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Eleventh Emergency Special session

18th plenary meeting
Thursday, 23 February 2023, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

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)

Draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7)

The President: This morning we will hear from the remaining speakers on the list carried over from yesterday's meeting (see A/ES-11/PV.17).

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark.

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

Almost eight decades ago, leaders from all over the world signed the Charter of the United Nations. They thereby committed their countries to protecting future generations from the scourge of war and to ensuring that armed force should not be used, save in the common interest. They committed to refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. They committed to settling international disputes by peaceful means. But one year ago, air raid sirens sounded across Ukraine, and Russian tanks crossed the Ukrainian border.

Russia chose to launch an unprovoked and brutal war of aggression on a sovereign and peaceful neighbour in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter. So far, many thousands have lost their lives. Millions have been displaced and, right now, we see no end to the war. Instead, we see Russia waging a brutal war. We see systematic violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, by Russia. We see inhumane attacks on civilians, critical infrastructure, health-care facilities, schools and residential areas. We see sexual violence and civilians, including children, being forcibly deported out of Ukraine. And we see the forced adoption of children in violation of international law.

We have a joint responsibility to stand up against all violations of international law, wherever they occur, and a responsibility to ensure that war crimes and other atrocities are investigated, and perpetrators held to account. Today a draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7) for peace will be put before us. The draft resolution, in essence, asks us to denounce the brutal aggression; support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter; support territorial integrity; and demand that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders. It is a draft resolution that urges us to cooperate in the spirit of solidarity to address the global impact of the war.

The United Nations Charter was signed to maintain international peace and security. It clearly prohibits aggression and wars of conquest, such as the ongoing

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Russian aggression against Ukraine. Let us therefore be honest about the issue before us. It is about standing up for international law. It is about standing up for the United Nations Charter and for peace. We will not be neutral when asked to stand on the side of the United Nations Charter and on the side of the victims of aggression. As the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, “If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor”.

The fact remains as simple today as one year ago. If Russia stops fighting, there will be no more war. If Ukraine stops fighting, there will be no more Ukraine. The fact remains that Ukraine’s right to protect itself is inherent in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter — the inherent right to self-defence. The fact also remains that Russia’s unprovoked aggression against Ukraine has no justification, whether legal or moral. The International Court of Justice has ordered Russia to immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 on the territory of Ukraine.

The war must end. The violence must end. We must restore respect for the United Nations Charter. We must ensure that similar horrors do not happen again. Today we have an opportunity to vote for peace — a peace that respects and upholds the United Nations Charter and that does not encourage future aggression against Ukraine or any other Member State. Let us not miss that opportunity.

The Nordic countries will honour the signatures our representatives placed on the United Nations Charter. We hope to be joined by all.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): I am proud to represent a country, Hungary, that is a direct neighbour of Ukraine. Being a direct neighbour of a country at war means that the impacts of the war are severe and immediate on us, and we are faced with the tragic consequences of that brutal war day by day. Therefore, Hungary is carrying out the largest humanitarian operation ever in its history.

Up to now, we have received more than a million refugees. Obviously, we ensure them full and equal access to our education and health-care system. We give incentives to companies in Hungary in order to encourage them to employ refugees. And, already, 1,300

schools and kindergartens in Hungary are enrolling refugee children and refugee students. Believe me, it is heartbreaking to see families that have been torn apart arriving in Hungary on a daily basis — children with their mothers only, leaving the fathers behind.

Based on our experience in the neighbourhood, this war has brought only suffering and has no winners. This war has only losers. Hundreds, or even thousands, of people are killed on a daily basis. The most important duty of the international community should therefore be to save lives. The question must of course be raised as to how it is possible to save people’s lives. The answer is simply said, but more complicated to achieve. The answer is peace. We can save people’s lives by establishing peace. Based on our experience, it has already become quite obvious that measures such as the delivery of weapons or sanctions do not save lives. On the contrary, they contribute to the prolongation and the risk of escalation of this war, and they bring about more suffering.

That is why Hungary calls on the international community to finally start to focus on how to establish an immediate ceasefire and contribute to launching peace talks, which should reach agreement about sustainable peace in our neighbourhood, as soon as possible.

We also know from our sad experience that peace can be reached only through dialogue and discussion. Channels of communication must therefore be kept open. If channels of communication are cut, it means that the hope for peace has also been given up.

In that regard, I believe that the United Nations should fulfil its role. We all know that the United Nations, as an institution or an organization, was not established as an integration of like-minded countries. The United Nations was established to serve as a platform for dialogue, even for those that consider each other as enemies. We therefore urge that talks between Russia and the United States be started as soon as possible in the framework of the United Nations.

I want to again underline that we Hungarians live in the neighbourhood. I can imagine that the situation in Ukraine may seem less serious from hundreds or thousands of kilometres away, or even from an ocean away. But, believe me, and believe us in the neighbourhood, we are pretty much aware that we are in the twenty-fifth hour. Although the Hungarian people are absolutely not responsible for the outbreak

of this war, and although it is not our war, Hungary and the Hungarian people have nevertheless already paid a very high price because of this war.

When I say that, I am not only talking about the skyrocketing inflation or the additional €10 billion that were added to our energy bill within the past year. I am also talking about the high number of Hungarians, members of the Hungarian community in Ukraine, who have died on the front lines. We do not want any more people to die. That is why we urge all actors in international political life to refrain from decisions, measures and statements that heighten the risk of the prolongation or escalation of this war. I would like to remind all those large and strong countries that represent the war rhetoric that they have not yet lost any lives in this war, while we Hungarians definitely have.

Members know very well that we Hungarians live in Central Europe, and we very clearly understood the lesson of history. We all know that, whenever there has been a conflict between the East and the West, we, in Central Europe, have always lost. Another major East–West conflict would therefore definitely be against our national interests.

Complete generations in Hungary lost decades of their lives because of the Cold War, and we do not want to lose more. We do not want the world to be divided into blocs again. Instead of blocs, we want connectivity and cooperation. We do not want this regional war to become a global one.

None of us should forget that war is always a failure of diplomacy and peace is always a success of diplomacy. That is why I hope that we all will step up our diplomatic efforts in order to finally establish peace in our neighbourhood. We hope that 2023 will be a year of peace and reconstruction.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania.

Ms. Xhaçka (Albania): One year ago, on this day, the world was holding its breath, waiting to see what choice Russia's President would make. On 24 February, we learned that he had made his choice. This war is one for which there was no other reason than that choice by the Russian President. We would do well to remember that.

Ukraine did not attack Russia. Ukraine never threatened Russia. That claim is just as ludicrous today, when the whole world has seen the weakness of the

Russian army, as it was on 23 February last year, when most of the world expected the invasion to succeed in a matter of days.

It was an unprovoked, illegal and criminal invasion of a country. Above all, it was an act of aggression that clearly violated the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and which was condemned by the Assembly in no uncertain terms and in landslide votes through a number of resolutions.

The International Court of Justice was also very clear in its order of 16 March 2022, stating that the Russian Federation should immediately suspend its military operations on the territory of Ukraine, and that it must also ensure that other forces under its control or supported by Moscow should not continue the military operation.

It is not just our evaluation of the military capabilities of the Russian army that has changed over the past year. The brutality of that force has become apparent to all. The war crimes that it has committed in Ukraine in the past year, the indiscriminate bombing of entire cities and towns, the rapes, the executions and the massive enrolment of convicts and mercenaries are perhaps the best indictments of the true nature of Russia's war, just as the truly heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people has rendered null any arguments and excuses that Russia has tried to present to the world in a vain attempt to gain legitimacy for its war of choice.

This war has had dramatic consequences for the entire world. But I submit to all in this Assembly that what we have seen until now is nothing compared to what we will see if Russia is allowed to prevail in this conflict.

Would anyone here or any of our countries represented here be safer if the Charter of the United Nations and international law were allowed to be trampled on in the manner in which Russia has done so? I believe not. I believe that a world where might makes right and where countries can suddenly decide to attack their neighbours and annex parts of their territory is a world that would not benefit any one of us or our people. It would practically mean going back to the logic of the 1930s.

That is why Albania fully supports draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, entitled "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine". That is why we believe that

the Assembly must vote in favour of this draft resolution and make clear its support for a just peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, which should guarantee the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters.

In the same vein, we oppose the hostile draft amendments A/ES-11/L.8 and A/ES-11/L.9, presented by Belarus. They represent no effort to contribute to peace, but an attempt to shield the aggressor. They must be rejected, and we call on all United Nations Members to vote against them.

Albania requests a recorded vote on the two amendments proposed by Belarus, A/ES-11/L.8 and A/ES-11/L.9.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

Ms. Colonna (France) (*spoke in French*): It has been a year since Russia unleashed its war of aggression against Ukraine without any justification and in a totally illegal manner. For one year, it has been waging a brutal war that violates the most fundamental principles of our common Charter, as well as its own commitments. It has been a year of war, marked by a series of abuses and by crimes so serious and systematic that the International Court of Justice has launched investigations into war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

None of us can close our eyes to the executions, torture, sexual violence as a weapon of war, the kidnappings or the deportation of children. Yet Ukraine has been resisting admirably for one year. It has been doing so for its independence, freedom and the right, which is its own, to build the future it has chosen.

As I stand here before the Assembly, I want to express France's absolute determination to support Ukraine so that it can not only resist and exercise its right to legitimate self-defence — a right recognized by our common Charter — but also so that it can ensure respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are also principles that unite us, and so that it can thus thwart Russia's aggression, which is a serious threat to international peace and stability and therefore to the peace and security of each of us.

This concerns each and every one of our States, because there will be no peace or security anywhere if aggression is rewarded. This war waged by Russia is therefore everyone's business, because it threatens the

existence of a State, because it is a project of imperialist domination and because it denies borders.

As the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, said at this rostrum last September (see A/77/PV.4), neutrality is not possible because neutrality would be tantamount to being an accomplice of the aggressor. Allowing Russia to dictate its terms would be a fatal blow to the international rules-based order, to which we all have subscribed for 75 years. It would undermine the very foundations of our collective security.

Our common duty is to prevent Russian aggression from being the first step towards a period of serious instability and systemic violence, which would spare no region of the world. None of us would have any reason to feel safe in a world in which a great Power, which possessed nuclear weapons and was a permanent member of the Security Council, could, at will, decide to attack its neighbours.

Russia is trying to convince some Member States that its attempts to disrupt the world order and impose an order based on force will work in their favour. That is an illusion. The facts bear that out: it was Russia and Russia alone that wanted the war, and its war puts global food security at risk, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and it has negative consequences for most of the world. We call for no more war, no more blockades or strains on food or energy.

For a year, the Assembly has remained active in the face of this unacceptable situation. Five times, since 24 February 2022, the Assembly has expressed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Today's vote must allow us to recall these rules and principles, without which peace and security would be only empty words. The draft resolution before the Assembly (A/ES-11/L.7) recalls that it is only on the respect of those principles that a just and lasting peace can be built.

Conversely, Russia shows no desire for peace. It knows no dialogue except that which subjugates others, in Ukraine as elsewhere. It knows no peace except the silence of the dead and the ruins. It accuses others only to better deceive and absolve itself of its crimes.

No one here wanted to go to war with Russia and certainly not Ukraine. No one has threatened Russia's security or violated its integrity. No one has used the same nuclear rhetoric. No one but Russia wanted the

tragedy that is unfolding before our eyes. It can and must stop, tomorrow. The International Court of Justice demanded that as early as 16 March 2022.

The draft resolution proposed by Ukraine is the result of a transparent and universal negotiation process, reflecting a desire to build a broad consensus around our common rules and principles, those of our Charter. It calls for a just and lasting peace that fully respects those principles, as our common interests demands.

Faithful to its tradition and values, France will fully support the draft resolution. It calls on all States to act responsibly and do the same.

The President: I now call on the Minister of European and Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Káčer (Slovakia): Seventy-seven years ago, the United Nations founding fathers, one of whom was, I am proud to say, Slovak diplomat Jan Papanek, established this Organization with the aim to save future generations from the atrocities of war. Their vision was simple and straightforward: to build a world in which every human being lives in peace and prosperity, while promoting friendly relations and cooperation among nations.

Today we must admit that this noble mission is facing a severe challenge. Effective multilateralism is falling apart, with one Member State blatantly violating the fundamental principles and values of the Organization, the State upon which the Charter of the United Nations bestowed the privilege of guarding those very principles through the provision of a permanent seat on the Security Council — the Russian Federation.

We strongly condemn the ongoing, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of all fundamental values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of Russian military activities in Ukraine and demand an unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

In that regard, we would like to echo the words of the Secretary-General who previously said: enough is enough. Yet the Russian Federation obviously does not understand that appeal. On the contrary, it goes on with its misleading rhetoric, propaganda and distortion of facts on the ground, promoting some kind of alternate reality. It is our duty to take a fierce stand against those actions and the spreading of lies and deceptive narratives.

The aggression has caused food insecurity and is fuelling global inflation with devastating impacts mainly on the most vulnerable countries in the world. Millions of Ukrainians had to flee their homes, 90 per cent of whom are women and children. Slovakia is one of the countries where more than 100,000 of them found temporary refuge.

Today we have gathered in New York with one goal — to reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia's ignorant attempt to redraw the internationally recognized borders of a sovereign country presents a grave threat not only to Europe. Let us be clear, this is not about only Ukraine, whose very existence is questioned today by one Member State. Tomorrow, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of any country might be at stake. This is about effective multilateralism, which is under severe threat. We cannot afford to let it go, nor let it vanish. We need it today and for future generations. We all have a duty to protect the rules-based world order. Therefore, I encourage all delegations to vote in favour of the draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7), which Slovakia strongly supports.

The President: I call on the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia.

Mr. Grljić-Radman (Croatia): It has been a year since the Russian Federation began to carry out its so-called special military operation, which is, in fact, a brutal aggression against its neighbour, Ukraine. We would also recall that it was an escalation of the aggression that started in 2014 with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.

The fact is that the Russian aggression against Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council — and a nuclear-weapon State, no less. That is bound to have long-lasting implications for the United Nations as a whole. Russia's logic of war and impunity has brought about immense human suffering, the death and injury of hundreds of thousands of people, mass displacement and the targeted destruction of civilian infrastructure necessary for meeting the basic needs of life. Its menacing execution brought with it war crimes and crimes against humanity, while the illegal annexation of parts of Ukraine's territory showed cynical disregard for the Charter of the United Nations itself. Finally,

it has affected livelihoods around the globe, as it has disrupted global economic flows and instigated worldwide energy and food insecurity.

The unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine has challenged the very principles of the global security architecture and eroded the rules-based international order, with profound consequences for years to come. We must not be silent in the face of those who destroy and violate the most fundamental human rights and the sovereign rights of States — we owe it to our countries, our citizens and all those who will come after us. If we fail now, not only will our present be grim, but the costs of our failure will be passed on to future generations. For the same reason, we should support all efforts to establish accountability for the crimes committed in Ukraine. We welcome the order of the International Court of Justice calling on the Russian Federation to immediately suspend its so-called military operation.

It is the bravery and determination of the Ukrainian people that stands in the way of the aggressor. The war in Ukraine bears a sad resemblance to the war in Croatia three decades ago. We in Croatia unfortunately know all too well how that feels, with propaganda on the purported need for denazification and the protection of minorities, followed by a self-declared republic on Croatia's soil, invasion and aggression. However, our fight for liberty took four long years. Let us not make Ukraine wait that long for freedom.

We stand with Ukraine and its people. We will continue to support them in their right to defend themselves and to defend the Charter of the United Nations, as well. The global community also stands with Ukraine, as evidenced by the continued support of the vast majority of Member States for the General Assembly resolutions calling for an end to the Russian aggression. By standing with Ukraine, we are standing in defence of the pillars of our system and demonstrating our resolve to protect the Charter. The draft resolution we are debating today (A/ES-11/L.7) is a further demonstration of that resolve.

Croatia stands firm in supporting the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, knowing that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be founded only upon those very principles.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Rau (Poland): A year has passed since the Russian invasion against Ukraine started. It has been a year of immense suffering, death and destruction. Today we gather here to call for peace. The draft resolution that has been put forward before the General Assembly (A/ES-11/L.7) defines the steps that need to be taken to achieve it. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace is the only acceptable option to end the war in Ukraine. That will be possible only when the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine are reaffirmed.

Russia must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. It is of fundamental importance to ensure Russia's full accountability for the crimes it has committed in Ukraine. Poland supports international initiatives towards that end and towards redressing, in an adequate form, all wrongs inflicted by Russia in the war. Today, in the light of Russia's total disregard for international law and the principles of the United Nations, we must reaffirm our commitment to the basic rules of the international order.

Russia continues its brutal aggression, attacking Ukraine's civilian population and non-military infrastructure, committing war crimes and atrocities, including the killing of women and children, torture, sexual violence and forced deportation. Standing up against Russia, Ukrainians have themselves made history. They are standing up to tyrannical force with courage and resilience. They have chosen to fight and to defend their independence, freedom and identity. Above all, they are defending the rules-based international order. The brave Ukrainian nation deserves not only our compassion, but also our support and solidarity.

Poland will continue to assist Ukraine for as long as it takes. In addition to offering shelter to millions of Ukrainian refugees, Poland continues to provide and facilitate transfers of aid. We are the main support gateway for Ukraine, and we are going to continue in that role as long as it is needed.

This war and its outcome matter throughout the world. Russia's invasion has contributed to a sharp increase in fuel, fertilizers and food prices. It has caused disruptions of supply chains. The resulting crisis is especially harsh on the most vulnerable. There is no doubt that Russia is solely responsible for this dire situation.

For Russia, this war is about its imperial desires and ambitions. For Ukraine, it is about defending its inalienable right to sovereignty and territorial integrity. For all of us gathered here, this war is about the most fundamental United Nations principles. Let us reaffirm their significance and our commitment to them. Let us not render them irrelevant. Simply put, it is our duty to support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): A total of 193 Member States in this General Assembly Hall represent 193 different positions. Such diverse views, I believe, can converge on one specific point. We all want peace in Ukraine — or at least the overwhelming majority of us want peace in Ukraine. The draft resolution before us, draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, is about peace. However, peace must be based on principles. Hostilities must stop now, but that would not necessarily produce a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

I ask everyone to imagine that a permanent member of the Security Council has launched an aggression against their homeland, grabbed their territory and then ceased hostilities, calling for peace. I would call it an unjust peace. It would be a victory for the aggressor if such actions were tolerated. It would set a terrible precedent for the rest of the planet. The world would revert to the law of the jungle, where brute force and coercion would prevail.

Peace must be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why Japan supports draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, entitled “Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.” I urge my fellow colleagues gathered here today to vote in favour of it.

Russia must, first and foremost, withdraw its troops immediately and unconditionally from Ukraine. The General Assembly has demanded it, as has the Secretary-General and the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, Russia seemingly does not care about the General Assembly resolutions and the International Court of Justice orders, treating them as pieces of waste paper.

In addition, abusing the veto power is not enough for Russia. It also abuses its status as a nuclear-weapon State with its irresponsible rhetoric. Russia’s nuclear threats, let alone the use of any of its nuclear weapons, will never be tolerated. Russia should be held accountable for all of its acts in an appropriate manner. Other Member States should also refrain from supporting that aggression, be it directly or indirectly.

In that regard, the draft amendments proposed by Belarus (A/ES-11/L.8 and A/ES-11/L.9) are an attempt to distract the attention of Member States from the fact that the Russian aggression is in violation of the very principles of the United Nations Charter. I urge fellow colleagues to vote against them.

My heart breaks for the dire humanitarian situation of the people of Ukraine. Japan will continue to provide support for them, along with fellow members of the international community.

At the same time, we must not forget that many other people around the world are suffering as well. Natural disasters, conflicts, violence, terrorism, food and energy crises, climate change, infectious diseases — the list goes on and on. We need an integrated and tailored approach in order to deal with those issues, and that is what the United Nations excels at. However, the United Nations is now being tested. It has been damaged. We need to restore trust in the Organization. We need to unite again. We need to strengthen the entire Organization to grapple with today’s ever more complex and interlinked challenges.

That entails not only the reform of the Security Council, but also enhanced roles for the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and other United Nations entities.

Next year, we should not meet here to mark the second anniversary of this senseless war of aggression. Instead, we should work towards peace, guided by the rule of law. Let us meet here for the 2024 Summit of the Future and make it a summit of peace. Let us mark 2024 as a year of a strengthened United Nations.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade and Federal Cultural Institutions of Belgium.

Ms. Lahbib (Belgium) (spoke in French): We did not want this war. We wanted to live in peace, in respect of the principles to which the entire international

community subscribed by signing on to the Charter of the United Nations. All of us here have committed, through Article 2, to respect territorial integrity and internationally recognized borders and to settle our disputes peacefully.

Russia flouted all of that on 24 February. And no, this is not a war of the West against Russia. Ukraine is the primary victim — attacked on its territory, its very existence threatened — but it is the entire international community that is affected and upended, because this aggression is undermining the international order and food, financial and energy security. It is sowing doubt, increasing nuclear risk and affecting the environment.

One year after Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the world is impoverished, and global security is threatened. But there are many of us here who have come to New York to demand a just and lasting peace, and we hope with all our hearts that this draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7) will unite us even more tomorrow.

We do not want an uncertain world in which insecurity, danger and threats become the rule. We want to have confidence in the future, because together we are capable of the best, even in difficult circumstances.

Thanks to the efforts of United Nations agencies and the Secretary-General, the Black Sea Grain Initiative has made it possible to send vital foodstuffs to countries indirectly affected by this conflict. We have not forgotten them, just as we have not forgotten the crises on other continents, some of which have worsened as a result of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. The disinformation, alternative truths, false equivalences and biased reasoning that our Russian colleagues have been spreading for almost a year are not borne out by the unrelenting facts and cruel realities that we are confronted with, such as abductions, displacements or deportations — justice will find the right words — that thousands of Ukrainian children have suffered.

Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol — these cities are forever marked by horror. For a year we have been witnessing Russia's continuous violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. These crimes cannot go unpunished. Belgium reiterates its support for the investigations conducted by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. We strongly advocate a world where the rule of law prevails over the law of the strongest.

It is in this spirit that we must define the principles of a global, just and lasting peace. Belgium fully supports the draft resolution that has been submitted to us, which was drawn up in an inclusive and transparent manner.

It is a moment of truth that brings us together today. Belgium joins the many who call for the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all military forces of the Russian Federation from Ukrainian territory and the return to the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

Until the advent of peace, Belgium will support Ukraine as long as it is necessary to do so, in order to preserve the full meaning of the idea of collective security at the heart of the United Nations Charter and at the heart of peace.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechia.

Mr. Lipavský (Czechia): We are meeting one year after the start of Russia's brutal war against Ukraine to yet again resolutely defend the United Nations Charter and promote international peace and security in line with the "Uniting for peace" resolution (resolution 377 (V)).

We are horrified by Russia's blatant violation of the international order. The United Nations Charter is binding upon all Member States, including Russia. Russia must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and respect its internationally recognized borders. Czechia stands with Ukraine and remains committed to supporting Ukraine's wish for a just peace in line with the United Nations Charter.

Russia's aggression is causing unspeakable suffering in Ukraine and beyond. It has sent a shockwave through the world food and commodity markets and is threatening to drive 50 million people to the edge of famine across Africa and other continents.

We support the Black Sea Grain Initiative and United Nations efforts to achieve its further extension in March 2023. We cherish the United Nations actions that address the wider consequences of the war inflicted by Russia, including global food insecurity.

We commend the Secretary-General for his untiring efforts to stop Russia's aggression and restore respect for the United Nations Charter. We appreciate the peace formula presented by President Zelenskyy.

Let me be clear: Russia's malicious ambition goes far beyond Ukraine. It wants to change the international order. Russia wants a world defined by spheres of influence, with neo-colonial relationships instead of partnerships on equal footing.

Our region — Central Europe — has had its own tragic experience with Russia's aggressive imperial policy. For the sake of restoring international peace and security, it is essential to say "no" to Russia's imperialist scheme.

All of us should be concerned that any country could be Russia's next victim. The future of the international order is being determined today. Not only is Ukraine defending itself and its people, it is also defending the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. Efforts to legitimize the use of force for achieving geopolitical goals and normalize such practices as food-supply blackmail or nuclear sabre-rattling must be decisively rejected.

Russia's massive air strikes, deliberately conducted in densely populated areas, are destroying civilian infrastructure and innocent lives. The findings of the United Nations commission of inquiry are shocking, as they document sexual violence and torture being used as Russian tactics of war. We are gravely concerned about the continued attacks of the Russian armed forces around Ukrainian nuclear sites and the illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Full accountability for war crimes and all other crimes in connection with Russia's war must be ensured, including for the crime of aggression. Letting the leadership responsible for the crime of aggression go unpunished would mean giving up on the fight against impunity and fuelling aggression. I am a strong proponent of creating a special tribunal for the crime of aggression in Ukraine, even though it is a complex task. I strongly believe that the United Nations should be involved so as to ensure maximum legitimacy and support.

The humanitarian toll of the war is heartbreaking. Russia's barbaric full-scale war brings to mind the horrors of the Second World War. Entire towns and villages have been damaged and destroyed. Critical civilian infrastructure has deliberately been destroyed. In the middle of this savage winter, people are trying to escape Russian bombs and survive in temporary shelters.

The war has forced more than 8 million Ukrainians to flee the country. In the spirit of solidarity, Czechia has opened its doors. Almost half a million Ukrainian refugees have been granted temporary protection, most of whom are women and children. We remain the country hosting the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita. Even though it brings challenges for the State and our citizens, especially at the time of economic and energy crises, our country and people have demonstrated an unprecedented degree of solidarity.

We have also provided humanitarian assistance to Ukraine through in-kind and material support so that people affected by the war in freezing temperatures have access to health care, drinking water, electricity and heating. In this regard, I would like to stress that our assistance to Ukraine does not affect the humanitarian aid we have given, nor the budget we have to help other countries in need.

My country strongly supports the draft resolution before us (A/ES-11/L.7), which defends the principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States. I would like to appeal to all those who might be tempted today to take a neutral stance or to those who believe that it is not "their" war: if we do not act now, we are accepting a new international order based on use of brutal force and on colonialism.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania.

Mr. Landsbergis (Lithuania): One year ago, on 24 February, at dawn, Russia, aided by its accomplice, Belarus, started its unprovoked, unjustified, illegal and bloody invasion of its peaceful and democratic neighbour, Ukraine. This was not the start of the war, which Russia had been waging since 2014, when it illegally occupied Crimea and parts of eastern Ukraine. Nor was it the first time that Russia had attacked its neighbours.

The crime of aggression was immediately followed by war crimes, crimes against humanity and other large-scale systematic violations of international law that have caused a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe with far-reaching consequences across the globe. The global food-security crisis, multiple crises in nuclear security and safety, energy, finance and environment, and a direct threat to the preservation of cultural heritage are all direct outcomes of Russia's aggression.

We are appalled by the harrowing evidence of atrocities amounting to genocide committed by the Russian armed forces and Kremlin-backed mercenaries. The wide-scale destruction of cities and critical infrastructure, mass civilian casualties, the forcible transfer of Ukrainians to Russia, the abductions and illegal adoptions of Ukrainian children, the abuse of prisoners of war, torture and sexual violence all bear witness to the moral abyss into which the aggressor has fallen. Those brutal atrocities are a clear expression of Russia's total disregard for the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations of sovereignty, territorial integrity, international human rights and international humanitarian law.

Over the past year, Ukraine and its people have shown remarkable courage and resilience in defending not just their own country, but the entire rules-based international order. We applaud Ukraine's heroic defensive efforts, which have succeeded in stopping the advancement of invading forces and destroying the myth of Russia's military invincibility.

The United Nations has demonstrated significant solidarity, as the overwhelming majority of its membership condemned Russia's aggression as a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and, in resolution after resolution, demanded its unconditional withdrawal. The Assembly also stripped Russia of its seat on the Human Rights Council, declared its staged annexation referendums illegal and took important first steps towards an international mechanism for Russia's reparations to Ukraine. The efforts of the Secretary-General were instrumental in sending much-needed Ukrainian grain to those in need, and the United Nations-established Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine is now investigating Russia's war crimes in the country.

The international community also came up with much-needed aid. Lithuania is proud to have been among the first to provide military assistance, to have granted protection to tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees and to have provided humanitarian relief. The entire Lithuanian nation is behind that effort, with private citizens and businesses welcoming Ukrainians into their own homes and donating over €42 million to support the Ukrainian armed forces with support for basic needs, combat drones and multifunctional radar stations.

However, none of that is sufficient to stop Russia's war. While Russia engages in blame games and accusations, its real objective is to create spheres of influence, instability and domination — spheres that hark back to colonial times, which this Organization was so determined to leave behind forever. Russia continues its aggression because we allow it to act with impunity. As the Security Council remains effectively paralysed by Russia's abuse of its veto, the role and responsibility of the General Assembly becomes ever more important. We, the Member States, should rise to the challenge by supporting President Zelenskyy's peace formula, which firmly rests on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based international order.

First and foremost, we must demand the full withdrawal and expulsion of the invading forces from all occupied territories of Ukraine and should not shy away from supporting Ukraine's decisive military action.

Secondly, we must seek full accountability for the perpetrators. In that regard, we welcome the efforts by the International Criminal Court, regional bodies and individual States to prosecute those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide in Ukraine. At the same time, since the International Criminal Court will not have jurisdiction over the crime of aggression, we call on the Assembly to mandate the establishment of a special tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression and provide it with international legitimacy and cross-regional support.

Thirdly, we should explore all means to ensure that Russian assets are used to compensate for all material and moral damages caused by the aggression. We welcome the first steps that the Assembly has taken towards allowing the victims of Russia's crimes to exercise their right to reparations.

With today's draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7), of which Lithuania is a co-sponsor, we aim to support and encourage all efforts for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the United Nations Charter. It is essential that the United Nations membership remain in solidarity with Ukraine, stand up to the aggression against it and speak out in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. At the end of the day, that is the only way in which we can defend the relevance of the United Nations Charter and this Organization.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Mr. Osmani (North Macedonia): Precisely one year ago, the unthinkable happened: a war of aggression in Europe, in the twenty-first century, after decades of carefully and skilfully crafting an international order based on rules and principles. This very Organization was created “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Now, when the people of Ukraine suffer from the scourge of an unprovoked, unjustified and deliberate war of aggression, the Organization should raise its voice clearly and loudly, through the representatives of its sovereign Member States, both in solidarity and in condemnation.

We speak out in solidarity because, while today it is Ukraine, tomorrow it could be any of our States who rely on the norms and principles of international law and consider the Charter of the United Nations as the indisputable guarantee of their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We speak out in condemnation because it is not acceptable that anyone — not least a permanent member of the Security Council, a supposed guardian of peace and stability in the world — invade, under any circumstances or pretexts possible, a sovereign State, destroy its infrastructure or inflict unbearable suffering upon the civilian population. We cannot allow or admit the territorial conquest and changes of borders by war, nor ridiculously staged referendums on thus-occupied territories. We cannot accept the return of spheres of influence, the rule of force and the right of the strongest to decide the destiny of other nations.

My country, North Macedonia, voiced that principled position from the first day of the aggression. For us, it is not and has never been a question about simply taking a side between the two belligerents, because that is not what has really happened. It is the Russian Federation, by violating the Charter of the United Nations, that has deliberately chosen to stand on the wrong side of history. The majority of the States Members of the United Nations have clearly acknowledged that regretful fact by voting in favour of previous relevant resolutions at this eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly.

We urge Russia once again to end this senseless war and withdraw its troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine. Immense damage has already been done, and every additional day of aggression only further exacerbates the human suffering.

In 2022, Russia decided to violate one of the most basic principles of international law and launch a full-fledged war of aggression against Ukraine, a founding State Member of the United Nations and a neighbour. That has shattered the peace and installed insecurity and uncertainty. Worldwide food and energy insecurity are but some of the direct consequences of the aggression. Meanwhile, the biggest danger lies in challenging the entire rules-based international order. The international community, embodied by the United Nations, cannot afford to allow such a gross violation of all norms and principles to go without a response.

Justice and accountability are needed for the sake of the victims first and foremost, but they are also prerequisites for avoiding further aggression and the unprovoked use of force in international relations. North Macedonia subscribed to that demand by supporting the investigation by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine. Additionally, the entire international human rights mechanism should be involved in fighting impunity and holding to account those responsible for war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law or human rights abuses.

The adoption of the draft resolution before the Assembly today (A/ES-11/L.7) is of paramount importance in that regard. My country figures among the initial co-sponsors and joins other members of the international community in a common endeavour to restore peace and safeguard the rules-based international order. That would not be possible without ensuring full accountability for wrongdoings. What is at stake here is no less than a vision of the world we want to live in — either we will secure peaceful coexistence and cooperation among nations, free from the menace of war and aggression, or we will be forced to live in constant fear, instability and uncertainty. It is up to each and every one of us present in the Assembly to decide on behalf of the nations we represent.

As at 1 January, North Macedonia assumed the chairpersonship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — the largest regional security organization in the world. The Russian aggression against Ukraine also erodes the foundations of that organization, by violating the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. I visited Ukraine during my first trip abroad in my capacity as Chair of the OSCE. In Borodyanka, near Kyiv, I saw the devastating consequences of war. I visited displaced civilians in a

camp nearby and, while talking to them, asked myself what those innocent civilians, most of whom were elderly people or children, did to deserve that destiny and, furthermore, what we could do as an international community, beyond humanitarian assistance, to alleviate such unbearable human suffering.

At the end of the day, in line with the motto of our OSCE chairpersonship, it is about people. What is the point of our political actions, nationally and internationally, if we remain idle before human suffering caused not by a natural disaster, but by a deliberate war of aggression? Accountability today is a moral imperative, as it is the most effective means to avoid it happening again, in another place, to another sovereign State and to another people.

At some point, the war will end, infrastructure will be restored and houses rebuilt, but the victims of this senseless aggression deserve more — they deserve justice. Humankind deserves a more solid and anchored base for avoiding wars of aggression in the future. Accountability is not an objective per se, but is, in my sincere view, an indispensable tool for securing peace, stability and security worldwide and to really save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

I thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this session and all members for their attention.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Mr. Hoekstra (Netherlands): Tomorrow, we mark a sad one-year anniversary: the anniversary of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, a war for which Russia — and Russia alone — is responsible. Over the past year, we have witnessed how Russia's aggression is slowly destroying Ukraine; how innocent men, women and children are being killed; how schools, hospitals and entire neighbourhoods are being wiped out; and how the Ukrainian people are enduring murder, rape, torture and abduction.

But make no mistake: this war is not only an attack on Ukraine. It is an attack on the principle of sovereignty. It is an attack on the Charter of the United Nations, which all of us have signed. It is an attack on our security, on our economies and on the Sustainable Development Goals, which were already in jeopardy. It is an attack on all we stand for, despite all

of our differences. If we turn a blind eye to Russia's aggression and allow it to trample the United Nations Charter, and if might becomes right, then I can see only more hardship, more instability and more suffering ahead of us.

The only way forward is to commit to the agreement we have made by making sure that Ukraine survives as a State within its internationally recognized borders and by working towards a real, just and lasting peace for Ukraine. That is our common responsibility and that is why the Netherlands is doing all it can to support Ukraine. We will do everything in our power to ensure that Russia is held to account and that justice will be done. We are taking a leading role to that end for the very reason that all of us here should not accept a world where brute force prevails over justice. That is why we strongly support the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and the International Criminal Court; that is why we will be sending two more forensic investigation teams in 2023; and that is why we will host the new international centre for the prosecution of the crime of aggression and a damages register in The Hague.

We all want peace, and the road to peace is actually very simple. The war can end today if Russia sends its soldiers home. Just send them home. But while the war continues, and as long as it continues, the Netherlands will do all it can to help Ukraine. We call on all members, our friends, of the General Assembly to join us in underlining our joint commitment to the United Nations Charter and to the rules-based order it represents by voting in favour of the draft resolution before the Assembly today (A/ES-11/L.7).

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. Rinkēvičs (Latvia): A year ago, Russia started its brutal invasion against Ukraine. Latvia stands together with Ukraine against this senseless war. Latvia stands for justice. Latvia stands for a just peace. We condemn, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's unprovoked, large-scale aggression against Ukraine, enabled by Belarus. Russia's actions are driven by its imperial and colonial ambitions. They undermine the rules-based international order rooted in the Charter of the United Nations.

We are witnessing blatant disregard for international law. As a nuclear Power, Russia continues to use irresponsible nuclear rhetoric. Only this week, Russia suspended its participation in the New START

Treaty. A permanent member of the United Nations Security Council is attempting to change the borders of another sovereign country by the use of military force. The permanent members of the Security Council have a particular responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Every sovereign country has a right to choose its own foreign policy course. It applies to Ukraine, as well as to any other country. Ukraine has a right to defend itself against foreign aggression. Ukraine is fighting for its survival and its right to exist. The sole responsibility for the war lies with Russia. Russia started the war, and Russia alone can and must end it immediately.

(spoke in Russian)

I wish to address the people of Russia and state that Ukraine did not attack them; nor did NATO. It is their own Government that attacked Ukraine and their soldiers who are killing peaceful civilians in Ukraine. They can and must stop the war. Russia must withdraw from Ukraine.

(spoke in English)

Latvia strongly condemns deliberate attacks by Russia against civilian and critical infrastructure in Ukraine. Residential areas, schools, kindergartens, hospitals and critical energy infrastructure have been destroyed by Russian bombing. Innocent civilians, including children, have been killed. More than 17 million people have been forced to leave their homes or flee their country. The international community must continue to provide all necessary support to Ukraine, including military and humanitarian aid. Latvia's assistance to Ukraine has significantly exceeded 1 per cent of our gross domestic product. The support provided will set the pace for further reconstruction processes in Ukraine. Latvia has engaged in the reconstruction of the Chernihiv region.

The horrific crimes in Ukraine remind us of the bitter experience of the Latvian people during the Soviet occupation. We condemn the illegal deportation of Ukrainian civilians to Russia and the forced illegal adoption of Ukrainian children. We condemn the forced passportization and conscription to the Russian armed forces of Ukrainian citizens. Russia must stop violating international humanitarian law and human rights.

The crimes committed by Russia cannot and will not go unpunished. We commend the efforts of the International Criminal Court to investigate atrocity

crimes and serve justice to the victims. Regrettably, the International Criminal Court and national judicial systems cannot exercise jurisdiction to prosecute the crime of aggression. Latvia calls for the establishment of an ad hoc tribunal under the auspices of the United Nations, which will grant that tribunal strong international legitimacy and provide a basis for applying exceptions for personal immunities. Those in the Russian leadership responsible for such crimes must be held accountable.

Russian propaganda seeks to justify its illegal invasion and deny its crimes, while trying to shift the blame for the global consequences of this war. We must resist such disinformation with truth and facts. Those Russian individuals and groups engaged in propaganda in support of Russia's aggression against Ukraine must be held accountable. In order to counter disinformation, Latvia will continue to support independent media.

Russia's war against Ukraine has led to serious long-term geopolitical, economic and humanitarian consequences far beyond Europe. Food and energy are instruments in Russia's warfare, which is affecting people globally. It is Russia's war against Ukraine that has caused a shortage of food supplies and a rise in energy prices, not sanctions. We commend the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which must be continued. We also support the work of the World Food Programme. Last year, the Latvian Government decided to unblock the delivery of Russian fertilizers to Latvian ports. Those fertilizers are to be donated to countries in the Global South to improve food security worldwide.

We welcome President Zelenskyy's 10-point peace formula and strongly support his vision for peace, which rests on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia must withdraw its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine. I call on all States Members of the United Nations to support the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. I urge Member States to vote in favour of the draft resolution for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine (A/ES-11/L.7). May this year mark a victory over tyranny, cruelty and suffering.

Mr. Cassis (Switzerland) *(spoke in French)*: For a year now, we have all witnessed the serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations in Ukraine. For a year now, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has continued in defiance of international law. For a year now, the confidence and security that prevailed in Europe has been under threat. Every country in the world

has been affected in some way by the consequences of that war. Those consequences are disastrous. The human cost is impossible to quantify: in addition to the thousands of dead, wounded and missing in the country, more than 8 million people have had to flee their homes. Eight million people is equivalent to the entire population of my country, Switzerland.

Last year, I saw with my own eyes the destruction and suffering in and around Kyiv. All of us here today have the names and inhumane images of Bucha, Kramatorsk, Mariupol, Kharkiv and Kherson in our minds. Those horrors have taken place as we commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. With those Conventions, we wanted to place the law, including international humanitarian law, above such barbarism. We wanted to turn the page on the experiences of past wars.

The Assembly has repeatedly stated that such wars must never be allowed to happen again. The Russian military aggression against Ukraine shows us, once again, that we are not immune. A permanent member of the Security Council has decided to attack its neighbour, an independent and sovereign nation. But let us not give up, as that would be a huge and grave mistake. It would be a vindication of all forces seeking power, no matter how they use it.

With the draft resolution being put to the vote today (A/ES-11/L.7), we are sending a strong message of peace and respect for the law and the principles that unite us. Switzerland strongly condemns the grave violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Ukraine, and I call on the entire international community here today to work together for a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The Ukrainian people have the right to live in peace that is based on the fundamental rules of international law, such as the prohibition of the use of force, territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Switzerland is ready to play its part. Together, let us reaffirm the importance of the Charter of the United Nations at a time when great challenges require urgent global solutions. Look at the energy shortages, food insecurity, inflation, climate change and migration. Those challenges force us to acknowledge our interdependence and our responsibilities. Turning inward is not the answer. Let us strengthen our ties, repair the cracks in our institutions and restore our mutual trust.

Finally, we must allow the Ukrainian people and all war-stricken peoples of the world to regain the hope of living in peace. Our unity is decisive: thanks to unceasing efforts such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, some of the negative consequences of the war have been mitigated, not only in human and security terms, but also on the political and economic fronts. Switzerland is providing humanitarian aid, hosting refugees and has launched the Ukraine reconstruction process in Lugano, Switzerland, last summer.

But more needs to be done in the area of humanitarian needs, for example, and in demining in particular. My country will continue to support Ukraine without forgetting the other conflicts in the world. For example, on Monday I will be hosting a donor conference for Yemen in Geneva with my Swedish counterpart.

By supporting the draft resolution on Ukraine today, on the eve of the first anniversary of the war, we are sending a clear message in support of the Charter of the United Nations. The expectations are great. Let us not disappoint the people who are counting on us, whether they are in Ukraine, Russia or anywhere else.

Mr. Kodzhabashev (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU) yesterday (see A/ES-11/PV.17).

A year has passed since the start of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine — a war that is not only in gross violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations but has seriously damaged global security and stability and continues to cause immense suffering. During that year the General Assembly has consistently come together to stand against this despicable act of aggression and violation of the Charter. Together we need to continue to fiercely defend the principles of the Charter, international law and the rules-based order because they are our only guarantee for peace. I once again reiterate Bulgaria's unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. We stand with Ukraine and will not recognize Russia's attempted annexations and illegal referendums. We demand that the Russian Federation immediately cease its military actions and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

Russia's war of aggression has resulted in thousands of casualties killed or injured, a massive displacement of civilians and catastrophic destruction of critical civilian infrastructure. Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation, which continues to worsen. We call for respect for international humanitarian law and unimpeded humanitarian access. Like every other EU member State, Bulgaria will continue to keep its borders open to all fleeing the war in Ukraine, without discrimination, and to provide humanitarian assistance on the ground via various humanitarian actors, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The global food crisis that the world is facing today, initially resulting from issues related to climate change, conflicts and the consequences of the pandemic, has been significantly aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Bulgaria will do its part to mitigate the most immediate consequences of the crisis and will continue to work on finding long-term solutions. We welcomed the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the leadership of the Secretary-General in resuming grain exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. While acknowledging that the situation remains critical and the need for humanitarian assistance to a number of countries in the global South persists, we call for a renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in March and for its unimpeded implementation.

The Russian Federation bears full responsibility for its aggression and all the ensuing destruction and loss of life, and it must and will be held accountable for that under international law. Only by ensuring justice for all the victims will we stand a chance of preventing such crimes in the near future.

Today the General Assembly has a historic responsibility to stand for the principles of the Charter and for peace and the international rules-based order. Bulgaria is proud to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, entitled "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine", because it stands for peace. Its purpose is to help end the conflict and reaffirm our collective support for the international principles on which a comprehensive, just and lasting peace must be based, and I urge everyone to vote in favour of it.

I would like to thank the Ukrainian people for their extraordinary courage and resilience, and lastly, I once again reiterate Bulgaria's unwavering support for

Ukraine's efforts to achieve a lasting peace in line with the Charter and international law.

Mr. Burke (Ireland): Ireland aligns itself with the statement made yesterday (see A/ES-11/PV.17) on behalf of the European Union (EU).

We meet today to mark one year since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a year of horrific death and destruction caused by Russia's illegal and unjustified war. Let us be clear. The invasion was unprovoked and entirely of Russia's making. I also want to make it clear that Ireland will continue to stand fully with Ukraine and its people in the face of Russia's brutal aggression.

This year and this war have been marked by Russia's blatant disregard for human life, for the Charter of the United Nations and for broader international law, including international humanitarian law. Russia has ruthlessly targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure, seeking to starve and freeze the people of Ukraine into submission. The war has seen the deaths of tens of thousands of Ukrainians, men, women and children. It has forced more than 13 million people to flee their homes in search of safety. More than 8 million refugees, mostly women and children, have sought protection across Europe. More than 5 million have been displaced within Ukraine. Millions more have been forcibly deported to Russia and held in contravention of international law. Yet despite all of that, Ukraine has remained steadfast in its resistance and in the defence of its democratic principles. The war has also seen a generation of Russian youth sacrificed to President Putin's imperialist fantasies.

This is a war of choice. Just as Russia chose to start this war, it can choose to end it. We strongly support the tireless efforts by the Secretary-General, as well as Ukraine itself, to end the conflict and reach a comprehensive just and lasting peace based on the principles of the Charter.

The effects of Russia's war are being felt across the world. Russia's actions have seen the world's most vulnerable people suffer from increased food and economic insecurity with the rising costs of energy and commodities. Ireland and the European Union are responding to the global effects of Russia's senseless war, including through the EU Solidarity Lanes and the Team Europe response to global food insecurity. We will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine and the most vulnerable around the world. We support the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which must be continued to allow life-saving grain to reach the people who need it.

This is a war that has seen reckless Russian attacks on nuclear facilities in Ukraine in a year when Russia has threatened to use nuclear weapons on anyone who might come to Ukraine's aid. It is regrettable and worrisome, in that regard, that Russia has now chosen to suspend its participation with the United States under the New START Treaty.

Ireland remains fully committed to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Those borders have not changed, and Russia's use of force will not change them. Ireland calls on the Russian Federation to immediately cease hostilities and withdraw unconditionally from the entire territory of Ukraine. We call on it to refrain from further threats or the use of force of any kind, including nuclear weapons, against Ukraine or any other Member State, which could have serious implications beyond the region. Russia's actions are not just a threat to Ukraine but to the entirety of the United Nations membership. Every State relies on the rules-based international order for its prosperity, independence and sovereignty. If we fail to hold Russia accountable and to respond to its attack on the Charter, we will leave the world a more dangerous place for us all.

The international community and the General Assembly have repeatedly made clear their condemnation of the war, including through this special session. As we mark this anniversary, with no end to Russia's war in sight, a further draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.7) is being brought before the General Assembly, calling for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the principles of the Charter. We call on all Member States to support it.

Ms. Sumuvuori (Finland): A year ago, in the early hours of 24 February 2022, we woke up to a new and grim reality. Russia had launched a brutal full-scale invasion of its sovereign neighbour Ukraine. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine was a turning point. In the past few years Russia has been turning away from cooperation and the rules-based international order. The illegal annexation of the Crimea and the war in eastern Ukraine that started in 2014 changed our perception of Russia, yet most of us could not have imagined a full-scale war. It is important to remember that the path of dialogue and diplomacy was always an option, but that was not the path that Russia took. War and destruction were Russia's choice.

It is appalling to see a permanent member of the Security Council disregard its obligations to maintain peace and security. Instead, we are witnessing a flagrant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and commonly agreed principles. Russia's methods of warfare in Ukraine systematically violate international law, most notably the laws of war. Russian missiles have targeted Ukrainian civilians and infrastructure, causing immeasurable damage and suffering. The attacks have destroyed hospitals, maternity wards, schools, kindergartens and places of worship. Testimonies from Ukraine and the areas liberated from Russian occupation tell gruesome tales of torture, extrajudicial executions and sexual violence. Our message is loud and clear. We must hold Russia accountable for its violations of international law, including reparations for damage. We must ensure that there is no impunity for atrocity crimes committed in Ukraine. It is not only morally imperative, it is our right and duty to do so.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has serious consequences and causes human suffering not only in Ukraine but globally. Finland continues to provide political, defence, humanitarian and financial assistance to Ukraine and its people. The global ramifications of the war include the food and energy crisis. Finland continues to support the global community in mitigating the negative consequences of Russia's actions. We also support the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Today the General Assembly will vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, on the principles for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. The resolution is about Ukraine, but it is also about all of us. Would any Member State not expect support from the United Nations — from all of us — if its country were invaded and partly annexed by a neighbour? Would it not be disappointed if it did not get support from its fellows? I also want to underline that according to the Charter, if a State Member of the United Nations is attacked, it has an inherent right to self-defence, both individually and through support from other Member States. And would not that country seek support in a time of such distress?

Finland's support for Ukraine and its people remains firm. We also support President Zelenskyy's peace initiative and its implementation. In order to achieve a comprehensive, lasting and just peace, Russia must immediately end its brutal and illegal

invasion of Ukraine. We call on it to respect Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity, cease its missile strikes on Ukrainian cities and withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory. It is our duty as the General Assembly to vote in favour of the draft resolution before us and against the amendments (A/ES-11/L.8 and A/ES-11/L.9) proposed by Belarus. We need to show our strong support for Ukraine and its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We in this Hall today must demonstrate our support for peace and the fundamental principles of the Charter. When the Charter and the rules-based international order come under attack, we must defend them together.

Ms. Tickner (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia rejects the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country, as that constitutes a direct violation of the fundamental purposes and principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Accordingly, we reject any unprovoked aggression by one State against another, which can have only negative consequences, including loss of life, displacement, material destruction, food and energy shortages and increased poverty, for the civilian population, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups.

In keeping with its policy of working for total peace beyond its national borders, the Government of Colombia urges the parties to seek a negotiated, peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Ukraine and expresses its solidarity with those who have fallen victim to the conflict.

Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Tomorrow, on 24 February, we will mark the one-year anniversary of the unjustified invasion of Ukrainian territory by the Russian Federation's military forces. That has led to a conflict whose protracted nature has had extremely negative consequences not only for the countries concerned but for the region and the international community as a whole. Today Uruguay echoes the many other countries that have called for an end to the hostilities. In the meetings of the General Assembly's emergency special session that have been convened since March 2022, Uruguay has been clear in its firm condemnation of the Russian Federation's military invasion of Ukraine and of its clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which all States Members of the United Nations are bound not only to respect but to comply with and enforce.

We would like to take this opportunity to call on the Russian Federation to cease its military operations and aggression against Ukraine and withdraw its forces from the Ukrainian territory as soon as possible. Both parties to the conflict must make every effort to return to the negotiating table in order to resolve their differences peacefully, as provided in the Charter of the United Nations. Uruguay has consistently called for unrestricted respect for international law and recalled that it is illegal to acquire territory through the use of force or other mechanisms that run contrary to the Charter of the United Nations. The rule of international law, which is explicitly provided for in the Charter and supported by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the precedent set by the International Court of Justice, makes the territorial annexation of another State through aggression a violation under the Charter and international law.

Consequently, the Government of Uruguay reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That is why Uruguay has co-sponsored and will vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, which calls unequivocally for the cessation of violence and the restoration of a just and lasting peace. In that regard, I would like to recall that the rejection of the use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes are fundamental principles of Uruguay's foreign policy.

Lastly, we reiterate our appeal that through the negotiation mechanisms provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, together with the involvement of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, paths for dialogue may be found to agree on steps to de-escalate the conflict, and that through diplomatic negotiations, the parties to the conflict may resolve their differences and end the war.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): One year into the Ukraine crisis, the conflict continues to grind on and grow in scale, while wreaking havoc on countless lives and causing an increasing number of spillover effects. We are deeply concerned about that. China's position on the Ukraine issue has been consistent and clear. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected. The purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be upheld. The legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously. All efforts that are conducive to the peaceful resolution of the crisis should be supported. Given the current situation, I would like to make the following four points.

First, the top priority is to facilitate a ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities without delay. Conflicts and wars have no winners. The longer the brutality continues, the greater the human suffering will be. We once again call on the parties to the conflict to remain rational, refrain from impulsive actions and prevent the crisis from worsening or spiralling out of control. The parties to the conflict should abide strictly by international humanitarian law, avoid attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure, protect women, children and other victims of the conflict, and respect the basic rights of prisoners of war. All parties should strictly abide by the Convention on Nuclear Safety and guard against man-made nuclear accidents. Nuclear weapons cannot be used. Nuclear war cannot be fought. All parties should unite against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, prevent nuclear proliferation and avoid a nuclear crisis.

Secondly, dialogue and negotiation are the only viable way to resolve the Ukraine crisis. At the beginning of the crisis, Russia and Ukraine held several rounds of talks and made important progress. Regrettably, peace talks have since stalled. The reason for that warrants deep reflection. The lessons of history tell us that crises, however deep they run, can ultimately be resolved peacefully. No matter how difficult it is, the door to a political solution cannot be closed. We support Russia and Ukraine in moving towards one another by resuming a direct dialogue as soon as possible, raising their legitimate concerns during such negotiations, proposing feasible options and putting an early end to the crisis and rebuilding peace as soon as possible.

Thirdly, the international community should make joint efforts to facilitate peace talks. One year into the Ukraine crisis, the brutal facts have amply demonstrated that sending weapons will not bring about peace — adding fuel to the fire will only exacerbate tensions, and prolonging the conflict will only force ordinary people to pay an even greater price. We hereby appeal that diplomacy and negotiation not be abandoned and that efforts to establish a ceasefire and hold talks continue. The international community should create the conditions necessary for that to happen, rather than fan the flames and serve its members' self-interest. We urge the countries concerned to stop abusing unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction. Instead, they should act in a way that is conducive to de-escalation. The international community should strengthen coordination and cooperation in energy, finance, grain

trade and transportation, and should work together to mitigate the spillover effects of the crisis. We support the General Assembly playing an active role in bridging differences, building consensus and forging synergy among Member States.

Fourthly, there is a need for pursuing common security and achieving lasting peace. Security is not the prerogative of only a few countries. One country's security should not be achieved at the expense of other countries' security. Bolstering or even enlarging military blocs will only undermine regional security and drive peace further away. The final settlement of the Ukraine crisis hinges on abandoning the Cold War mentality and giving due regard to and respecting the reasonable security concerns of all countries, thereby properly addressing their legitimate security aspirations and advancing the building of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture.

As a responsible country, China always stands on the side of peace and dialogue, and always advocates for peace and promotes talks. China will soon issue a position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. We stand ready to continue playing a constructive role in resolving the Ukraine crisis and bringing about peace at an early date.

Mr. Iravani (Islamic Republic of Iran): One year after the start of the Ukraine crisis, the conflict still shows no signs of ending, and the international community continues to grapple with a range of challenges, including the devastating humanitarian consequences of the conflict for civilians and its serious implications for the global economy. Given those complex and difficult circumstances, it is essential that we remain fully committed to achieving a peaceful resolution of the conflict and lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the principles outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Islamic Republic of Iran's position on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has not changed. We remain steadfast in our commitment to upholding the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States. We urge all parties to fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by taking constant precautions to protect civilians and critical infrastructure, and by facilitating safe and unfettered access to humanitarian aid for those in need.

We acknowledge that the conflict is detrimental to both parties, as neither can gain any long-term advantage. To achieve a sustained solution, it is crucial for all parties involved to abandon their military ambitions and prioritize finding a peaceful diplomatic resolution. By prioritizing dialogue and diplomacy and addressing the underlying cause of the conflict, we can take a crucial step towards achieving a solution that not only mitigates the devastating humanitarian impact but also restores regional stability and security. Against the backdrop of the increasing need to end the conflict, my delegation supports the idea of leveraging the Secretary-General's capacity, as mandated by the Charter, to establish a cross-regional group of independent, competent, impartial countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to contribute to that process, which could be critical in facilitating constructive dialogue and assisting in the identification of a solution to the current impasse in the Ukraine conflict. As a first step, we call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire, coupled with the provision of humanitarian aid to those in need, which should take precedence over everything else.

On the anniversary of this tragic conflict, we had hoped that draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7 would present a practical and achievable means to bring an end to the conflict that is consistent with the United Nations mission. Unfortunately, the proposed text falls short of comprehensively and impartially addressing all aspects of the issue, and fails to acknowledge the condition and provocation actions that have contributed to the crisis. Moreover, the policies and action declared by certain sponsors of the draft resolution raise doubts about the political will to resolve the dispute peacefully. Those policies and action on the ground have only aggravated the situation, rather than promoting a peaceful and lasting solution. Instead of bringing the Member States together, the draft resolution may further polarize them, potentially worsening the conflict in Ukraine.

We believe that any resolution of the issue must be based on a thorough and unbiased assessment of the situation and the underlying cause of the conflict and must take into account all relevant factors and perspectives. It is also critical that all parties involved demonstrate a genuine commitment to reaching a peaceful resolution and take concrete steps in that direction. In the light of those concerns, our delegation has decided to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7. Nonetheless, we remain committed to

working towards a peaceful and sustainable resolution of the conflict, and we stand ready to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation with all the parties to achieve that important goal.

I would like to address the reference made to my country by the representative of the Israeli regime during yesterday's meeting (see A/ES-11/PV.17). An Iran-phobic campaign, with widespread systematic dissemination of disinformation and baseless allegations against Iran, has always been one of the main elements of the Israeli regime's statements in this organ. The Israeli regime cannot conceal its brutalities in Palestine or distract attention away from its long-standing malign activities and demonic policies in other countries. The Israeli regime is notorious for its atrocities and apartheid policies practiced against the people of Palestine and region, in particular the targeting and killing of innocent people, including women and children, in occupied Palestine. The Israeli regime continues to commit flagrant and systematic violations of human rights and all norms of international humanitarian law, especially the core crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

In that regard, we strongly condemn the Israeli regime's recent terrorist attack of early Sunday, 19 February, on a civilian residential building in the densely populated district of central Damascus, continuing its flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and endangering regional and international peace and security. The international community must strongly condemn such attacks and compel the Israeli regime to end all acts of aggression against Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity immediately. Possessing all types of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the most sophisticated conventional weapons, the Israeli regime continues to endanger peace and security in the region and beyond. Meanwhile, it continues to defy the constant, strong international call to join the internationally legally binding instruments banning weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, it attempts to portray Iran's conventional weapons capabilities and its exclusively peaceful nuclear programme as a challenge to regional stability.

While we reiterate our commitment to ongoing bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, my Government categorically rejects the unsubstantiated claims that Iran has transferred unmanned aerial vehicles for use in the

Ukraine conflict. Such claims are nothing more than a propaganda campaign used by certain States to advance their political agenda. Iran is willing to engage in constructive bilateral, technical and expert exchange with Ukrainian experts in order to clarify the unsubstantiated allegation that has been levelled against it.

Mr. Feruță (Romania): Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the High Representative of the European Union, Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, on behalf of the European Union and its member States (see A/ES-11/PV.17), and I would like to add some points in my national capacity.

What we wish for, on the cusp of the one-year mark since the start of Russia's fully-fledged war of aggression against Ukraine, is very simple: peace for the people of Ukraine, the victory of principles and values, and one less bloody conflict for the world. But what we are still witnessing is very different. We continue to see an alarming level of hostilities that show no sign of abating, with unimaginable suffering for the civilian population and dire and long-lasting consequences. The human rights and humanitarian consequences of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine, including the continuous attacks against its critical infrastructure, are particularly worrisome. No less cruel are the reports of the atrocities committed on the territory of Ukraine, for which we must ensure accountability.

That continued aggression undermines the core of the rules-based international order and effective multilateralism, and remains a matter of concern for the international community. The hybrid war proliferated by Russia — which is made even more intense through the mediums of fake news, disinformation and malign interference — aims to not only destabilize the region and the most vulnerable States, such as the Republic of Moldova, but also to undermine our unity, mutual trust and solidarity. The Russian Federation is testing the resolve of the world to stand up for its norms and values. By attacking the basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the Security Council, is also attacking the very foundation of international peace and security. The stakes of this conflict are clear to all of us, and the world must send a clear message: there is no justification for bloodshed, destruction and human suffering.

We need the full force, determination and legitimacy of the General Assembly to reaffirm that international law matters, that the Charter matters, and that we stand by the rules put in place for the protection of every single Member State of this Organization. The upcoming vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, which is before us and which we should adopt with the largest possible majority, is an opportunity to reaffirm our support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and to call for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the Charter and international law.

Romania has been at the forefront of countering all the multidimensional effects of this war since day one. We are fully engaged in the international efforts to end Russia's impunity, and we also strongly support the efforts to seek accountability for all crimes committed in Ukraine. The perpetrators must pay, and our collective efforts must be effective in that regard, as Ukraine seeks the justice it deserves. We support the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression in relation to the situation in Ukraine. Romania has stood by Ukraine, its direct neighbour, during the entire year of Russia's aggression. For the past year there has been a multidimensional effort to accelerate the transfer of about 13 million tons of Ukrainian grain through Romanian territory. That has reached countries in the global South that have been seriously affected by the increases in global food prices and that were already facing food insecurity. The Romanian port of Constanța, on the Black Sea, has become the main gateway for Ukrainian grain shipments, representing a real food hub at the European level and a direct contribution to ensuring global food security. With that goal in mind, we have also been advocating and hoping for a continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Some 3.6 million Ukrainian citizens have entered Romania so far and of those more than 110,000 have remained. We have offered humanitarian aid to those in need, in addition to setting up a humanitarian hub, all aimed at reducing suffering and helping Ukrainians to defend and build their way to peace.

What we all want is peace. That has been made clear today and yesterday by countless delegations. We want a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, a peace that does not reward the aggressor and that is based on the principles of the Charter, which we have bravely stood up for in the past. And peace in Ukraine

cannot be restored by inaction. As a matter of urgency, the Russian Federation must reverse its illegal actions and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That is what the draft resolution before us delivers. We have the power to unite around its text. Romania, as one of its sponsors, supports the draft resolution and calls on the entire United Nations membership to vote in favour of it for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on the principles of the Charter.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Ms. Sourek (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance): It has been one year since the Russian Federation launched its illegal war on Ukraine, a year of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It has been a year of brutality against the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the promise of democratic rights and freedoms, the international rules-based order and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States. It has been a year of death, displacement and devastation, occurring every day in the territories invaded by Russia and revealed in the areas recovered by Ukraine.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) reiterates its condemnation of Russia's illegitimate and immoral war against Ukraine and urges for the immediate and unequivocal withdrawal of all Russian military forces from Ukrainian territory. Until that happens, we welcome the adoption, enforcement and continued escalation of sanctions by the international community against the Russian Federation. Ultimately, the responsibility of the Russian Federation must be addressed in accordance with resolution 60/147 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That accountability is a matter of international law, and the rule of law must and shall prevail. We encourage the Secretary-General to continue working to advance ceasefire talks and to support increased humanitarian access to the war-affected areas and the protection of civilians.

Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7, which we are discussing today, calls for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. That objective is inextricably connected to the democratic ambitions of the Ukrainian people. As International IDEA has noted previously,

this conflict is about democracy as much as it is about sovereignty. Over many years, and despite many obstacles, Ukrainians have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to democratic values. The result has been steady improvement across a variety of democratic indicators, including respect for media freedom, the fight against corruption and the conduct of free and fair elections, as measured by International IDEA's indices and reports. Today that hard-won progress hangs in the balance. But we should clearly understand that Ukrainians have chosen democracy. A comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine must therefore be a democratic peace, determined by and for Ukrainians. The support from the international community should reflect that democratic imperative. Among the needs of a post-war Ukraine, support for democracy and the defence of human rights will be crucial.

The outcome of this institutional process will reverberate far beyond Ukraine. It is a test of the defence and rebuilding of inclusive and sustainable democracy as a guarantor of rights for both people and nations. In that effort, we should not lose sight of the need to ensure that there is a path to enable democracy to return to Russia as well, as part of securing a lasting regional and global peace. We must say it clearly — a democratic Russia would not have unleashed this tragedy. Advancing democracy is the single best way to build and guarantee global peace. Ukrainians are putting their lives on the line every day to defend the values that we claim to hold — the values of the Charter, sovereignty, human rights and multilateralism. Helping them to preserve a future for Ukrainian democracy will be our greatest tribute to them.

The President: I now call on the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Ms. Baerbock (Germany): Let us think about the number 45 — the 45 seconds you have to get your grandmother to safety, the 45 seconds you have to make it to the basement. Forty-five seconds is the time it takes for missiles from Russia to hit the city of Kharkiv after the sirens are heard. I met teenagers in eastern Ukraine for whom counting to 45 has become part of their daily lives — teenagers, grandmothers and fathers who want nothing more than for this war to end and to have peace.

Russia's war of aggression has not only brought terrible suffering to the people of Ukraine. It has opened gaping wounds across the world, with families on all continents who cannot make ends meet because of

rising food and energy prices. I think all of them — and most of us here — agree on one simple thing. We want the suffering to stop, in Ukraine and worldwide. We want this war to end. We want peace. And the good thing is that we do have a peace plan right here in front of us. It is called the Charter of the United Nations. Its principles, which apply to every State, are very simple — sovereign equality, territorial integrity and the non-use of force. That is why the road to peace is also very clear. Russia must withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Russia must stop the bombing. Russia must return to the Charter. Each and every one of us here today has an opportunity to contribute to that peace plan — by telling the aggressor to stop and by making it clear that it is not peace if an aggressor tells its victim to simply give up, and that it is not peace if an aggressor is rewarded for its ruthless violence. That would run counter to the very essence of our Charter. It would mean not peace but more violence. That is why we are supporting Ukraine in its right to defend itself as it is enshrined in Article 51.

Today I have also heard some speakers say that by arming Ukraine we are adding fuel to the fire. But let me ask them honestly — why ever would we

do that? We did not want this war. We did not choose this war. We too would much rather focus every bit of our energy — and our money — on fixing our schools, fighting the climate crisis and strengthening social justice. But the truth is that if Russia stops fighting, the war ends, while if Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine ends. And the human suffering would continue, with abduction, rape and torture every single day, and with children counting to 45 every single day to save their lives. The war's global trail of devastation would continue, with inflation, energy shortages and hunger. That is why today's vote is also about all of our futures. Today each and every one of us here has to choose whether to stand isolated with the oppressor or to unite for peace, and whether to stay silent or to protect our Charter so that the Charter can protect us.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. We shall proceed to consider draft resolution A/ES-11/L.7 and the draft amendments contained in documents A/ES-11/L.8 and A/ES-11/L.9, starting with explanations of vote before the voting, at 3 p.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.