping mission.

These developments follow the decision to order a mass evacuation of civilian residents of Donetsk and Luhansk into the Russian Federation.

We are concerned by the escalating shelling across the contact line, reportedly leading to a number of casualties. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has recorded a total of 3,231 ceasefire violations in the Donbas area from 18 to 20 February; 1,073 ceasefire violations, including 926 explosions

in the Luhansk region; and 2,158 ceasefire violations, including 1,100 explosions, in the Donetsk region.

We remind all involved of their responsibilities under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Although the United Nations is not in a position to verify the numerous claims and allegations made by various actors, we are deeply concerned about the reports of civilian casualties, the targeting of critical civilian infrastructure and ongoing evacuations.

We are extremely concerned about the possible implications of the latest developments for the existing negotiation frameworks. Amid the current risks and uncertainty, it is even more important to pursue dialogue. Negotiation is the only way to address the existing differences among the key actors regarding regional security issues and the settlement of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, in accordance with resolution 2202 (2015).

Before the current, already dangerous conditions escalate further, we call on all relevant actors to focus their efforts on an immediate cessation of hostilities. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected, and actions and statements that may worsen the situation must be avoided.

Over the past few weeks, key actors have been engaged in intense diplomatic efforts to avert a new eruption of conflict in the heart of Europe. The Secretary-General fully supports these efforts and has deplored even the possibility that a new conflict could even break out.

We are committed to our long-term partnership with Ukraine — a founding Member of the United Nations — as it continues to pursue its democratic reform agenda 30 years after independence. And once again, we reiterate the full commitment of the United Nations to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders, according to General Assembly resolutions.

Throughout the eight years of conflict in eastern Ukraine, the United Nations has continued to provide life-saving humanitarian support to all in need, as well as human rights-related work. During this difficult period, we are committed to staying and delivering, and remain fully operational in Ukraine, including in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The safety and security of all our staff must be respected by all parties.

The next hours and days will be critical. The risk of major conflict is real and needs to be prevented at all costs. I can assure the Council of the full commitment of the Secretary-General to working towards a diplomatic resolution of the current crisis.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

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

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Since the Second World War, the Charter of the United Nations Charter — the key tenets of which the Council is mandated to uphold — has stood as a bulwark to the worst impulses of empires and autocrats. Earlier today, Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, announced that Russia will recognize as "independent States" the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, the sovereign territory of Ukraine, an area controlled by Russia's proxies since 2014. He has since announced that he will place Russian troops in these regions. He calls them peacekeepers. This is nonsense. We know what they really are. In doing so, he has put before the world a choice. We must meet the moment and we must not look away.

History tells us that looking the other way in the face of such hostility will be a far more costly path. Russia's clear attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is unprovoked. It is an attack on Ukraine's status as a United Nations Member State. It violates a basic principle of international law. And it defies our Charter. What is more, this move by President Putin is clearly the basis for Russia's attempt to create a pretext for a further invasion of Ukraine. The consequences of this action will be felt far beyond Ukraine's borders.

We do not have to guess at President Putin's motives. Today President Putin made a series of outrageous, false claims about Ukraine, aimed at creating a pretext for war, and immediately thereafter announced that Russian troops were entering the Donbas. He claimed that Ukraine is seeking nuclear weapons from the West. This is not true. Ukraine is in fact one of only four countries to have voluntarily surrendered their nuclear weapons. The United States and our allies have no intention of supplying nuclear weapons to Ukraine, and Ukraine does not want them.

And then, President Putin asserted that Russia today has a rightful claim to all territories — all

territories — from the Russian Empire; the same Russian Empire from before the Soviet Union, from over 100 years ago. That includes all of Ukraine. It includes Finland. It includes Belarus and Georgia and Moldova; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Lithuania; Latvia, and Estonia. It includes parts of Poland and Turkey. In essence, Putin wants the world to travel back in time — to a time before the United Nations; to a time when empires ruled the world. But the rest of the world has moved forward. It is not 1919. It is 2022. The United Nations was founded on the principle of decolonization, not recolonization. And we believe that the vast majority of United Nations Member States and Security Council are committed to moving forward, not going back in time.

The consequences of Russia's actions will be dire — across Ukraine, across Europe and across the globe. In our past two meetings on Ukraine, I have mentioned that nearly 3 million Ukrainians need food, shelter and lifesaving assistance right now. The United Nations estimates that the humanitarian toll will expand significantly should Russia further invade. Already, Russian proxies dramatically increased shelling and artillery fire over the weekend, killing Ukrainian civilians and soldiers. If Russia invades Ukraine even further, we will see a devastating loss of life — unimaginable suffering. Millions of displaced people will create a refugee crisis across Europe. Nevertheless, Russia has declined repeated entreaties to state its intentions before the world, including by Secretary Blinken in the Security Council last Thursday (see S/PV.8968).

President Putin is testing our international system; he is testing our resolve and seeing just how far he can push us all. He wants to demonstrate that through force, he can make a farce of the United Nations. We must act together in response to this crisis. Over the past few weeks, the world has heard the other 14 members of the Security Council speak with one voice, asking Russia to pursue diplomacy. Other members of the Council — even those that often align with Russia on other matters — have been clear that the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of every United Nations State Member, including Ukraine, should be respected and safeguarded, that this is a basic norm of international relations and that it embodies the purpose of the United Nations Charter.

The sequence of events that Secretary Blinken spelled out for the Council last Thursday appears to

be proceeding exactly as he predicted. Today President Putin has torn the Minsk agreements to shreds. We have been clear that we do not believe he will stop at that. In the light of President Putin's latest actions, we must all stand up for the principles upon which the Organization was founded.

President Biden issued an Executive Order today that will prohibit new investment, trade and financing in the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic regions. Tomorrow the United States will take further measures to hold Russia accountable for this clear violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but we and our partners have been clear that there would be a swift and severe response were Russia to further invade Ukraine.

In this moment, no one can stand on the sidelines. We must make it clear that an attack on Ukraine is an attack on the sovereignty of every United Nations Member State and the United Nations Charter, and that it will be met with swift and severe consequences. We continue to believe that the diplomatic table is the only place where responsible nations resolve their differences. That is the only place to preserve peace.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for another clear and comprehensive briefing to the Security Council on this issue.

Albania condemns, in the strongest terms, Russia's decision to recognize non-Government-controlled areas of Ukraine as independent entities. This is a breach of international law, an affront to the Charter of the United Nations and another blatant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and it puts an end the Minsk agreements.

This act of the Russian Federation is null and void, has no basis and has no international legal validity. We call on the Security Council and all the United Nations States Members to reject and condemn it firmly. Albania reiterates its firm position in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Less than a week ago, we were sitting in this very Chamber, at the Russian initiative, to discuss the implementation of the Minsk agreements (see S/PV.8968). Today we meet at an emergency meeting exactly because of the Russian Federation decision to violate the very Minsk agreements. This is disrespect

not only of the Council and its decisions, but for the entire universal principles of international law Russia is set to respect and protect.

The whole world has witnessed how the Russian Federation has continuously worked to undermine the sovereignty of Ukraine and to determine its geopolitical orientation. What happened today is nothing less but a *bis repetita* of what we saw in Georgia in 2008 and with Crimea in 2014 — aggression by fabrication of phantom republics. Who is next?

Every United Nations Member State should be alarmed and realize, eyes wide open, the consequences of the instrumentalization of national minorities as a weapon to undermine sovereign States and threaten regional and international peace and security. We should not allow the "made in Russia" model of destabilization to be exported to other parts of Europe or anywhere else.

We reiterate our demand for the removal of the military troops from the Ukrainian border and from the occupied territories of Ukraine, including troops disguised as peacekeepers when they are simply aggressors. Albania calls on the Russian Federation to stop its fait accompli policy, revoke this illegal decision and engage seriously and in good faith in diplomatic talks and to give a chance to the Minsk agreements.

This is yet another critical moment for Ukraine. The United Nations should remain actively engaged and committed, together with regional organizations, to the right of the Ukrainian people to live in peace and freedom.

We welcome the statement of the Secretary-General and echo his call for all relevant actors to prioritize diplomacy to address all issues peacefully as the only way forward.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for her briefing. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his action and very clear words. I welcome the presence of the representative of Ukraine, whose request for an emergency meeting France supported, given the extreme gravity of the situation.

France condemns Russia's recognition of the separatist eastern regions of Ukraine. This is not just a further attack on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, but it is also a violation of the

fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, resolution 2202 (2015), which endorsed the Minsk agreements, and the commitments undertaken by Russia, confirmed at the very highest level these past few days. On 17 February (see S/PV.8968), the Russian representative publicly acknowledged before the Council that there is no alternative to the Minsk agreements and that they were the only internationally recognized legal basis to resolve the conflict in Ukraine.

Today, however, the reality is quite different. Russia is choosing to challenge and confront in spite of continuous efforts over the past few weeks and days to de-escalate, notably by President Macron working with the German Chancellor. We are continuing those efforts. We call on Russia to match its words with its deeds, as it claims to be in favour of dialogue, and to reverse its decision to recognize the separatist entities.

We are preparing targeted sanctions with our European partners against those who took part in that illegal decision. In the context of the heightened tensions on Ukraine's borders, provoked by the Russian military build-up, we are concerned by Russia's additional destabilizing step and the threat it poses to European security.

France welcomes Ukraine's restraint in these difficult circumstances. We express our full solidarity with the people and the Government of Ukraine. We call on Russia to refrain from other destabilizing actions, in particular those that could undermine the security and safety of civilian populations. We are concerned by President Putin's decision to send the army to the separatist territories under the pretext of peacekeeping. That would be another flagrant violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

France will continue to mobilize in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me begin by thanking Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

We have been closely following the evolving developments related to Ukraine, including developments along its eastern border and the related announcement by the Russian Federation. The escalation of tension along Ukraine's border with the Russian Federation is a matter of deep concern. Those

developments have the potential to undermine the peace and security of the region.

We call for restraint on all sides. The immediate priority is the de-escalation of tensions, taking into account the legitimate security interests of all countries and aimed at securing long-term peace and stability in the region and beyond.

We are convinced that the issue can be resolved only through diplomatic dialogue. We need to give space to the recent initiatives undertaken by the parties that seek to diffuse tensions. In that context, we welcome the intense efforts under way, including through the Trilateral Contact Group and in the Normandy format. We need the parties to exert greater efforts to bridge divergent interests. We cannot afford to have a military escalation.

As we have emphasized before, the Minsk agreements provide a basis for a negotiated and peaceful settlement. We need greater efforts to find common ground to facilitate the implementation of the provisions of the Minsk agreements, including their key security and political aspects. As we have time and again emphasized, constructive diplomacy is the need of the hour so as to avoid the scaling up of tensions.

The safety and security of civilians are essential. More than 20,000 Indian students and nationals live and study in different parts of Ukraine, including in its border areas. The well-being of Indian nationals is of priority to us.

In conclusion, we strongly emphasize the vital need for all sides to maintain international peace and security by exercising the utmost restraint and intensifying diplomatic efforts to ensure that a mutually amicable solution is arrived at as early as possible.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Let me start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for the updates she has brought to the Council tonight.

When the Organization was established in 1945, it entrusted the Security Council with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Tension in and around Ukraine is being aggravated on a daily — indeed, hourly — basis, giving that habitual quotation from the Charter of the United Nations extraordinary importance and relevance.

We are all aware of how critical the situation has become. Brazil is following the latest developments

with extreme concern. In the present circumstance, we in the Council, in representation of the international community, must reiterate calls for immediate de-escalation and our steadfast commitment in support of political and diplomatic efforts to create the conditions for a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The collective security system of the United Nations rests ultimately on the pillar of international law. That pillar, in turn, rests upon the core principles enshrined in the Charter: the sovereign equality and the territorial integrity of Member States, restraint in the use or threat of use of force, and the peaceful settlement of disputes. Yet that pillar and those principles will not yield results unless the legitimate concerns of all parties are taken into consideration and unless there is full respect for the Charter and for existing commitments, such as the Minsk agreements.

In that vein, we renew our appeal to all concerned parties to maintain dialogue in a spirit of openness, understanding and flexibility and with a sense of urgency to find ways for a lasting peace in Ukraine and in the wider region.

A first inescapable objective is an immediate ceasefire, with the comprehensive disengagement of troops and military equipment on the ground. Such a military disengagement will be an important step to build trust among the parties, to strengthen diplomacy and to seek a sustainable solution to the crisis.

We firmly believe that the Council must live up to its core responsibility to help the parties engage in a meaningful and effective dialogue so as to achieve a solution that effectively addresses the security concerns within the region. Let us make no mistake — at the end of the day, we are talking about the lives of innocent men, women and children on the ground.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): We meet this evening because, earlier today, President Putin announced the Russian Federation's recognition of the independence of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, and issued a decree to send Russian military forces into Ukraine as so-called peacekeepers.

The actions Russia has chosen today will have severe and far-reaching consequences.

First, there will be consequences for human life. An invasion of Ukraine unleashes the forces of war, death and destruction on the people of Ukraine. The

humanitarian impact will be terrible on civilians fleeing the fighting. We know that women and children will suffer most.

Secondly, there will be consequences for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a United Nations Member State, which is protected and guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General said earlier, Russia's decisions are a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter.

Thirdly, there will be consequences for international law. The actions taken today make a mockery of the commitments Russia has made through the Budapest Memorandum and the Minsk agreements, endorsed by resolution 2202 (2015). In seeking to redraw borders by force, Russia's actions show blatant contempt for international law.

The United Kingdom will be announcing new sanctions on Russia in response to its breach of international law and attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. There will be severe economic consequences for its actions.

Now more than ever, the Council must shoulder its responsibilities for peace and security and defend the principles of the Charter. The Council must be united in calling on Russia to de-escalate immediately, in condemning aggression against a sovereign nation and defending the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and in calling on Russia to respect its obligations under the Charter to the peaceful resolution of disputes.

Russia has brought us to the brink. We urge Russia to step back.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing on the current situation in Ukraine.

We are following with concern the recent developments in the situation in eastern Ukraine. In the current circumstances, it is critical that any actions exacerbating the crisis cease.

Through resolution 2202 (2015), the Security Council endorsed the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements as the only framework for resolving the situation in eastern Ukraine. That resolution must be respected.

Specifically, in this particular case, three fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations are being violated, namely, refraining from the threat or use of force in international relations, respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. It is therefore unacceptable that over the past few days the shelling, explosions and other ceasefire violations have increased, according to reports from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission. We urge the parties to immediately put an end to those actions.

We wish to recall that in this same Chamber a few days ago Russia stated categorically that it would not invade Ukraine (see S/PV.8968). We hope that it will comply fully with that statement. Mexico reiterates its commitment to respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, particularly Assembly resolutions 2625 (XXV) and 3314 (XXIX).

We once again reiterate our appeal to resume efforts to take the path of de-escalation, diplomacy and dialogue.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I, too, want to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

We meet tonight at a moment of great danger for the people of Ukraine; for peace and security in Europe; and for the international norms and principles that all of us around this table have a responsibility to defend. It is a moment that we had hoped to avoid, a moment that should have been averted by diplomacy and dialogue. We must respond to it by speaking clearly and honestly about this grave situation and how we can resolve it peacefully.

So let me be clear about where we stand: Ireland's commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders is unwavering. Ireland believes in and is fully committed to the core principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. These include the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States. Ukraine has the same fundamental right as every other sovereign and independent State to choose its own foreign policy and to ensure the security and defence of its own territory.

The commitments we make as Members of the United Nations are binding on every one of us — no exceptions.

Last Thursday, during the meeting organized by the Russian Federation on the Minsk agreements (see S/PV.8968), we heard from Deputy Minister Vershinin that the goal of that meeting was for the Security Council to affirm that there was no alternative to that milestone document.

We believe that the Council did just that. Yet now, four days later, President Putin has decided to recognize as independent entities the non-Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk and to order troops into those two regions of Ukraine. This is the second time in less than 10 years that the Russian Federation has violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is a flagrant violation of international law.

In taking that unilateral step, Russia has abandoned the Minsk agreements and cast into doubt all the diplomatic efforts of past weeks. Ireland commends Ukraine for the restraint it has shown in the face of Russia's military build-up at its border and the provocation of the recognition of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Ireland, along with our European Union partners, supports a clear and unequivocal response to this violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. The Russian Federation's unilateral actions serve only to further raise tensions. Ireland once again calls for calm, de-escalation and the pursuit of diplomacy. Even if that call has not yet been heard, it is a call worth making again tonight. We need to see sustained and credible moves on the ground towards the de-escalation of the crisis. We urge Russia to reverse the recognition, withdraw its military forces and return to discussions within the Normandy format.

All signatories to the Minsk agreements agreed on the need for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission's safe and secure access to the entire territory of Ukraine. The mandate of the Mission was agreed by all 57 OSCE participating States. At this sensitive time, it is imperative that the Mission be given the full access agreed in its mandate.

We commend those who have engaged in dialogue and urge them to redouble their efforts to seek a peaceful resolution to this perilous situation. We owe nothing less to the people of Ukraine. We call on all parties to

ensure the protection of civilians as well as to refrain from any actions that would escalate the situation.

Ukraine has already endured eight years of bitter conflict, with more than 14,000 lives lost. The people of eastern Ukraine in particular have suffered from years of insecurity, humanitarian crisis and human rights violations and abuses. The Council and its members have the responsibility to work to resolve that conflict rather than yield to a grim new chapter that will inflict further misery on Ukraine and its people. This is the time to show the courage to pull back from the precipice and return to dialogue and diplomacy.

We all need to demonstrate our faith in the value of diplomacy tonight.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, for her updates and briefing this evening.

I would like to refer to the statement that the United Arab Emirates delivered in this Chamber on 17 February on the same subject (see S/PV.8968). I would like to emphasize once again the importance of de-escalation and restraint in order to maintain regional and international security and stability. We believe that now is the time to engage constructively and in good faith to address the current situation and mitigate its impact, of course, on any civilians and civilian infrastructure and to chart a diplomatic path forward.

The United Arab Emirates reiterates the importance of dialogue, as others have said, de-escalation and diplomacy, and of continuing all efforts to reach a peaceful solution consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty and good-neighbourliness. We believe that the Minsk agreements form a good basis for that and that adherence to those principles is indeed a sustainable pillar of a peaceful pathway forward.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

We meet tonight on the brink of a major conflict in Ukraine. The diplomacy we urged on 17 February (see S/PV.8968) is failing. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine stands breached. The Charter of the United Nations continues to wilt under the relentless assault of the powerful. One moment it is invoked with

reverence by the very same countries that at another turn their backs on it in pursuit of objectives diametrically opposed to international peace and security.

In the two most recent meetings on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.8960 and S/PV.8968) and given the build-up of forces by the Russian Federation, Kenya urged that diplomacy be given a chance. Our cry was not heeded, and, more importantly, the Charter's demand for States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered has been profoundly undermined.

Today the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine has been effected. Kenya is gravely concerned by the announcement made by the Russian Federation to recognize the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine as independent States. In our considered view, that action and announcement breach the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We do not deny that there may be serious security concerns in those regions. But they cannot justify today's recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent States when there were multiple diplomatic tracks available and under way that have the ability to offer peaceful solutions.

This situation echoes our own history. Kenya and almost every African country were birthed by the ending of empire. Our borders were not of our own drawing. They were drawn in the distant colonial metropolises of London, Paris and Lisbon with no regard for the ancient nations that they cleaved apart.

Today across the border of every single African country live our countrymen with whom we share deep historical, cultural and linguistic bonds. At independence, had we chosen to pursue States on the basis of ethnic, racial or religious homogeneity, we would still be waging bloody wars these many decades later. Instead, we agreed that we would settle for the borders that we inherited, but we would still pursue continental, political, economic and legal integration. Rather than form nations that looked ever backwards into history with a dangerous nostalgia, we chose to look forward to a greatness that none of our many nations and peoples had ever known.

We chose to follow the rules of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Charter not

because our borders satisfied us but because we wanted something greater forged in peace. We believe that all States formed from empires that have collapsed or retreated have many peoples in them yearning for integration with peoples in neighbouring States. That is normal and understandable. After all, who does not want to be joined to their brethren and to make common purpose with them?

However, Kenya rejects such a yearning from being pursued by force. We must complete our recovery from the embers of dead empires in a way that does not plunge us back into new forms of domination and oppression. We rejected irredentism and expansionism on any basis, including racial, ethnic, religious or cultural factors. We reject that again today.

Kenya registers its strong concern and opposition to the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent States. We further strongly condemn the trend by powerful States in the past few decades, including members of the Security Council, breaching international law with little regard.

Multilateralism lies on its deathbed tonight. It has been assaulted today, as it has been by other powerful States in the recent past. We call on all Member States to rally behind the Secretary-General in asking him to rally us all to the standard that defends multilateralism. We also call on him to bring his good offices to bear to help the parties concerned to resolve this situation by peaceful means.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Kenya's respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I will also begin by first of all thanking Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing to the Security Council.

The decision by the Russian Federation to recognize the non-Government-controlled regions of eastern Ukraine and to send in troops has stunned the world. Ghana deeply regrets the decision of the Russian Federation to turn its back on the Minsk agreements and the dialogue required to address concerns over the implementation of the agreements.

When Ghana joined this Organization, in 1957, we were under no illusions that the international order was perfect. However, we were, and are still, convinced that the principle of the sovereign equality of States, which constitutes the basis of this Organization and

our multilateral order, is the very type of foundation for a stable world. We believe that the United Nations represents the best attempt at maintaining peace across nations, forging relations and cooperation between and among our peoples and holding forth the prospect of a better tomorrow. It is for that reason that Ghana, like many other Members of the Organization, solemnly committed itself to upholding the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We believe that, through multilateralism, we can improve cooperation to make the world a better place for its citizens and for generations unborn.

Through this Organization and our common actions on principles such as self-determination within the context of the United Nations, the countries that existed under colonial rule were assisted in becoming sovereign and politically independent States. By its sheer convening power, this Organization has set out a pathway for dialogue for all its Members, regardless of differences in political ideology, and encouraged the development and maintenance of friendly relations. Through the actions of this Organization, the rights of people across the world have become more respected by their Governments and their well-being has been better guaranteed.

I will be clear: Ghana supports the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine, which joined the United Nations as a bona fide Member. We do not support any actions that violate Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. By its principles, Ghana does not recognize any entity outside the clear arrangements that have been established by the Charter and the principles of international law for the recognition of States.

As an international community, we have pulled back from many dangerous scenarios when logic and reason have prevailed. On this occasion, we re-echo the voice of the coalition of peace for restraint by all parties. While the sound of war may be loud, the voice of peace runs deeper. We urge restraint on all unsettled but accepted situations across the globe and remind Member States of the need to protect the collective security mechanism, which requires adherence to the core principles of the Charter and international law.

The true test of greatness lies not in one's ability to use power but in the capacity to constrain its use when that would be an obvious choice by those of a lesser capacity. We hope that within the Security Council,

and perhaps outside it too, we will find a resolution of the existing situation in Ukraine in a manner that does not impair the mechanisms for peace. While Ghana and other African Member States have always held that the use of the veto power is anachronistic and counterproductive to the effective workings of our modern arrangements for maintaining global peace and security, that concern has never been rendered more acute than in situations such as the one that we now see. Even though on many occasions it may be enough to say that we are against the actions of a Member State that go against the international norms, on this occasion we are all required to do more in reaffirming our common commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter. Besides the immediate cost of instability, all countries, including the most vulnerable in the developing world, may pay a steep price for actions that destabilize a part of Europe.

As we note with great concern the reports of foreign troops being sent across the borders of Ukraine, we reiterate our continuing concern about the situation of the civilian populations in Donetsk and Luhansk. We urge all parties to strictly comply with the tenets of international law.

We may be at the precipice, but we have not fallen over it. The path of dialogue and diplomacy remains. We urge the reversal of escalatory actions and invite the Secretary-General to renew his good offices with regard to the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, in close coordination with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and all other relevant partners.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

Over the past few weeks, our attention has often been focused on developments in the situation on the border between Russia and Ukraine, amid fears of military action and escalating rhetoric by the parties. Following the call made by the Russian State Duma, some days ago, to recognize the sovereignty of the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, all signs point to imminent action.

Today Russia announced its decision to recognize the sovereignty of the self-declared Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics. That decision is heavy with consequence for the sovereignty and territorial

integrity of Ukraine. It also undermines the relevance and implementation of the Minsk agreements.

Gabon is particularly committed to the principles of tangible borders, territorial integrity and national sovereignty and notes the fact that the core principles of international relations are being undermined. My country calls upon all parties to de-escalate, demonstrate restraint and adhere to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. We encourage them to use the channels of dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the crisis and prevent irreparable damage.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing and, through her, the Secretary-General for today's press statement.

We are gathered here this evening because of the Russian Federation's violation of the core principle on which the Organization is built — the sovereign equality of all its Members. Norway strongly condemns the decision by the Russian President to recognize the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, in eastern Ukraine, as independent States. The recognition of the self-proclaimed People's Republics is a clear violation of the Minsk agreements, under which Russia recognizes the non-Government-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine as part of Ukraine.

As a signatory of the Minsk agreements and as endorsed by resolution 2202 (2015), the Russian Federation has made a clear commitment to seeking a peaceful settlement to the conflict and recognition of the self-proclaimed People's Republics runs directly contrary to the work of the Normandy format and Trilateral Contact Group towards a negotiated peace. Furthermore, Russia's actions constitute a clear violation of international law. It has chosen unilateral action and military threats rather than diplomacy and dialogue. Norway urges Russia, as a party to the conflict, to fulfil its commitment, to abide by international law and to return to the path of diplomacy.

Russia's continued massive military build-up in and around Ukraine remains an issue of grave concern. Norway urges Russia to de-escalate by withdrawing its military forces from Ukraine and from the vicinity of its borders.

We commend Ukraine's posture of restraint in the face of continued provocation and destabilization

efforts. Russia's decision to deploy forces in eastern Ukraine is unjustified and irresponsible, as it further increases tensions. We face the prospect of a war that would not only threaten Europe's security architecture, but also lead to unparalleled suffering for the civilian population. Norway calls on Russia to strictly respect and fully adhere to international humanitarian law. We call upon all parties to protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure, and to facilitate safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need in Ukraine.

Let me conclude by again reiterating Norway's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its recognized borders. Finally, let me recall the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which are now under threat by the actions of the Russian Federation in and around Ukraine.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China has paid close attention to the most recent developments of the situation in Ukraine. We fully elaborated on our position at the previous two meetings of the Council on this topic (see S/PV.8726 and S/PV.8968). At present, all parties concerned must exercise restraint and avoid any action that may fuel tensions.

We welcome and encourage every effort for a diplomatic solution and call on all parties concerned to pursue dialogue and consultation and seek reasonable solutions to address each other's concerns, on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

The current situation in Ukraine is the result of several complex factors. China always adopts its own position based on the merits of the matter in question. We believe that all countries should resolve international disputes by peaceful means, in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

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

We have just heard several highly emotional statements, categorical assessments and far-reaching conclusions related to the signing today by Russia's President of decrees recognizing People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk. I will ignore the direct verbal assaults against us. It is now important to focus on preventing war and forcing Ukraine to stop the shelling and provocations against Donetsk and Luhansk.

From the statements made by several of our colleagues, anyone would believe that Russia's recognition of the People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk took place suddenly, for no reason at all. Of course, that is not the case. It should be recalled that those Republics declared their independence from Ukraine in 2014. We only recognize them now, despite the high level of support for doing so, both in the Republics themselves and in Russian society from the very beginning.

At the time, the hope was that Ukrainian Maidan regime would reconsider and stop talking to their own citizens in the east in the language of cannons, gunfire, shelling and threats. Time and again, we firmly requested Kyiv to listen to the aspirations of the people living in Donbas and to the Russian-speaking residents of the country and respect their entirely legitimate desire to use their mother tongue and teach their children in that language. We also asked Kyiv to honour the memory of those who liberated the land from fascists, instead of those who fought on the side of fascists and contributed to the killing of hundreds of thousands of people during the Second World War.

After the Ukrainian military adventures foundered upon the resolve of the Donbas and Luhansk people to defend their land, the Minsk agreements were signed and the package of measures was adopted to implement them. There was once again hope for peace and the prudence of the Maidan authorities, which had burnt themselves on their desire to drown Donetsk and Luhansk in blood. In particular, much hope was placed in the 2019 election of the new president of Ukraine, who promised to finally establish peace in Donbass.

However, those who counted on the peace-loving attitude of the Ukrainian Government were unfortunately mistaken. Kyiv not only quickly returned to its bellicose rhetoric and continued to shell peaceful civilians, but it also did everything it could to sabotage and ultimately undermine the Minsk agreements. Most important is Kyiv's stubborn refusal to speak directly with the representatives of Donetsk and Luhansk, despite the fact that that requirement is a central structural element of the package of measures. We have heard the unequivocal confirmation of their unwillingness to engage in such dialogue more than once from Ukrainian leaders in recent days, including from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at the Security Council meeting we convened on 17 February on the implementation of the Minsk agreements (see

S/PV.8968). After that, it became clear once and for all that Ukraine does not intend to implement the Minsk agreements.

I want to remind my colleagues on the Security Council that in all other conflicts, be they in Libya, Syria or Yemen, we demand and call for direct dialogue between the parties to the conflict, and only Ukraine is somehow an exception to the rule.

One might draw the conclusion from some of the statements today that a number of our colleagues are ready to bury the Minsk agreements. However, I would like to remind members that, at the time when the Minsk agreements were signed, the Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic had already declared their independence. The fact that Russia recognized that today in no way changes the make-up of the parties to the Minsk agreements, as Russia is not a party to them. We have repeatedly stated that and, in that regard, nothing has changed.

It is another matter that the Minsk agreements, some of the provisions of which should have been implemented back in 2015, have long been openly sabotaged by Ukraine, with the patronage of our Western colleagues. Currently, we see that many of our colleagues want to sign off to the idea that the Minsk agreements are dead, but they are not. Kyiv remains obligated to implement them. We remain open to a diplomatic solution, but will not allow a renewed bloodbath in Donbas.

Unfortunately, we are compelled to note the extremely negative role played in all this by our Western colleagues, led by the United States of America. Instead of forcing Kyiv to fulfil its commitments, they have only openly incited Ukraine, repeating the empty mantra that Russia is not fulfilling its obligations under the Minsk agreements, which, as we have repeatedly stressed, is not even party to them.

Moreover, for several weeks, while stoking groundless panic about Russia's supposedly imminent invasion of Ukraine, our Western colleagues have been shamelessly foisting weapons upon the country and sending trainers there, thereby effectively pushing the Ukrainians, who have deployed a 120,000-strong military contingent along the contact line, to engage in armed provocations against Donbas.

The bubble inflated by the combined efforts of the West and Ukraine could not help but burst. Over the weekend, the intensity of Ukrainian shelling of

residential areas in the Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic increased sharply. Reportedly, up to 1,600 projectiles were launched, killing civilians. Several subversive groups penetrated into the territory of the Republics, who have carried out or attempted to sabotage critical infrastructure. As I mentioned, there have been civilian casualties. General mobilization has been announced in the Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic.

Refugees have poured into Russia, not Ukraine, over the past several days, amounting to approximately 70,000 women, elderly people and children. Russia is hosting them and providing them with shelter and support. Towns in Russian territory close to the border area were even shelled. It has therefore become clear that Donbas is on the verge of a new Ukrainian military adventure, as it already was in 2014 and 2015. We cannot allow that to happen. That is why the President of Russia listened to the opinion of parliamentarians and members of the Russian Security Council. Everyone knows the rest. The detailed statement by our Head of State on the reasons for the decision adopted was broadcast by the world's leading media.

However, today we have heard an open distortion of what the President said in his statement about history and genesis of this crisis and the assertion that that he allegedly would like to rebuild the Russian Empire.

I call on our Western colleagues to come to their senses, set aside their emotions and not make the situation worse. No one other than them will be able to restrain Kyiv's militaristic plans and force it to stop shelling and provocations against the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics, which in the new circumstances could have particularly dangerous consequences. In accordance with the agreements signed with them today and on the basis of their appeals, the armed forces of the Russian Federation will perform the functions of maintaining peace on the territories of the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic.

In conclusion, I should like to note that, in today's statements, most of my colleagues failed to mention the more than 4 million residents of Donbas. They seem to have omitted their fates from their statements since 2014, contemptuously calling them pro-Russian separatists. However, they are guilty only of wanting to talk with the authorities that came to power following the illegal Maidan coup in 2014 and to discuss how their rights would be upheld.

Over the past few days, with the intensification in military activity of the Ukrainian army along the contact line, the lives of hundreds of thousands of women, children and elderly people, as in 2014 and 2015, have once again ended up under real threat. The main goal of our decision was to protect and save those lives, which are more important than everyone's threats.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): It is with unease that I will now remove my mask, and it is not because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). We are all vaccinated; there are vaccines for COVID-19. It is because of the virus that has so far no vaccine — the virus that hit the United Nations and the virus that is spread by the Kremlin. The delegation of Ukraine has requested this urgent meeting to draw the attention of the Security Council to the illegal and illegitimate decision of the President of the Russian Federation to recognize the occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine as the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.

Today the entire membership of the United Nations is under attack — under attack by the country that occupied the membership of the Security Council in 1991 bypassing the Charter of the United Nations; the country that occupied the parts of the territory of Georgia in 2008; and the country that occupied parts of Ukraine in 2014.

As stated by the President of Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, following the urgent meeting of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine have been and will remain unchangeable, regardless of any statements and actions by the Russian Federation. Ukraine unequivocally qualifies the recent actions by the Russian Federation as violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The political leadership of the Russian Federation shall bear full responsibility for the outcomes of the decisions taken.

Recognition of the occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine can be considered as a unilateral withdrawal by Russia from the Minsk agreements and shows its disregard for the decisions taken in the framework of the Normandy Four. This

step undermines peaceful efforts and ruins the existing negotiating frameworks.

Through the decisions adopted today and those that may be adopted tomorrow, Russia attempts to legalize the presence of its troops, which have actually been in the occupied areas of Donbas since 2014. A country that has fuelled the war for eight years is not able to maintain peace, as it claims.

What will happen next? We want peace, and we are consistent in our actions. Today the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine sent a request, on the basis of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, to the guarantors of Ukraine's security, demanding immediate consultations. A Security Council meeting and a special meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) were called. We insist on the full-fledged operations of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine in order to prevent provocations and further escalation. An emergency summit of the Normandy Four was also requested.

We expect from our partners clear and efficient shows of support. We will now see who our true friends and partners are — who is on the side of the Charter of the United Nations and who will continue to deter Russia through words only. We are committed to a political diplomatic settlement and will not succumb to provocations.

In accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, Ukraine has the inherent right to individual and collective self-defence. We are committed to a peaceful and diplomatic path and will not waver. We are on our land. We are not afraid of anything or anyone. We do not owe anyone anything, and we will not give anything away to anyone. There should be no doubt whatsoever, because it is not February 2014. It is February 2022. This is a different country and a different army. Our one goal is peace — peace in Ukraine and peace in Europe, global peace

“[W]e must do all we can to make sure that the problem of Donbas is resolved through the implementation of the Minsk agreements.”
(see *S/PV.8968*)

That was said here in this Chamber just four days ago by the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs in the chair of the President of the Council, with reference to President Putin, who took the decision that we are discussing today, which is a threat to the rules-based

order and to the Charter, in particular its Article 2, as well as to international peace and security.

The Security Council has been tasked with maintaining that peace and security, under Article 24 of the Charter. Pursuant to Article 39, the Security Council shall make recommendations or decide what measures shall be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security. The delegation of Ukraine calls on the Security Council members to exercise those duties.

We invite the Russian Federation to carefully re-read today's statement again and again, in which the Secretary-General considers Russia's decision to be a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I thank the Secretary-General for that powerful statement.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that it remains up to Russia to abandon its long-standing strategy on Ukraine, one based on threats and the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of my country, and to re-engage with what we all have committed to — the fundamental principles of peaceful relations, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

We demand that Russia cancel its decision to recognize the occupied parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine and return to the negotiations table. We condemn the order to deploy additional Russian occupation troops in the territories of Ukraine. We demand the immediate, complete and verifiable withdrawal of the occupation troops.

The United Nations is sick. That is a matter of fact. It has been hit by the virus spread by the Kremlin. Whether or not it succumbs to the virus is in the hands of the membership. Today the Kremlin copy-pasted — word for word — the decree on Georgia of 2008. They copy-pasted it word for word, with no creativity whatsoever. The copying machine in the Kremlin works very well. Who will be the next United Nations Member? That is an open question.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Only four days after our most recent meeting (see S/PV.8968), the Security Council meets again to discuss the situation in Ukraine. On Thursday there was consensus in the Security Council that the Minsk agreements, which the Council unanimously endorsed in resolution 2202 (2015), needs to be implemented by all, including the Russian Federation.

Today we are confronted with the very opposite from Russia. President Putin's decision to recognize the separatist, self-declared "people's republics" in eastern Ukraine is not only a blatant breach of resolution 2202 (2015), but also of the basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is another flagrant and deliberate violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, after the illegal annexation of Crimea and the instigation and fuelling of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine since 2014. Russia has repeatedly insisted that it was not a party to the conflict. Today it unmasks itself and shows that it always has been.

My Government condemns Russia's violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. With our allies and partners, we will take firm and adequate measures in response to Russia's breach of international law that will have serious economic, political and geostrategic consequences. I call on all United Nations States Members to join us in condemning Russia's actions of today.

Today's decision comes in the context of an unprecedented build-up of Russian forces around Ukraine over the past weeks and months. Those forces seem poised to attack. We have seen a flare-up along the line of contact over the past few days and efforts that appear to fabricate a pretext for a Russian attack. Moreover, Russia has declared its readiness to deploy troops in eastern Ukraine.

The Charter of the United Nations is crystal-clear: it unequivocally prohibits the threat of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of States. The current Russian force deployment around Ukraine can only be considered a further threat against Ukraine's territorial integrity.

I call on Russia to live up to its obligations as a permanent member of the Security Council, and I urge Russia to immediately revoke today's decisions and re-commit to the Minsk agreements, in line with what the Normandy Four agreed upon. Russia must not cross the internationally recognized borders of

Ukraine. Moreover, Russia must immediately withdraw its troops from the regions bordering with Ukraine in Russia and Belarus.

I call on Russia to recommit to the rules-based security architecture in Europe, which has been built over decades. Russia's decisions have put that order

under serious strain. We call upon Russia to return to the path of diplomacy, instead of shedding further blood.

Germany will spare no diplomatic effort in this regard, while steadfastly standing by Ukraine, its territorial integrity, its sovereignty and the Ukrainian people.

The meeting rose at 10.30 p.m.