



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

8980th meeting
 Sunday, 27 February 2022, 3 p.m.
 New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
India	Mr. Tirumurti
Ireland	Mr. Kelly
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
Norway	Ms. Juul
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
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 3.10 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 representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2022/160, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania and the United States of America.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China, India, United Arab Emirates

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The draft resolution received 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2623 (2022).

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

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): On Friday night, we stood together outside this Chamber to declare that the Russian veto (see S/PV.8979) would not stop us from holding Russia accountable for invading a sovereign State — a State that dared to be a democracy. Russia vetoed Friday's draft resolution (S/2022/155) but, as I have said before,

Russia cannot veto our voices, Russia cannot veto the Ukrainian people, and Russia cannot veto the Charter of the United Nations. Russia cannot and will not veto accountability.

Now, the Security Council has taken an important step forward towards that accountability. For the first time in decades, it has called for an emergency special session of the General Assembly. The Council members who supported resolution 2623 (2022) recognize that this is no ordinary moment. We need to take extraordinary actions to meet this threat to our international system and do everything we can to help Ukraine and its people.

Just this morning, President Putin put Russia's nuclear forces on high alert, although he is invading a country with no nuclear weapons and is under no threat from NATO, a defensive alliance that will not fight in Ukraine. This is another escalatory and unnecessary step that threatens us all. We urge Russia to tone down its dangerous rhetoric with regard to nuclear weapons.

These are issues that affect all Member States, and now in the General Assembly they can all make their voices heard on Russia's war of choice. We will then vote on a draft resolution that will hold Russia to account for its indefensible actions and for its violations of the Charter.

As we speak, rockets continue to rain down on Kyiv and across Ukraine. Tanks are tearing through cities. Russia continues to ready even more brutal weaponry — bombs that flatten cities and indiscriminately target civilians — for an unjustifiable assault, fabricated out of lies and the rewriting of history. Russia also propagates outrageous lies about Ukraine's conduct in its own defence.

We are alarmed by the mounting reports of civilian casualties, videos of Russian forces moving exceptionally lethal weaponry into Ukraine and the widespread destruction of civilian facilities like residences, schools and hospitals. To the Russian officers and soldiers, I say that the world is watching, photographic and video evidence is mounting, and they will be held to account for their actions. We will not let atrocities slide.

Those of us here safely sitting in this hallowed Chamber have a moral responsibility to respond to Russia's desecration of human life. That means humanitarian aid like the thermal blankets that the

United States Agency for International Development has already airlifted to tens of thousands of Ukrainians in need and the recently announced \$54 million in additional humanitarian assistance that will reach hundreds of thousands more. That means military support, including the additional \$350 million of security assistance that the United States is shipping to Ukraine. And it means holding the sole aggressor — Russia — accountable for its actions.

That will take some courage from some fellow Member States, and I know that. For inspiration, I would ask them to look to the Ukrainian people. They have shown strength, courage and resilience in the face of Russian guns, soldiers, bombs and rockets. They also maintain the courage to sit down and talk. We welcome their continued willingness to participate in peace talks.

On Friday night, darkness descended on Kyiv. Missiles attacked a sheltering city. But the next morning, Ukrainians woke up to a new citizen — a baby girl born to a mother in a bomb shelter. The baby's name is Mia. Photos of her tiny hand gripping her mother as they hid underground have inspired the world. Let us have the courage of Mia's mother. Let us have the courage of the Ukrainian people standing bravely to defend their democracy, way of life and futures. Let us show them that they are not alone; that the world stands behind them; that the United Nations has a purpose; and that the additional bravery of the protesters in Russia is not in vain. Let us do everything we can to help the people of Ukraine as they stand up for themselves, their sovereign country and their children.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Albania voted in favour and welcomes the adoption of resolution 2623 (2022). Formally, this short text is of a purely procedural nature, but its significance is of historic proportions. Last Friday (see S/PV.8979), a veto tried to lock the United Nations at a time when we need it most. That is no longer the case. The five lines of the text we have just adopted open the big doors of the place where the world meets — the General Assembly — to speak out and condemn an unprovoked and unjustified pure act of aggression.

The General Assembly emergency session is all about condemning an unprovoked war. It is all about upholding the Charter of the United Nations. It is about sending a clear and iron-clad message of what is acceptable and what is not, including to the Russians citizens who need to listen to the world and hear it.

Russia must be stopped in its attempt to break the international rules-based order and replace it with its will.

All Member States, especially the small ones like mine, which constitute the majority of United Nations Members, must remember that international law, rules and the Charter are their best friend, their best army, their best defence and their best insurance. Russia's actions undermine them. It is time to learn from past mistakes, not repeat and perpetuate them.

Russia can at any moment come back to reason, stop the war, recall its invading troops and return to talks — but they must be genuine talks for peace, not for surrender or capitulation. But that requires lucidity, courage and wisdom, not threats of an apocalypse. As we said last Friday, this is no time to remain idle or look away. It is time to stand up. Ukraine and Ukrainians are resisting. We are and will stand with Ukraine.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): On Friday (see S/PV.8979), the Russian Federation was alone in the Council in blocking the adoption of draft resolution S/2022/155, co-sponsored by 82 United Nations Member States. It called for an end to the aggression against Ukraine. France does not accept such obstruction. It therefore voted today in favour of resolution 2623 (2022), which calls for convening an emergency special session of the General Assembly. The matter remains before the Security Council. France will remain poised within the Council to ensure that it assumes its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In this context, the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, would like the Security Council to meet as soon as tomorrow on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. Together with Mexico, France will submit a draft resolution to guarantee unhindered humanitarian access to meet the urgent needs of the people remaining in Ukraine.

In response to those who attempt to impose the law of the strongest, the international community must demonstrate its unity, solidarity and adherence to the rule of law. France stands firmly by Ukraine and its people.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): Ireland once again strongly condemns the Russian Federation's further invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent country. Since we last met on Friday (see S/PV.8979), the Russian Federation has intensified its unjustified

and unprovoked attack against Ukraine. Russia's aggression is causing mounting hardship and suffering for the people of Ukraine, who have shown remarkable resilience and resolve. Ireland stands in full solidarity with them today.

The Security Council has a responsibility to act in the face of conflict and respond to this grave threat to international peace and security. We have failed to exercise that responsibility. We were rendered powerless to do so, despite the clear will of 11 members of the Council, by the Russian Federation's use of the veto in a flagrant attempt to excuse its own military aggression against Ukraine — a fellow Member of our United Nations. The use of the anachronistic veto in such terrible and tragic circumstances is reprehensible and undermines the legitimacy of the Council in the eyes of the watching world.

However, the veto will not prevent the international community from responding to Russia's blatant breaches of international law, nor will it deter us from holding Russia accountable for its actions. Ireland voted in favour of resolution 2623 (2022) to convene an emergency special session of the General Assembly. Ireland calls on our fellow members of the General Assembly to step up where the Council has failed, to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to condemn aggression and to support a return to the path of diplomacy and peace. That is the very least that the people of Ukraine deserve from us in their hour of need. We cannot let them down.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On Friday, 25 February (see S/PV.8979), as a result of the exercise of the veto, the Security Council was unable to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as it was unable to adopt draft resolution S/2022/155, on the situation in Ukraine, despite the fact that 11 members voted in favour of it.

In response to the paralysis of the Security Council, today we have invoked General Assembly resolution 377 (V), entitled "Uniting for peace", to convene an emergency special session of the General Assembly with the urgency that the situation warrants. Since 1945, Mexico has maintained its unwavering position against the exercise of the veto by the permanent members of the Security Council. As we have repeatedly stated and reiterate today, that power should not be a privilege. In every situation, it constitutes an enormous and

highly sensitive responsibility. Consequently, Mexico unequivocally supports convening the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly. As the Permanent Representative of France noted, we will convene a meeting of the Security Council to consider the overall humanitarian situation on the ground and facilitate the swift delivery of humanitarian aid to those most in need.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We are currently witnessing dramatic changes in the situation in Ukraine. China has on many occasions made its position clear on the issue of Ukraine, and it remains unchanged. We believe that the top priority now is for all parties to exercise the necessary restraint to prevent the situation in Ukraine from deteriorating. China supports and encourages all diplomatic efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis and welcomes direct dialogue and negotiations between Russia and Ukraine as soon as possible.

At the same time, China supports discussions on an equal footing between the European Union and Russia on European security issues and upholding the principle of indivisible security to eventually establish a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism. China believes that the Security Council should give priority to regional peace and stability and the universal security of all countries, and play a constructive role in resolving the Ukraine issue. Actions taken by the United Nations should help calm the situation and facilitate diplomatic solutions to avoid an escalation of tensions.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the result of the voting on resolution 2623 (2022) today.

By voting in favour of convening an emergency special session of the General Assembly on Ukraine tomorrow, the members of the Security Council have laid bare Russia's diplomatic impotence. Russia again was isolated in opposing the resolution, but Russia cannot stop the world from coming together to condemn its invasion of Ukraine.

As each day passes in this unprovoked and unjustified war, support for the people of Ukraine, their plight and their fight for freedom grows. We therefore urge all Members of the United Nations to use their voice tomorrow to call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine and end this war.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): It is regrettable that the situation in Ukraine has worsened further since the Security Council last convened on this matter (see S/PV.8979). We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of violence and an end to all hostilities. There is no other choice but to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue.

Our Prime Minister has advocated this strongly in his recent conversations with the leadership of the Russian Federation and Ukraine. In this regard, we welcome today's announcement by both sides that they will hold talks at the Belarus border.

The global order is anchored on international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. We are all agreed on these principles.

We continue to be deeply concerned about the safety and security of Indian nationals, including a large number of Indian students who are still stranded in Ukraine. Our evacuation efforts have been adversely impacted by the complex and uncertain situation at the border crossings. It is important to maintain an uninterrupted and predictable movement of people. It is an urgent humanitarian necessity that must be immediately addressed.

Taking into consideration the totality of circumstances, we decided to abstain.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Norway voted in favour of resolution 2623 (2022).

Just two days ago, in this Chamber (see S/PV.8979), we all saw that Russia was isolated and had no support for its attack on Ukraine. Russia's action is unacceptable. Russia is wrong. Russia is the aggressor that violates the very core principles of international law that the United Nations stands for.

On Friday, the Security Council failed to uphold its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council's response to the breach of the peace and the act of aggression failed because of the veto by the aggressor itself. Preventing such acts is a direct responsibility of the Security Council. Therefore, it was necessary to reconvene today to decide to call an emergency special session of the General Assembly on this issue.

Now, we will take this matter to the General Assembly for the purpose of making appropriate

recommendations to Members for collective measures. Russia will be held accountable.

The civilian population, including children, is suffering the consequences of this horrifying conflict: killings, displacement and disappearances; fighting in and around urban areas; the use of heavy explosive weapons; and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. We remain deeply concerned about the protracted harm to the civilian population.

Norway is on the side of the Ukrainian people and its Government. We are providing further assistance to Ukraine. The Norwegian Government has today decided to provide \$226 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

Let me conclude by reiterating that Norway insists that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally stop all fighting and withdraw all its forces from the territory of Ukraine.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Last Friday (see S/PV.8979), my delegation laid out before the Security Council a comprehensive view of its concerns regarding the security developments in and around Ukraine. Nothing in the intervening period has allayed those concerns. On the contrary, in fact, as we speak the number of casualties, the human suffering and the risks to international peace and security keep increasing by the hour. Indeed, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recently indicated the number of refugees to already be 422,000.

We voted in favour of resolution 2623 (2022) before the Council, despite misgivings about its timing and its contribution to achieving peace. These misgivings arise ultimately from our unyielding commitment to respect for and interest in upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the role of the security Council.

The urgency of the situation has convinced us of the need to add the voice of the General Assembly to that of the Security Council in seeking solutions to the crisis in and around Ukraine. This in no way detracts from our firm belief that the Council, with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has not yet exhausted the instruments and mechanisms at its disposal to contribute to a negotiated and diplomatic solution towards peace.

Therefore, we reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, for full respect for humanitarian law and for a renewed attempt within the Security

Council to promote and support the process of dialogue between the parties involved — a role that the Council is inherently better equipped to play — to bring a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian conflict. The Security Council and the General Assembly must work together.

As we renew our calls for an immediate ceasefire, we also appeal to Ukraine and Russia to facilitate the withdrawal of all persons who want to leave the Ukrainian territory. Brazil already wishes to express its gratitude to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and others that are facilitating the exit of people fleeing the conflict, in particular Brazilians and Latin Americans.

Let us be exceedingly cautious in moving forward in the General Assembly. The supply of weapons, the recourse to cyberattacks and the application of selective sanctions, which could affect sectors such as fertilizers and wheat, with a strong risk of famine, entail the risk of exacerbating the conflict and not of resolving it. We cannot be oblivious to the fact that these measures enhance the risks of wider and direct confrontation between NATO and Russia. It is our duty, both in the Security Council and the General Assembly, to stop and reverse this escalation. We need to engage in serious negotiations, in good faith, that could allow the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, security guarantees for Ukraine and Russia, and strategic stability in Europe.

Ms. Koumby Missambo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The Council meets today, Sunday, in an attempt to echo the unequivocal messages of the international community against the war in Ukraine. As we stated in the Council just two days ago (see S/PV.8979), we reiterate our ongoing commitment to the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which must be respected by each of its Member States. We also have faith in international solidarity and multilateralism.

It is those values that give our Charter and Organization their full relevance and integrity, and the reason we voted in favour of holding an emergency special session of the General Assembly on Ukraine. Today, our thoughts are with the innocent people suffering the horrors of a war that they neither chose nor provoked and the thousands of civilians fleeing their homes, towns and country to seek refuge elsewhere.

My country is deeply concerned about the attacks on civilians and civilian public goods and calls for

de-escalation. We call on the parties to the conflict to refrain from any use or threat of use of weapons that may have indiscriminate effects.

Lastly, Gabon continues to call for an immediate ceasefire and the resumption of open sincere dialogue. There is still time — there is always time — to choose dialogue and diplomacy over force.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): The United Arab Emirates regrets the fact that the situation in Ukraine has worsened since our last meeting (see S/PV.8979) and reiterates its call for a cessation of hostilities. We remain steadfast in our belief that dialogue and diplomacy should be the only path to resolving differences. We therefore welcome today's news that talks may commence tomorrow morning on the Ukraine-Belarus border. That is urgent and much needed.

We will work tirelessly to support efforts towards a peaceful resolution. As we conveyed on Friday, the developments in Ukraine undermine regional and international peace and security. The United Arab Emirates reiterates that the protection of civilians in Ukraine is of the utmost importance, particularly as the security situation escalates. Civilians trying to reach safety must be able to leave unhindered. It is of paramount importance that the necessary humanitarian aid be delivered to those in need. Space for humanitarian assistance must be preserved so that humanitarian actors can maintain access to civilians.

We emphasize the importance of upholding international humanitarian law and mitigating the impact of the conflict on the most vulnerable. We reiterate once again the absolute need to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all Member States.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by acknowledging the dangerous moments in which we live and noting the necessity for diplomacy to triumph over war. I therefore urge that, even at this difficult moment, and as diplomatic representatives of our States, we maintain the commitment of our States to dialogue and the objectives of peace.

Last Friday, because of the exercise of the veto (see S/PV.8979), the Council was unable to assume its primary responsibility to act on a threat to international peace and security following the Russian Federation's

aggression against Ukraine. It is time for the General Assembly to assume its residual responsibility and to pronounce itself on the matter. It is for that reason that Ghana voted in favour of resolution 2623 (2022), just adopted. As we consider the resolution we have just adopted, it is important that we do so with sobriety, not only for this generation, but also for those whose blood and trust speak to us from the restless graves of those who died in the two World Wars.

As a condition for becoming a Member of the United Nations, we all declared that we would fulfil our obligations under the Charter of the United Nations in averment of our peace-loving nature. Today, the peace we say we love is threatened. Ghana therefore calls on all Member States to participate in the emergency special session of the General Assembly in a constructive manner and to unite around the call for peace to stop this unjustified war that has already caused the needless loss of many lives.

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

Russia voted against resolution 2623 (2022) because its authors proposed that it be placed on record that the Security Council is unable to uphold its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. There is no hint in the text of any attempt to find a constructive solution in the Council. Two days ago (see S/PV.8979), we vetoed another draft resolution (S/2022/155) for the same reason — it was one-sided and unbalanced. There are no new initiatives either.

The United Nations and the Security Council were created in a post-war period to save succeeding generations from the scourge of a new war. To that end, global Powers decided to negotiate among themselves, ideally to achieve consensus. In any event, the objective was never to attempt to impose decisions on each other or to disregard the interests of any of the five permanent members. That is precisely why the Security Council grants its permanent members the right to veto decisions. It is not a privilege but a tool for ensuring the balance of interests, which is of paramount importance to the entire world. The balance of interests ensures global stability. Any attempt to circumvent or disregard the position of the Russian Federation undermines the bedrock of the Charter of the United Nations.

What we need is not to ram through such schemes, but instead attempt to find common ground, regardless

of the attempts of our Western partners to avoid that, including when they disregard our legitimate concerns about NATO policy and violations by Western States of the core principles of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on the principle of the indivisibility of security.

We now need to focus on resolving the situation that led to the current crisis. It did not start when Russia launched a special military operation in Ukraine. It started much earlier, when for eight years the Council turned a blind eye to crimes perpetrated by Ukrainian nationalists in Donbas. Today once again, no mention was made of the suffering of the people of Donbas. The images of homes in Donbas that were destroyed by nationalists and Ukraine's armed forces have been brazenly presented by Western media outlets as a consequence of Russia's military operation in Ukraine. At today's meeting, we are once again hearing lies and false information about the indiscriminate bombing of Ukrainian cities, hospitals and schools.

The Russian military poses no threat to Ukraine's peaceful citizens. The military does not fire at peaceful civilian infrastructure. However, Ukrainian nationalists pose a threat as they hold the people of Ukraine hostage and use them as human shields. There is ample evidence from ordinary Ukrainians proving that, despite public protests, nationalists are deploying heavy equipment and multiple rocket launchers in residential areas. That is an egregious violation of international humanitarian law that needs to be duly condemned. Essentially, those are the same tactics being used by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant terrorists.

All responsibility for the potential repercussions lies in the hands of the Maidan regime. The residents of Ukraine are also under threat from the ongoing activities of radicals, who are giving power to all those who want it, including prisoners escaped from jail, and giving weapons to marauders, thieves and criminals. There has been sufficient evidence of that on social networks from the residents of Kyiv and other cities, demonstrating the reckless attitude of the Ukrainian authorities towards their own citizens.

An information war has now been unleashed against the Russian Federation on social networks. Insofar as evidence of the destruction of civilian infrastructure by the Russian military does not exist, Ukrainian strikes and accidental strikes and videos from Donbas

are being portrayed as such, whereas they are actually being carried out by Ukrainian nationalists.

Furthermore, social networks have a host of educational manuals on how to create fakes to depict Russian military operations and other fabrications. There are 1.2 million such fakes currently circulating on social networks. We urge our colleagues not to aid and abet the proliferation of such disinformation, although I fear that, once again, our call will fall upon deaf ears.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I would like to express my gratitude to those Council members that have supported the request to call for an emergency special session of the General Assembly.

I immediately express my regret that, once again, rule 20 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure has not been properly applied by the presidency. However, I express my relief that this rape of the institution of the presidency of the Security Council will be over in less than 48 hours.

To those who appear to see no reason to support the request to hold the emergency session — despite the letter I sent to all members yesterday — as well as the representative of the aggressor, I would like to address the following.

Do they know what the most common warning is now in most Ukrainian cities? “Attention: air raids. Please proceed to the shelters.” I recommend that they look at the pictures and footage of what is happening, day after day, night after night.

I will continue to invite all members of the Security Council to join in the catharsis — the purgation — of this institution that will save it for the next generation.

Russia persists in its aggression, despite the initial plan for a blitzkrieg, which has failed. We can all see that. That failure prompted the bloody and mad Russian leadership to order the heavy shelling of residential areas, critical infrastructure and hazardous material storage sites in retaliation for Ukrainian resilience and resistance. It is extremely alarming that, today, the Russian President has resorted to open nuclear blackmail. The world must take that threat very seriously.

Now, most instances of fighting are occurring around the Ukrainian capital, as well as in the north-east in the cities of Kharkiv, Sumy and Chernihiv and in the southern cities of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Mariupol. Long-range operational and tactical aircraft, high-precision long-range weapons and multiple rocket launcher systems are being widely used against the Ukrainians.

Among the most telling recent examples of the Russian course of action in Ukraine was a missile strike on the town of Vasylykiv, which is practically a suburb of the capital. A missile hit the oil depot, causing a large-scale fire. There was also shelling in Kharkiv that damaged the gas pipeline.

According to the Ukrainian Minister for Health, Mr. Viktor Lyashko, at least 16 children have been killed since 24 February, when the large-scale military aggression against Ukraine was launched. On 26 February, a 7-year-old girl died after having been seriously wounded during the shelling of a kindergarten in the city of Okhtyrka. On the same day, due to the shelling and gunshots, a child was killed and two more wounded at the Okhmadet Children's Hospital, in Kyiv. Due to the threat of air raids, maternity hospitals in a number of Ukrainian cities — including Kiev, Kharkiv, Sumy, Irpin and Bucha, to name just a few — cannot operate normally. Ukrainian children are being born in bomb shelters.

According to the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, as of now more than 350,000 schoolchildren have no access to education. Thirty-three schools with over 5,500 students are closed due to severe insecurity in civil areas.

Today, I have brought those appalling facts to the attention of UNICEF, asking it to respond immediately to the situation, give proper qualification to the actions of the Russian Federation and take all possible measures to prevent further deaths and violence against children in Ukraine due to the blatant Russian aggression. I sent them via diplomatic note and I look forward to working with UNICEF on the issue.

The losses of the enemy as early as 27 February have amounted to nearly 4,300 personnel killed and over 200 taken as prisoners of war. That detailed information has been posted by the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

As always, Russia denies that its soldiers have been taken prisoner and does not acknowledged all the

soldiers who have been killed. In that regard, Ukraine has opened a hotline entitled “Come Back Alive from Ukraine” for the relatives of Russian soldiers who are not aware of their whereabouts and cannot contact them. The hotline was opened by the Government of Ukraine and received over 100 calls from Russian mothers during its first hour of operation.

It is unfortunate, however, that today, pursuant to the decision of the Prosecutor-General of the Russian Federation, the hotline and its dedicated website have been shut down. I therefore want to take this opportunity to read out the telephone number for anyone in Russia who would like to call regarding soldiers who may have been killed or taken prisoner in Ukraine and enquire about their well-being. The number is (380) 894201860. We will distribute that information after the meeting. I hope that the Russian Government does not shut down the website of the United Nations now that I have read that number.

We condemn the fact that Belarus is deeply engaged in the armed aggression against Ukraine. Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, Belarus has provided its territory for the Russian offensive. Today, Zhytomyr Airport, in the Ukrainian city of Zhytomyr, was hit by Iskander missiles launched from the territory of Belarus. That is quite an invitation for the negotiations at the border of Belarus — quite a way to escalate and raise stakes by the aggressor on the eve of negotiations.

Ukraine has filed a case against the Russian Federation at the International Court of Justice, as well as a request for the Court to issue an order of provisional measures against Russia. We will distribute that information and very soon, if it is not already there, it will be available on the Court’s website. Ukraine seeks an emergency hearing and an order by the Court that Russia must cease its unlawful attack on Ukraine. Russia will have to answer for its behaviour at the world court in The Hague. The Court has jurisdiction to hear Ukraine’s case and to order emergency measures on the basis of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the Genocide Convention. The Genocide Convention is

one of the most important international treaties drafted in response to the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust.

Russia, however, has twisted the concept of genocide and perverted the solemn treaty obligation to prevent and punish genocide. It has made an absurd and unfounded claim of alleged genocide as a justification and pretext for its own aggression against Ukraine, in violation of the sovereignty and human rights of the Ukrainian people. Ukraine’s case before the International Court of Justice will establish that Russia’s aggression against Ukraine is based on a lie and a gross violation of international law and must be stopped. As the Ukrainian people continue to bravely stand against Russian aggression, Russia’s lies will be exposed and Russia’s contempt for international law will be confirmed. Ukraine will bring Russia to account.

(spoke in Russian)

In conclusion, I wish to address the Ambassador of the Russian Federation. During a previous meeting, I spoke about children and parents who take pride in, or are ashamed of, the actions taken by their kin. It seemed to me, at that point, that the Russian Ambassador took my words very personally. I am prepared to take back my words if he were to follow the example of his colleague, Oleg Anisimov, the head of the delegation of the Russian Federation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at the closure of the session. Today, in response to the emotionally charged statement of the Ukrainian delegation — and it is difficult now for us to speak without emotion — he said that “those who see what is taking place can find no justification for the attack against Ukraine.” That statement was made at a closed meeting, but it was confirmed by a number of participants, and subsequently by Mr. Anisimov himself.

There are always choices to be made in life. For example, one can remain a human being or one can continue to defend evil. Everyone has a choice.

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

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.