



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

9380th meeting
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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Cleverly/Mr. Kariuki	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil	Mr. França Danese
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Pérez Loose
	France	Ms. Colonna
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	Japan	Mr. Takei
	Malta	Mr. Camilleri
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Ministers and other high representatives to today's meeting. Their presence today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Austria, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before you proceed with the meeting, Mr. President, I would like to express our principled disagreement with the presidency's approach to inviting delegations to participate in this meeting under rule 37. In violation of existing practice, the British presidency has unilaterally decided to give the representatives of eight member States of the European Union (EU) and NATO and their closest allies the opportunity to speak at today's meeting, as well as the representative of the EU itself, despite the fact that it is the regular practice of the Council to invite no more than three delegations to take part in the meetings on Ukraine under rule 37. It is clear that today's participants, in accordance with their NATO membership, will add no value to the discussion and will merely drag out today's meeting, turning it into a debate, which is not something that the United Kingdom agreed on with Council members ahead of the meeting. That behaviour speaks not only to a lack of integrity on the part of the presidency but also to an attempt to put pressure on the members of the Security Council. There can be no plausible explanation for turning a Council meeting into a get-together for representatives of NATO States.

However, the British presidency does not seem to care about its own reputation or about the rules and traditions of the Security Council. It has learned no lessons even from its own mistakes as President of the Council, of which we have already seen quite a few in the first half of July alone. This is also a good moment

to remind everyone that in February we encountered attempts by an EU member, then President of the Council, to turn a Council meeting on Ukraine into a political spectacle performed to coincide with the visit of European ministers to New York (see S/PV.9269). The same thing is happening today.

We feel obliged to point out that London has shown complete disregard time and again for the procedures and practices of the Security Council, putting its national position and the interests of NATO above the duties of the President of the Security Council, who is supposed to be the guardian of its procedures with a balanced and impartial approach. Regrettably, it appears that this elementary task is beyond the capacity of Britain's diplomats for the second year in a row.

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

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

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: More than 500 days after the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, life in Ukraine remains a living hell, as the Secretary-General has characterized it. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 9,287 civilians have been killed and 16,384 injured, most of them under fire from Russian armed forces. That statistic includes 537 children killed and 1,117 injured. And those are only the confirmed statistics. The actual number of victims is likely considerably higher. Children have been particularly hard hit by the conflict. Ukraine was the country with the highest number of children killed and maimed in 2022 and with the most attacks on schools and hospitals. Nowhere is safe in Ukraine. On 27 June, Russian missiles hit the city of Kramatorsk, reportedly killing 11 people, including 14-year-old twin sisters. At least 60 others were injured. On 6 July, bombardments hit Kyiv, Odesa and Lviv, which are far from the front

lines. On 8 July, Russian artillery shelling reportedly killed at least eight civilians and wounded 13 in Lyman. And communities in the Sumy region continue to be under constant Russian shelling. Civilians in areas under Russian control also face mortal danger. On 9 July, four civilians were killed and many more injured while receiving humanitarian aid in the town of Orikhiv, in the Zaporizhzhya region. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, wherever they occur, are indefensible and strictly prohibited under international law. They must cease immediately.

As the Secretary-General has consistently underlined, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The United Nations remains fully committed to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The parties involved have the responsibility to avoid actions that could further escalate tensions. In particular, any threat to use nuclear weapons is utterly unacceptable, as is jeopardizing the safety and security of nuclear power plants and other critical infrastructure. In recent days, experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency have heard a series of explosions apparently taking place some distance from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. They are a stark reminder of the potential risks to nuclear safety and security at the power plant during the military conflict in the country.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continue to respond to the dire consequences of the war, having reached more than 5 million people with aid so far this year. There have been more than 65 inter-agency convoys this year to front-line areas. Unfortunately, the continuing lack of humanitarian access to the Russian-controlled areas of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions is depriving an estimated 3.7 million people of much-needed assistance. We continue to engage with the authorities in Moscow and Kyiv to secure access and urge Russia to fulfil its international obligations to grant humanitarian access to the territories that it controls. Access is also an issue in the wake of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, which has devastated local communities along the Dnipro River and continues to have broad, long-term environmental consequences. The flooding has affected local ecosystems, exposed military and hazardous waste and shifted landmines. The

United Nations is undertaking a post-disaster needs assessment to determine the wider impact in support of a comprehensive recovery strategy.

Displacement throughout Ukraine remains a serious concern. Currently, more than 6.3 million Ukrainians are refugees, and an estimated 5.1 million people are internally displaced. According to estimates from the International Organization for Migration, 4.76 million displaced people have returned to their communities since the beginning of the war, including 1.1 million refugees. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that while most of the remaining refugees and internally displaced persons want to return to their places of origin, voluntary return in safety and dignity may not be possible for many, given the security situation. Ukraine has become one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. As part of our support to the Government of Ukraine for the reconstruction and repair of critical infrastructure, the United Nations is assisting the country's emergency services in removing more than half a million landmines and pieces of unexploded ordnance, which will enable 4 million people to return home.

OHCHR has documented a harrowing record of human rights violations, including arbitrary deprivation of life, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture, ill-treatment and conflict-related sexual violence. According to the latest OHCHR report, the Russian Federation has arbitrarily detained 864 individuals, many of whose cases also amount to forced disappearance. It is deeply disturbing that more than 91 per cent of civilian detainees held by the Russian Federation have been reportedly subjected to torture or ill-treatment, including sexual violence, and more than 26 per cent of them transferred to other locations, in violation of international law, either within parts of Ukraine under Russian control or to the Russian Federation itself. We are also gravely concerned about the alleged summary execution of 77 civilians while they were arbitrarily detained by the Russian Federation, as reported by OHCHR. OHCHR has documented 75 cases of arbitrary detention by Ukrainian security forces, mostly of persons suspected of conflict-related criminal offences. In 57 per cent of the cases, OHCHR documented the use of torture and ill-treatment. We call for the arbitrary detention of civilians to stop and for the immediate release in conditions of safety of all persons held arbitrarily. The victims must be provided with effective remedies. We

also urge the Russian Federation to guarantee regular, unimpeded and confidential access to all detainees for independent monitors, including from OHCHR. All victims of human rights violations deserve justice and accountability, whichever side of the front line they come from. Impunity must not be allowed to stand.

The Ukraine Recovery Conference held in London last month was a demonstration of international solidarity, raising more than \$60 billion in pledges towards Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. The United Nations will continue to support national and international partners in ongoing recovery efforts, in line with the principles of building back better and leaving no one behind.

Globally, in 2023, it is projected that 345 million people across 79 countries where the World Food Programme (WFP) is operational and data is available will experience acute food insecurity. As many as 40.4 million people across 51 countries face severe hunger emergencies and are one step away from famine if they do not receive immediate assistance. The Black Sea Grain Initiative enabled the safe export of approximately 33 million metric tons of foodstuffs from three Ukrainian ports, including more than 750,000 metric tons of wheat transported by the WFP, helping to relieve hunger in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and Yemen. The Initiative helped bring down global food prices. The memorandum of understanding on Russian food and fertilizer exports also delivered concrete results over the past year. As the Secretary-General stated this morning, the decision of the Russian Federation to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative will strike a blow to people in need everywhere. The Secretary-General also stated that that decision will not stop our efforts to facilitate the unimpeded access to global markets of food products and fertilizers from both Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

We knew well before 24 February 2022 that the world was at an inflection point. We understood that we needed to take urgent action to deal with an overwhelming set of crises that collectively threaten our very existence. International cooperation and respect for the rule of law were more important than ever. Today it is clear that, in addition to causing unconscionable death and destruction, the war in Ukraine has greatly diminished our ability to face an uncertain future. It has heightened tensions in different regions and risks triggering a global arms race. The war threatens to undermine the very structures that

prevented a third global conflagration and helped us to resolve multiple conflicts over the past 80 years. The longer this war continues, the more dangerous its consequences are, including the possibility of a wider conflict. For the sake of the Ukrainian people and of our global community, this senseless, unjustified war must stop.

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

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

More than 500 days have now passed since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. At least 9,000 innocent civilians lie dead, including 500 children. Thousands more Ukrainians have been kidnapped, imprisoned and tortured. Homes, businesses, schools and hospitals have been reduced to rubble. Russia's incessant attacks have knocked out 60 per cent of Ukraine's power supply. The war has claimed countless victims. I am going to focus on those who have been forcibly deported in this war and those who are going hungry as a result of it.

In Kyiv last month I met a teenage boy — I will call him Denys. When the Russians captured his hometown, they told Denys and his classmates that they were going on a holiday. They were in fact transported to a Russian camp where they were neglected, indoctrinated and abused. Denys' distraught mother was desperately searching for him. But the Russians, pretending to look after Denys and countless others, told him that his parents had abandoned him. The boy's ordeal lasted for 7 months before his mother — thanks to the charity Save Ukraine — found him and brought him home. But 19,000 Ukrainian children remain in Russian camps, and their parents are desperately searching for them. A further 2.5 million Ukrainian men and women have been deported to Russia. Those are barbaric crimes. Russia is trying to erase Ukrainian identity and cultural history, and it is using children as an instrument of war. But the world is watching, and Russia will be held accountable. We welcome the International Criminal Court's investigation, and we will leave no stone unturned until those responsible are brought to justice.

Ukrainians are Russia's principal victims, but the war is also harming the poor and the vulnerable across the world, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Energy prices skyrocketed by 20 per cent worldwide last year — almost doubling global inflation

from 4.7 per cent to 8.7 per cent. World food supplies have fallen sharply. Ukrainian food exports — maize, barley and wheat — have plummeted by more than 40 per cent, with catastrophic consequences for sub-Saharan Africa, which relies on those supplies. Food prices are skyrocketing — they increased by a staggering 332 per cent in Lebanon last summer.

Some of those losses were offset by the Black Sea Grain Initiative, brokered by the Secretary-General and Türkiye. But today Russia has announced that it is refusing to extend it, taking a colossal 23 million tons of Ukrainian food off world markets over the coming year. As the Secretary-General said this morning, today's decision by the Russian Federation will strike a blow to people in need everywhere. We call on Russia to return to the table and agree to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative indefinitely, and to implement it fully without delay. Let us be clear — Russia's actions are taking food out of the mouths of the poorest people across Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.

We cannot allow this war to go on for another 500 days. The General Assembly has called repeatedly for peace — a peace that is based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and our shared belief that might does not equal right. President Zelenskyy's 10-point plan has shown a way forward. Ukraine wants peace. We want peace. The whole world wants peace. Peace will bring home Ukraine's lost children and feed the hungry of the world. Peace will keep the promises we all made in the Charter. Peace will pave the way to a reformed multilateral system. Peace will help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. A just and lasting peace is what we all want. The Russian Federation can choose peace — today — by withdrawing all Russian forces from Ukraine. I urge Mr. Putin to bring his troops home and to end this war now.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

Ms. Colonna (France) (*spoke in French*): The Security Council met at the ministerial level on 24 February (see S/PV.9269), after 365 days of an abominable war chosen by Russia alone. The day before, the General Assembly had called once again on Russia to cease its aggression (see A/ES-11/PV.19), but it has continued. Russia has now been waging a war of aggression against Ukraine for more than 500

days. For 500 days, it has been destroying, bombing and deliberately targeting civilian populations and infrastructure. For 500 days, it has been committing abuses and war crimes, abducting and deporting thousands of children, using rape as a weapon of war and torturing and killing people. That is 500 days too many.

We founded the United Nations at the end of the Second World War by making a collective commitment: to ensure that the horrors of war would never be repeated, to give priority to the peaceful settlement of disputes and to respect common rules and principles to govern relations between States. It is those principles and rules that Russia — despite being a permanent member of the Council with a special responsibility as such — has chosen to violate in committing its senseless aggression against a neighbouring country.

What is happening in Ukraine concerns all our States, because that aggression, which openly calls into question the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, creates the risk of setting a precedent, and the way we respond to it will largely determine our collective stability and security in the decades to come. All those who may be inclined to think that this war is too far away, that it is a European issue, or that it does not concern them, must understand that. If we allow force to take precedence over the law, for sovereignty and territorial integrity to be violated with impunity and for the aggressor and the aggressed to be placed on an equal footing, we will be contributing to creating the conditions for other wars. Let there be no doubt: if we allow this aggression to bring rewards, other aggressions will follow, in Ukraine or elsewhere.

While this war concerns all of us in this Chamber, its consequences weigh heavily on populations the world over, particularly those in the poorest and most vulnerable countries. The Russian aggression is having too many negative consequences everywhere. While Russia pretends to show solidarity but offers nothing to help others, on 22 and 23 June 3 in Paris, we organized the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact, which produced concrete results, including on debt management, and set a clear course for leveraging funding for the countries that need it most.

While Russia deploys its militias to plunder the resources of the African continent, France has increased its development partnerships and become the world's fourth largest donor of official aid. And while Russia

is unacceptably engaging in blackmail in the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, and while it is Russia that is hindering freedom of movement in the Black Sea, the European Union is pursuing and improving its “solidarity corridors”, which have enabled the export of over 38 million tons of grain.

After 500 days of an illegal, unjustifiable and doomed war of aggression, it is essential that we step up our advocacy for peace. In this respect, I would like to salute the many initiatives that have emerged in recent weeks. They show that attachment to the ideal that founded the United Nations remains widely shared. But our efforts will only be meaningful if they create the conditions for a just and lasting peace, in keeping with the Charter’s fundamental principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity. Let us be clear: any solution that endorses Russia’s illegal annexation of whole swathes of Ukrainian territory will only pave the way for future conflict. To think otherwise would be a fatal mistake.

We must respond to this aggression, which has violated all the principles in which we believe at the United Nations, with solutions based on law and justice. That is why the fight against impunity for Russia’s crimes in Ukraine is so important. That is why the safety and security of Ukraine’s civilian nuclear facilities is a priority, at a time when Russia is irresponsibly endangering them by occupying Zaporizhzhya. We will also remain committed to the protection of civilians and to helping the nearly 18 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

Ukraine, a country that was attacked when it posed no threat whatsoever to Russia, continues to seek dialogue, and has placed all these principles at the heart of its vision for peace, which has been constantly reiterated since last year. That is why we support it. This support will last for as long as it takes.

The President: I now call on the Permanent Representative of the United States and Member of President Biden’s Cabinet.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

As I prepared for today’s meeting, I thought back to the days leading up to President Putin’s unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This was just over 500 days ago. For weeks, the United States, alongside

many countries represented in this Chamber, had been sounding the alarm about Russia’s imminent invasion. But all Russia did was deny, deny, deny. Russia’s Deputy Foreign Minister told us to stop the hysteria. But only a few days later, we were all in this Chamber, in this very Council, when Russia launched its brutal war of aggression. That night, President Biden delivered a message that would prove prescient. He said that Putin’s war of choice “will bring a catastrophic loss of life and human suffering”. Tragically, the world has watched this play out in horrifying detail in Ukraine and around the world.

After all, the spillover effects of this needless war are profound. Just look at the harm Russia has done to the world’s food supply. By weaponizing food, Russia has exacerbated the global food security crisis, a crisis that disproportionately affects people in the Middle East and Africa. And today, in another act of cruelty, Russia suspended its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which was an arrangement that has brought stability to global food markets and lowered food prices for all. It has bolstered the World Food Programme’s humanitarian work in such places as Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen. And according to the United Nations, nearly two thirds of the wheat exported through this arrangement have gone to developing countries. As the Secretary-General said, “today’s decision by the Russian Federation will strike a blow to people in need everywhere”.

Of course, this decision follows Russia’s callous veto of a compromise draft resolution of the Security Council that would have extended life-saving assistance to Syrians in dire need (see S/PV.9371). In both cases, Russia’s cynicism is obstructing the will of the Security Council and the recommendations of the Secretary-General. We must all urge Russia to extend the cross-border mechanism into Syria and continue its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Over the past 500 days, Russia has waged a campaign of brutality on the Ukrainian people. Russia’s forces have rained missiles down on Ukraine, causing unconscionable death and destruction. We have all seen the images of burned-out homes and schools and playgrounds. Russia’s forces have tortured civilians in detention, including through beatings, electrocution and mock executions. One woman I met in Kyiv could only share a portion of the horrors she experienced while in detention; it was still too raw, but the pain etched onto her face said it all.

The United States has determined that members of Russia's forces and other Russian officials have committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine: rape, summary executions, the deportation of Ukrainians, including children. The list goes on. Russia continues to deny these atrocities. These crimes have been well documented, and the international community has taken steps to hold those responsible to account, and there will be justice.

On the night of the invasion, President Biden also said that the United States and our allies would respond in a united and decisive way, and this, too, has been borne out. We have stood united, never wavering in our support for Ukraine. Together, we have imposed sanctions on individuals and entities that provide political and economic support to Russia's war efforts, and together we have provided and will continue to provide Ukraine with humanitarian and security assistance.

We hear our Russian colleagues say that somehow this assistance is the reason the war continues. But, once again, Russia is trying to turn reality on its head. The security assistance, including weapons, that the United States and more than 50 other countries are providing is for Ukraine's self-defence — self-defence to which Ukraine has an inherent right, as reflected in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The truth of the matter is this: Russia could end this war today by pulling out its troops. It is that simple. And this has been said by several of us in this Chamber.

The United States refuses to give up on the urgency of peace, which is why, along with Ukraine and other Member States, we supported the General Assembly resolution that called for a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6). Russia tried to bully countries into voting against this resolution, but its efforts were in vain. Over 140 Member States made clear that peace must be rooted in the United Nations Charter and in the fundamental principles of sovereignty, equality and the territorial integrity of States. But up to this point, Russia has shown no true interest in a just and durable peace. And as a result, the Ukrainian people continue to suffer, the world continues to suffer.

I suspect — actually, I know — Russia will continue to follow its standard playbook and deny the truth about its war of aggression. It will continue to call bogus Council meetings and invite conspiracy theorists

to brief us. It truly is shameful. But what cannot be denied is this: the Ukrainian people will continue to courageously defend their country. And the United States will stand with them for as long as it takes, just as it will continue to stand up for the Charter of the United Nations and its principles as the basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

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

Mr. Takei (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and welcome the participation of Foreign Minister Kuleba of Ukraine in this meeting.

I condemn Russia for taking the rest of the world hostage. It is deeply regrettable that Russia chose to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative and blames others for the crisis it has created by its aggression.

Japan condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. Russia must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Ukraine and respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Japan will stand with Ukraine as it defends itself for a just and lasting peace.

We should not tolerate the clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The same applies anywhere in the world. If a permanent member of the Security Council unilaterally attempts to change the status quo of the territories of its neighbours by force or coercion, it should be held accountable and face consequences commensurate with its privileges.

Russia abuses the veto power. The veto is not for impunity. It should embody the heavier responsibilities of the permanent members. In that regard, Japan welcomes the commitment of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to voluntarily refrain from the use of the veto. I hope that the remaining permanent members will join them.

Russia is trying to threaten the world with irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, the deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus and the seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Japan cannot accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone its use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

We have to admit that the credibility of the Council is eroding. The Security Council should be reformed to restore the trust of the international community and represent the world of today, not the world of 80 years ago.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): I thank Rosemary DiCarlo for her insightful briefing as always with accurate and indisputable information on this matter. We thank the United Kingdom presidency for convening this high-level meeting on the situation in Ukraine and welcome you, Mr. President, in the chair.

After more than 500 days of ongoing war in Ukraine, what we have said since the very beginning of this lunacy remains true: it is an unjust and unjustifiable war of choice, a one-man-made catastrophe, a pure act of aggression.

During this time, in our almost weekly debates, we have heard everything and its opposite. We have seen officials pompously declare in this Chamber, looking straight into the eyes of Security Council members, that there will be no war. It was a lie and everyone, including everyone in the global South, knows it. Then, when war began, they rushed to specify that it was only a special military operation, that is, an aggression. Then they claimed that Russia never commits crimes, despite overwhelming and sickening evidence of cruelty, which has, among other things, led the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants for its top leadership. Then they claimed that Russia never attacks civilian infrastructure, except for residential areas, shopping malls, power generation installations, health facilities, schools, kindergartens and everywhere else. If Samuel Beckett were alive, he would be jealous. The theatre of the absurd is thriving in Russia.

Russia, through its propaganda, has never lost an occasion to claim that, despite all the devastating consequences of the war, there are no facts, and everything is staged by Ukraine, pushed by Western hysteria. That was until a Russian in the highest circles of power of the Kremlin, the infamous leader of the notorious Wagner Group, an assembly line of atrocities, a killing machine 100 per cent owned and financed by the Government to do dirty jobs, came out and claimed that the invasion of Ukraine was nothing less and nothing more than “a racket perpetrated by a corrupt elite chasing money and glory without concern for Russian lives”. He said it. It would be hard to say it better or with more accuracy.

We have heard so many times that Russia has fallen out with the international rules-based order. The Russians claim repeatedly that they do not agree with it, and they want out. I think it is important to understand what that is all about.

The rules-based order, which my country and the overwhelming majority of the world — 143 countries in General Assembly at the last count — want and seek to protect is everything we have commonly built over 78 years together, bit by bit, to shift from a culture of war to the shared desire for peace and cooperation. It relies on the foundations of the Charter of the United Nations, on the dozens of conventions and treaties, the countless Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and court rulings — all that precious international legislation that we commonly call “international law”. It is the order where, despite their wealth and might, nations are equal, free to decide their choices and their future; where relations between States are based on friendship and respect and genuine efforts to achieve mutual benefits; where rules and commitments are respected and observed; and where we all, including Russia, have committed to work for peace, not prepare for the next war. It is that international order that Russia does not want anymore because it wants to evolve against, instead of together; because it wants to dictate the geopolitical choices of others, including Ukraine; because it wants to impose its imperial ambitions and consolidate its influence on what it calls the “near abroad”, on what it sees and calls again the “Russian world”.

Last year, food insecurity sent shock tremors across the world until the Black Sea Grain Initiative was put in place. Now Russia just ended the Initiative, gambling again with the needs and food of people in need. It is for everyone to judge.

Russia’s massive assault on a sovereign country threatens not only Europe. It assault the astonishing human effort we have all invested since the Second World War to build global peace through the international rule of law. Let us make it clear — the defeat of Russia in Ukraine would not mean the end of Russia; it would mean the end of aggression and transgression of rules established and accepted globally, in favour of a sustainable peace in Europe and the world. On the other hand, a Russian victory would signify the prevalence of imperial Powers and the sanctioning of war as a means to dominate its neighbours. We do not want any of that, and we cannot accept it. That is why support for

Ukraine must continue until Russia understands that its logic of force has failed.

Let me conclude by reverting to a lesson of history — wars, however long, do not last forever. And Russia's war of choice will end, as well — the sooner the better for all, including the Ukrainian people and Russia itself. That is why the door of diplomacy should remain open.

We fully support Ukraine's peace formula for a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace. It should respect the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as protected by international law and the United Nations Charter. Any other solution will not lead to lasting peace, but only to a postponement of the conflict.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her informative briefing and express my appreciation to you, Foreign Secretary Cleverly, for presiding over this meeting. I also welcome the other ministers and high-level representatives who have joined us today.

The toll that the war in Ukraine is exacting on civilians is enormous. Further afield, the consequences of conflict have reverberated across the globe. Since the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the memorandum of understanding on the export of Russian fertilizers and food products were agreed almost one year ago, they have had significant impact globally. The shift in the price of grain following the announcement of the Initiative's termination, this morning, reflects its importance.

The United Arab Emirates regrets that the agreement will not continue and that Ukrainian food items will struggle to reach those who depend on them. Though this remains a political decision, it is the most vulnerable who are now forced to grapple with the very real consequences of that decision. The Initiative is one of the few positives that have emerged in the context of this conflict. These agreements were borne out of a resolute commitment to dialogue, and it is our hope that dialogue will prevail among all parties.

The world has witnessed more than 500 days of suffering since the beginning of the war. It is difficult to convey the true cost of this conflict. One can speak of the millions who have been displaced, the tens of thousands killed and injured and the impossible

situation faced by those living amid the shifting front lines. One can speak of the destruction wrought by the war and the long journey towards reconstruction that awaits Ukraine. One can also speak of the intangible impacts — the broken families, the uprooted communities and the traumatized children. All of these will last long after the last bullet is fired.

Since the outbreak of war, the World Health Organization has recorded more than 1,000 attacks on health care in Ukraine, including on medical personnel, facilities and their means of transport. We reiterate our call on the parties to respect their obligations under international law. We underline the demand made by the Council, in resolution 2286 (2016), that all parties to armed conflict ensure the respect and protection of all medical personnel, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities.

In the past week alone, there have been two instances of humanitarian aid workers coming under fire in Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya. We encourage all relevant authorities to facilitate the life-saving work of humanitarian organizations. That is especially important at a time when humanitarian needs remain significant and civilians are facing continued interruptions to power supplies across the country.

For its part, the United Arab Emirates is distributing \$100 million of aid for Ukraine, including the provision of generators and LED lights for civilians, supplies for babies, as well as a grant of \$4 million for programmes supporting the welfare of orphaned children, under the Olena Zelenska Foundation. The United Arab Emirates will continue its humanitarian efforts to help alleviate suffering on the ground.

Today's announcement is disappointing, but it should not dissuade our collective efforts to bring the war to an end. The United Arab Emirates will continue to call for this and support all genuine efforts to mitigate the war's consequences. De-escalation and dialogue are necessary to achieve a sustainable and just peace, one that is in line with the Charter of the United Nations and respects Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): It has been 510 days since the war against Ukraine began. Regrettably, today we are further from finding a resolution to the conflict than when it started, and deepening differences could cause

widespread and long-term damage to multilateralism and our shared ambition for global peace and security.

Already, we have seen several thousand lives lost on both sides; whole cities destroyed; safeguards against nuclear facilities jeopardized; amplified and reckless rhetoric on nuclear weapons risking lowering the threshold for their use; and the proliferation and use of dangerous weapons rolling back our collective ambitions on arms control.

The impact of the brutal war on Ukraine has not been limited to its suffering masses. It has cast its dark shadow across the world, aggravating the socioeconomic conditions of many countries that were already reeling from the adverse effects of the coronavirus disease pandemic. Evolving national security doctrines are also responding to the war in Ukraine in ways that do not necessarily support the strengthening of our collective security.

As I thank the United Kingdom for organizing this meeting and welcome the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo, I appeal to the Council that the gaps between the expectations of 1945 and the reality of today should be a reminder of the further efforts all of us need to take in amplifying the voice of peace and establishing credible pathways of dialogue to help Ukraine and the Russian Federation to stop this needless war.

For its part, Ghana would like to highlight three main points.

First, we emphasize the need for the parties to heed the calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities. The militarization of the conflict, fuelled by the manifest combative choices of the parties, has not significantly changed the dynamics of the conflict on the ground. Constrained by the absence of a common message from the Council, it is well past time for the parties to heed the voice of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly, which, in all its resolutions, called for an immediate end to the war in favour of a peaceful settlement.

Secondly, bearing in mind the civilian casualties, the gross violations of human rights and the extensive destruction that has accompanied the war, we are compelled to reiterate to the warring parties their obligation to strictly comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, especially the requirement to make a distinction of non-combatant

populations in order to avoid harming them and the facilities critical to their survival. Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is morally unacceptable and constitute violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

We also urge Ukraine and the Russian Federation to embrace the five concrete principles put forward by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. We want to express our appreciation for the coordinated humanitarian response spearheaded by the United Nations humanitarian agencies and international partners, as their efforts have been vital in assuring the people of Ukraine that they have not been forgotten by the rest of the world.

Thirdly, in order to manage the adverse impact of the war in Ukraine on third States, it is important to ensure that all grain produced is able to reach the global market. In that regard, we are deeply disappointed that the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has delivered more than 32 million tons of food commodities to 45 countries since it began in July 2022, has not been renewed. A renewal of the initiative, accompanied by a resolution of the challenges related to the export of ammonia to global markets, as well as of Russian agricultural products and fertilizers, as envisaged in the memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations, would help prevent speculative spikes in global food prices, strengthen global food security and eliminate other knock-on effects.

In closing, I want to reiterate how futile it is to use force as an instrument for pursuing relations with States in the present era. It has not served the interests of others well, and it cannot do so in the current circumstances. Our common renunciation of war in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations reflects the firm position of the international community on the matter, and our expectation that this obligation and other moderating voices should drive us to seek a path of lasting and comprehensive peace for Ukraine and the Russian Federation through dialogue and diplomacy. Finally, I reiterate Ghana's commitment of support for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Our commitment remains undiminished.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the Ukrainian crisis began, it has become increasingly protracted, expanded and complex, involving ever more cruelty, danger and unpredictability. The international community should be working together to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control and to achieve a ceasefire and an end to the fighting as soon as possible, with a view to promoting a political settlement of the issue.

I have four points to make. First, we must step up efforts to promote peace talks. The developments on the battlefield show that the Ukrainian crisis cannot be solved by military means, and a continuation of the conflict will only inflict more suffering on civilians and may even lead to unpredictable and irreparable situations. No matter how long the crisis lasts, it should eventually be solved by political means. For some time now, rational voices supporting a resumption of talks have grown ever stronger. Developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America have all put forward peace proposals. While their content may differ, they all reflect a strong desire to resolve the crisis politically. Both parties to the conflict should work together to meet each other halfway in order to explore solutions that accommodate each other's concerns, correspond to the realities in the region and help to bridge differences. The international community should work together to create the necessary conditions for a ceasefire and an atmosphere favourable to peace talks.

The Ukrainian crisis is a major manifestation of conflicting security concerns in Europe and presents many lessons that deserve profound reflection and thought. It has once again shown that pursuing absolute security, inciting confrontation between blocs and expanding military alliances reflect outdated ways of thinking and are dangerous practices that can only bring turmoil and anxiety to Europe and indeed the whole world. The key to an ultimate solution to the crisis is to uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable conception of security and promote the construction of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture.

Secondly, we must control the spillover effects of the crisis. The world economy's recovery in the wake of the pandemic has been sluggish. The Ukrainian crisis has interacted with other factors and has dealt a severe blow to global development, bringing fragility to global food, energy and financial security, while developing countries are facing increased difficulties

in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We should devote our limited financial resources and energy to addressing our common global challenges. The countries concerned should immediately stop their abuse of unilateral sanctions and control from a distance to ensure safe and smooth global industrial chains and supply chains. We should increase support and assistance to developing countries and take more actions that are conducive to economic growth globally. China appreciates the important role of the Black Sea Grain Initiative in stabilizing world food markets and hopes that the parties involved can resolve the issue through dialogue and consultation.

Thirdly, the greatest possible effort should be made to respond to the humanitarian crisis. Millions of people have been displaced by the protracted conflict, and much important large infrastructure has been destroyed. The parties to the conflict should strictly abide by international humanitarian law, follow the principles of necessity, distinction and proportionality, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, provide rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and spare no effort to eliminate the suffering of civilians. Women and children are the most vulnerable groups in armed conflict and should be given special care. China encourages the international community and humanitarian agencies, on the basis of abiding by the principles of humanitarian relief, to step up humanitarian assistance to people affected by the crisis.

The irresponsible transfer of cluster bombs can easily create humanitarian issues. Humanitarian concerns and legitimate military security needs should be handled in a balanced way. Prudence and restraint should be exercised in the transfer of cluster bombs.

Fourthly, nuclear safety and security must be ensured. The Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the surrounding area have seen increasing military risks, and there have again been reports of explosions heard recently in those areas, which is deeply worrisome. We once again call on the parties to the conflict to remain rational and maintain restraint as much as possible, abide by nuclear safety conventions and other international laws and steadfastly avoid causing nuclear accidents. China supports the International Atomic Energy Agency in continuing to maintain contact with all parties and playing a constructive role in ensuring the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. China has always maintained that nuclear weapons should not be used and that nuclear wars cannot be

won and should never be fought. We have continued to call for every possible effort to be made to prevent the conflict from escalating into a nuclear crisis.

On the issue of Ukraine, China's consistent position has been that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be safeguarded, while the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be complied with and the legitimate security concerns of all parties respected. All efforts, as long as they are conducive to a peaceful settlement of the crisis, deserve our support. We have maintained close communication with the parties to the conflict, other interested parties and the developing countries in general, and we have taken practical measures to actively promote peace talks, alleviate humanitarian crises and control spillover effects. In February, China released a position paper on a political solution to the Ukrainian crisis, containing 12 propositions, including respect for sovereignty, a ceasefire, an end to hostilities, the initiation of peace talks and an end to unilateral sanctions. China will continue to use that paper as a basis for working with the international community to promote a political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique would like to commend the United Kingdom's presidency and you, Mr. President, for taking the initiative to convene this meeting. We thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her insightful briefing and welcome the participation in this debate of the various Ministers and high-level dignitaries.

As we gather today, the conflict in Ukraine continues unabated, with ever-mounting casualties and growing global ramifications. From the 11 September 2001 attacks to the rise of Al-Qaida and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham and their incursion and spread into Africa, the past 20 years have had no shortage of history-changing conflicts with global implications.

To that list of doom, we must now add the conflict in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine is a twenty-first century tragedy. It is unfolding under our constant collective gaze and the scrutiny of the entire world. It is being fought both on the battlefield and in the court of a perplexed public opinion. The conflict has so far claimed thousands of lives, led to the destruction of critical socioeconomic infrastructure and caused global food shortages. It is heralding the return of nuclear brinkmanship. We are disappointed that, thus far, all

efforts to end the conflict — including an African peace initiative — have been in vain.

No other matter under the consideration of the Council in the past year and half has commanded more attention and resources. It is Mozambique's considered view that the continuation of the armed confrontation in Ukraine is not the answer in the interests of the parties and those of the world community at large. There is a danger that a failure to resolve the conflict on basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations would erode trust in the notion of our collective security and our collective responsibility to maintain international peace and security, as set out in the Charter. A world thus divided will not be able to muster the resources and political will needed to face the countless other global challenges we are confronted with today. Those challenges range from climate change to global terrorism and from global health threats to rising inequality.

Mozambique has always called on the parties to the conflict to take responsibility for the protection of civilians. They must ensure compliance with the applicable international law and international humanitarian law. Furthermore, we consider that the parties must exhaust all avenues of dialogue towards a negotiated settlement of the conflict. In that context, Mozambique wishes to reiterate its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities. We advocate a return to direct negotiations between the parties as a matter of urgency and with full respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her sobering and important briefing today.

The international community has repeatedly called for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on full support for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including through General Assembly resolutions. Malta expresses its support for the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's peace formula, which also addresses the broader global ramifications of Russia's aggression on food security, energy security, nuclear safety and the environment.

International humanitarian law and human rights law must be upheld. Russia must immediately stop its illegal and indiscriminate shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The human rights situation in the Russian-occupied territories also constitutes a matter of serious concern. As we just heard from Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, the numbers and statistics in the report by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are harrowing and extremely disturbing. Furthermore, as explained in the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry in Ukraine, Russian armed forces have carried out attacks that may constitute war crimes. Those include indiscriminate assaults on civilians and civilian infrastructure, executions, torture, unlawful imprisonment, inhumane detention, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence and the unlawful deportation and transfer of children.

Holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions and ensuring victims' rights to reparations and justice are essential principles. We are fully supportive of the ongoing International Criminal Court and International Court of Justice processes. We also welcome the setting up of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, which will coordinate efforts to collect, preserve and store evidence and the establishment of the Council of Europe's register of damage caused by the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

Less than one year into the establishment of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, more than 32 million tons of food commodities have been exported to 45 countries across three continents. It has proven itself to be a lifeline to millions, acting as a major defence against the global food insecurity accelerated by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Today Malta is deeply concerned by the decision of the Russian Federation not to renew that initiative further. It is another example of the politicization of humanitarian needs, which we also witnessed just last week with regard to the Syrian file. It is of utmost importance that the Black Sea Grain Initiative is further extended and secured to alleviate pressures on food security all over the globe. The weaponization of food is unacceptable.

I conclude by underlining the fact that the unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine continues to cause severe humanitarian and human rights violations, inflicting deep intergenerational trauma and exacerbating global crises in food and energy supplies. We once again urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease all hostilities and to unconditionally and completely withdraw all its

forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

Mr. Pérez Loose (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I appreciate the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo.

Since the beginning of Ecuador's term on the Security Council in January 2023, we have addressed the issue of the military aggression against Ukraine at least a dozen times. Those sessions have sometimes focused on the status of the aggression and prospects for peace; sometimes on the protection of civilians; sometimes on the protection of freedoms, including freedom of thought and religious beliefs; sometimes on arms transfers; and sometimes on issues such as the nuclear safety and security situation in Zaporizhzhya, or the breach of the Kakhovka dam. Some meetings, such as today's, or that of 24 February (see S/PV.9269), were scheduled by the presidency, while others were organized at the request of the United States and Albania, at the request of Ukraine, at the request of Russia, or at the request of Ecuador and France, essentially on the humanitarian situation.

In those six months, the Council has heard briefings from Secretary-General António Guterres, the Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as well as speakers from academia and civil society. The formats, approaches and agenda items on which they were called to speak, and their components, have been different. In each case Ecuador has sought to make a genuine contribution to the specific topic. But there is one recurring element that has not changed and will not as long as this violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law continues. That is the practically unanimous call of the members of the Council for an end to Russia's occupation and military aggression against Ukraine, as ordered by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022, and for paving the way for a permanent peaceful solution. In that regard, the General Assembly also made a strong statement with its adoption of resolution ES-11/6, on the principles of the Charter underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. The Council should be guided by that decision. Today I would like to underscore four more points.

First, we must abandon the mindset of one State's domination of another by military supremacy and move towards that of diplomacy, if we are to avoid a broader conflict and seek permanent peace.

Secondly, we must recognize the valuable contribution of the United Nations system and its partners on the ground, whether we are talking about OCHA, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or the IAEA, to name only a few.

Thirdly, we stress the need for the parties to fully respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, which means no attacks on humanitarian workers and their equipment. We urge the Russian Federation to allow humanitarian access in the temporarily occupied areas of Ukraine. We encourage the safe exchange of prisoners. We deplore violations of children's rights and the fact that the protracted invasion continues to claim lives.

Fourthly, we express our deep disappointment with the Russian Federation's announcement of its withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, just five days short of a year into the agreement. With 32 million metric tons of food shipped from Ukrainian ports, the initiative has been vital to millions of people, including in Afghanistan, Yemen and the Horn of Africa, and has prevented an even further deterioration of food security in the world. That is all the more reason why Russia's military aggression against Ukraine must not last another day, because it is outside international law and because of its consequences for Ukraine, Russia itself, and its global impact.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Brazil deeply regrets the continuing loss of human life, especially of innocent civilians. We express our solidarity with the families of the victims and with the millions of Ukrainian nationals who find themselves refugees or internally displaced.

Once again, we join our voice to that of other members in condemning the attacks on residential areas and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, especially hospitals and schools. We want to remind Council members that parties to conflicts have clear obligations under international law and international humanitarian law. However, we believe that merely condemning illegal actions in the course of the war will bring us

no closer to peace. We urge both sides to de-escalate the fighting and initiate discussions on parameters for a comprehensive peace agreement, taking into account Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the legitimate security concerns of all parties, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We encourage the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter. That is at the core of the many proposals for facilitating dialogue coming from different corners, such as the peace initiative of African leaders last month.

Massive transfers of highly lethal weapons to the battlefield can further undermine the prospects for a peaceful outcome. The increasing flow of weapons into the conflict will only fuel more violence and will not help to end it. The presence of arms and ammunition in large quantities tends to become a destabilizing factor in the long term, compromising the chances of lasting peace in the region and fuelling conflict everywhere. Brazil renews its appeal to the parties to give first priority to the welfare of the civilian populations on both sides of the front lines.

The conflict in Ukraine affects us all, including in regions far from the combat zone. Developing countries are particularly vulnerable to the side effects that the war is having on their economies and their food and energy security. The Black Sea Grain Initiative has made an important contribution to stabilizing international food and fertilizer prices. In recent months, the full implementation of the Istanbul agreements has become increasingly difficult, compromising the regularity of trade in agricultural products and inputs through ports in the Black Sea. In the absence of an agreement for a comprehensive and lasting peace, we urge the parties involved to spare no effort to renew what Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo described, in one of our previous meetings, as a beacon of hope. We welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General in the constant quest for a compromise between the parties in order to ensure food security and adequate nutrition for millions of people, especially in the least developed countries. That will keep up the hope that in some way the conflict will end.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for paying special attention to the situation in Ukraine. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing, as grim as it may be. And I welcome

the participation in today's meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Last month, the second Ukraine Recovery Conference took place in London. Switzerland hosted the first Conference, in July 2022. In both Lugano and London, the international community proved that it was firmly committed to supporting Ukraine in its rebuilding process. The prospect of future reconstruction is essential when in the wake of the Russian military aggression we find that thousands of people have been killed, Ukraine's infrastructure has been devastated, global food security undermined and certainties shattered. Allow me to elaborate.

First, we just heard from the Under-Secretary-General that the loss of human life in Ukraine is enormous. Just last week civilians in the Zaporizhzhya region were killed while receiving humanitarian aid. We can add to that the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure, which will be a herculean task to rebuild. The fact that the toll continues to mount is unacceptable. We reiterate our call on Russia to begin immediate de-escalation, cease all combat operations and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay. We want to remind everyone that international humanitarian law protects civilians and civilian infrastructure, which should never be targets. In that regard, I would like to express Switzerland's deep concern about the use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions in Ukraine. As a State party to the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions, Switzerland calls on all States and parties to the conflict to refrain from using such weapons. The indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force is a serious violation of international humanitarian law.

Secondly, restoring global food security is urgent. Millions of people around the world have fallen prey to food insecurity since Russia's military aggression began. The arrangements reached in Istanbul have made a difference for them. We condemn Russia's decision concerning those agreements and hope they will be renewed in the near future.

Lastly, we have seen the resurgence of a spectre that we thought we had banished — a sovereign State's war of aggression against another sovereign State with the aim of territorial expansion. But our certainties have been upended. As we face all of these challenges, we must find a firm footing, which we have in the Charter of the United Nations. We might have thought that a

flagrant violation of the Charter would undermine its authority, but on the contrary, we have seen that a vast majority of States have reaffirmed its importance. More than 140 States have condemned the aggression against Ukraine. The principles of the Charter and General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, adopted in February, form a basis on which a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be built in Ukraine. Switzerland is closely following the various commitments aimed at moving towards peace, while at the same time stressing that Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected.

Rebuilding Ukraine is urgent. But that will not be enough. We also need to provide justice for the victims and restore global food security. Hunger must never again become a weapon of war. We must therefore continue to close ranks behind international law, in particular the Charter, the shield that protects us all, so that the buildings, supply chains, peace and stability that we will eventually rebuild will rest on a solid and lasting foundation for humankind.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Since in addition to you, Mr. President, there are many other high-ranking accomplices of the terrorist regime in Kyiv in this Chamber today who bear full responsibility for its crimes, I would first of all like to consider where their actions in the context of the Ukrainian crisis have led us all.

A tragedy is deepening before our eyes, a tragedy whose underlying cause is the 2014 anti-constitutional coup d'état in Kyiv, instigated by the United States of America and its Western allies in fine colonial tradition. The motives of the people who have led the Kyiv regime since then have nothing to do with the interests of Ukraine. Despite the aspirations of a majority of Ukrainians, and in order to satisfy the West's fixation on confrontation with our country, they abandoned peace and good-neighbourliness with Russia and non-discriminatory treatment of all the nationalities represented by those living in Ukraine, and began the wholesale promotion of nationalism and whitewashing of Nazi war criminals at a breakneck pace.

In unleashing a bloody war on the Russian-speaking residents of Donbas nine years ago, the Kyiv regime deliberately and intentionally escalated the Ukrainian crisis into a military confrontation with Russia. We were compelled to come to the defence of the women, children and elderly who were being annihilated by Kyiv

before the eyes of the so-called civilized Western world after Ukraine and its Western patrons refused once and for all to comply with the Minsk agreements, which were endorsed by the Security Council. And as we now know very well, for all those years that document was a mere smokescreen behind which the Western States were preparing Ukraine for war with Russia. That is why all our Western colleagues' lamentations about Russia's so-called unprovoked aggression and war of choice persuade no one anymore. For anyone capable of unbiased analysis, it is quite obvious that we had no choice of any kind and that the time bomb that went off on 24 February 2022 had been set by the West at least as long ago as 2014 but in reality even earlier.

As we all know, in April 2022 — that is, a little more than a month after the start of the special military operation — Ukraine rejected a peace plan to resolve the crisis that its negotiators had already signed off on and that it was understood included international security guarantees for Ukraine. As we are now all well aware, that was done with the direct involvement of the United Kingdom, whose leadership at the time convinced the leader of the Kyiv regime that Ukraine would be able to defeat Russia with Western support. That was when the hot stage of NATO's proxy war on Russia, waged to the last Ukrainian standing, began in earnest, in which Ukraine was essentially transformed into a private military company hired by Washington, London and Brussels. In order to ensure that there was no way the Ukrainian authorities could back out after Russia's troops had withdrawn from Kyiv as a gesture of goodwill against the signing of the draft peace agreements in Istanbul, a disgusting and clumsily executed provocation took place in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, which many experts believe British intelligence played a direct role in organizing. We definitely intend to carry out an objective investigation to ascertain whether that was the case. But we all remember how in April of last year the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council used unscrupulous procedural manoeuvres to prevent the holding of a special meeting of the Council that we had requested in connection with the provocation, behaving in a manner unbecoming to the presidency of the Security Council and one of its permanent members while making it clear that it was an accomplice of the Kyiv regime.

The provocation in Bucha was the smokescreen needed to give the Ukrainian leadership cover in choosing a path of armed confrontation with Russia

rather than peace. At the same time, instead of making diplomatic overtures, the Western countries redoubled their efforts to provide Ukraine with aid and Western weapons. The cost of that fateful decision for Ukraine has been hundreds of thousands of young Ukrainians killed and maimed, while even today the Kyiv regime continues to throw them into the meat grinder on the eastern and southern fronts in its vain attempt to prove to its Western sponsors Ukraine's ability to win. Since then, the country has already lost several battalions and for all practical purposes all of its own weaponry.

Since there are a number of Western Ministers among us today, I would like to take this opportunity to underscore the responsibility of their Governments for the ongoing tragedy inflicted on the people of Ukraine. By systematically pushing Ukraine towards war with Russia rather than implementing the Minsk agreements, they were guided solely by their own geopolitical interest in weakening Russia. For the sake of those unattainable goals, they condoned the formation of a genuinely totalitarian dictatorship in Kyiv, which unleashed a war on its own Russian-speaking citizens in the eastern part of the country. For eight years they failed to notice that Ukrainian shells were killing peaceful women, children and elderly persons. And today they are being killed by the long-range shells and missiles that the West has supplied, because Ukrainian shells are no longer capable of reaching peaceful Donetsk and other cities and their supplies are virtually gone. In order to make civilians suffer even more, the West has decided to supply depleted uranium shells and cluster munitions to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, as well as to ignore Ukraine's continued shelling of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant and egregious terrorist attacks on Russian territory, which reflect the terrorist nature of power in Ukraine.

Today we all learned of yet another terrorist attack by the Kyiv regime on the Crimean bridge, hundreds of kilometres from the combat zone. As a result, two innocent Russians were killed, and their 14-year-old daughter was seriously injured. I have not heard any of the Western sponsors of the Kyiv regime condemn that act of terrorism. We have yet to get to the bottom of the extent to which Western, and particularly British, intelligence services were involved in the preparation and execution of the terrorist attack. Far too much evidence points to the latter.

All the facts that I have mentioned point to the fact that there is no crime that the West will not commit in order to preserve its hegemony in world affairs, and, as Mr. Borrell said, to preserve an idyllic garden at any price while everyone else can continue to live in the jungle. There is no principle that they are unwilling to trample on to achieve that end. The reason I am saying that is because their countries, or more precisely their Governments, should be under no illusion that their responsibility for what is happening in Ukraine is any less than that of the Zelenskyy regime and in fact may be more. No matter how hard they try to portray themselves as the defenders of poor, unfortunate Ukraine, their actions give them away. And the actions of the Kyiv regime, including against its own population and including the persecution of the followers of the canonical Orthodox Church, which everyone in the West is trying to ignore, leave no doubt that even when the regime starts grabbing all who disagree with the current Government's destructive, anti-popular policy or shooting them on the spot, they will have no trouble turning a blind eye to it. But we will discuss that in more detail in the meeting we have requested for 26 July.

In my statement, I would like to touch on two other issues that have to do with Ukraine. Exactly nine years ago, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was shot down in the skies above Donbas. That event had a direct impact on the crisis within Ukraine, forcing the Donbas militias that held the military initiative to come to a halt in anticipation of what at the time was assumed would be Ukraine's inevitable condemnation of an act of terrorism.

It is well known that since that disaster, Russia has consistently advocated for a comprehensive, thorough, unbiased and depoliticized investigation into the causes of the disaster, based on facts and irrefutable evidence. We were among the initiators of resolution 2166 (2014), which expressed the importance of a full, thorough and independent international investigation. However, no such investigation has been conducted to date, and the circumstances of the incident have not been reliably established. Neither the technical investigation by the Dutch Safety Board nor the criminal investigation by the Joint Investigation Team met the criteria set out in resolution 2166 (2014). Their real purpose was not to establish the truth but to tailor the relevant evidence to fit the narrative of Russia's involvement in the tragedy. Essentially, the MH-17 disaster became nothing less than a key element in a false and unsubstantiated

anti-Russian campaign that was later supplemented by the poisonings of the Skripals and Navalny, as well as the provocation in Bucha that I mentioned earlier today. As we know, the more horrible the lie, the easier it is to believe it, and that principle has been our Western opponents' top priority in all those cases.

In the case of Flight MH-17, Russia provided the investigation with a colossal amount of information that was vital to establishing the true causes of the crash. However, neither the investigation nor the District Court of The Hague took it into account. They considered the information of Ukraine's intelligence services to be more reliable, information that consisted of data from dubious sources from social networks, photographs and video materials that had clearly been edited. Not a single question was asked of Ukraine, which refused to provide radar data or the recorded communications of ground-based flight-tracking services and has never been able to explain where the Ukrainian air-traffic controllers working that day, who could have shed light on the circumstances of the tragedy, disappeared to. In the time that has passed since the disaster, the question of Kyiv's responsibility for failing to close the airspace above the combat zone where the Armed Forces of Ukraine's air defence equipment, including Buk surface-to-air missile systems, was deployed, has not been properly addressed. Some clarity could have been provided by the United States satellite images that were taken on the day of the crash. However, Washington categorically denied the judges' requests to disclose that data or to at least allow us to familiarize ourselves with it under special conditions.

Unfortunately, the approach of the Netherlands and its accomplices, based on promoting a political command that had already been decided on, has prevented the possibility of establishing the true perpetrators of the tragedy of Flight MH-17. In that regard, we can only sympathize with the families and friends of the victims, who have been deliberately deprived of their right to the truth. And it is very telling that not a single Western colleague who spoke before me in the meeting reminded us today of the tragedy. They do not need the facts or the truth about it, because it has already served its purpose in the process of Russia's defamation.

Before I conclude, here is the last subject I would like to touch on today. Today, through the Russian Embassies in Ankara, Minsk and London, as well as the Consulate General in Istanbul, we circulated official notes on the decision of the Russian Government to terminate

the Black Sea Grain Initiative as of 18 July. Similarly, we notified the Secretary-General and the Head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, who was directly responsible for its implementation. I see no point right now in going into the details of how António Guterres' so-called Istanbul package, of which the Russia-United Nations memorandum of understanding was and still is an integral part, was actually implemented. We have already done that many times, including here in the Security Council Chamber. We renewed the Black Sea Grain Initiative more than once after receiving what turned out to be repeated empty promises from the Secretariat. However, as the President of Russia has said, the grain deal has been a one-sided game for the entire past year.

In a situation where exports of feed corn and wheat from Ukraine to high- and above-average-income countries remained stable — they received 90 per cent and 60 per cent of those commodities, respectively — the least developed countries received not even 3 per cent of them. The World Food Programme's humanitarian operations accounted for even less, only 2.2 per cent of wheat exports. Since those facts are too unflattering and speak for themselves, the Black Sea Grain Initiative was simply reformatted from a humanitarian to a commercial one without much fanfare.

Against that backdrop, the problems facing Russian economic operators have remained unresolved. When we announced in March that we had agreed to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative for 60 days, until 18 July, we stated explicitly that we would take a decision on further steps only after reviewing the progress made in addressing a number of systemic challenges, which we have spoken about repeatedly and that I will not list again now. At the same time, we do pay tribute to the efforts of the Secretary-General and his team, who tried until the last minute to persuade Western countries to fulfil their obligations to Russia under the Russia-United Nations memorandum. However, that was all smoke and mirrors in the end.

Since there has been — and there is still — no progress, and since the Kyiv regime does not hesitate to use the cover of an open maritime humanitarian corridor to commit provocations and attacks against Russian civilian and military objects, we decided to withdraw from the deal, about which we have today officially informed the Turkish and Ukrainian sides, as well as the Secretariat. That means that we are revoking the guarantees of safe navigation, closing the maritime

humanitarian corridor, restoring the status of the north-western Black Sea as a temporarily dangerous area and disbanding the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul.

In that regard, without Russia's participation, the Black Sea Grain Initiative will cease to operate as of 18 July. Russia will be willing to consider its restoration only when it receives concrete results rather than promises and assurances from Western capitals. Apparently, now is the time for Kyiv's European allies to demonstrate the solidarity they have promised. Now they can export Ukrainian food through land corridors. For our part, despite all the obstacles, we undertake to fully deliver on our contractual obligations to supply Russian grain to our customers and to continue to help those in need in developing countries.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I welcome your participation in this meeting, Mr. President, as well as the presence of the other high-level participants in our discussions today. I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

As the months go by, the war in Ukraine is becoming the most-discussed issue within the Security Council, whether in terms of security and humanitarian issues or nuclear risks. But the violence continues, and the war is still challenging international peace and stability and contributing to food insecurity in many parts of the world. The offensives and counter-offensives on both sides have led to fears of an escalation of violence, greater loss of life and property and an even greater displacement of people, diminishing the prospects for negotiations for a lasting peace. The damage that has been done in 17 months is immense and extremely alarming. The latest reports of the Secretary-General note hundreds of attacks on hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure and a rapid increase in the numbers of non-military victims, particularly children.

The Council must strive to find a peaceful solution in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We call on countries with any influence on the main parties to take action so that a real dialogue can be initiated, with a view to reaching a lasting peace agreement. In that regard, my country encourages the Secretary-General to continue to use his good offices to promote the start of talks between all the parties. It is essential for the international community to support and coordinate the various diplomatic initiatives in order to promote a negotiated settlement.

Today, 17 July 2023, we see the end of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, a vital agreement for many countries, and we remain hopeful that a solution will be found to enable this important initiative to be renewed as soon as possible.

The permanent threat posed by the risk of nuclearization of this war is also a potential danger that must be avoided. My country reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and opposes any politicization, intimidation or trivialization of the nuclear issue. Nuclear power plants are civilian infrastructure protected by international humanitarian law. They must not be used for military purposes.

The humanitarian situation is taking on increasingly critical proportions. As we have said, we reiterate the need for unhindered access to humanitarian aid for the most vulnerable populations, which are often those living in areas where security risks are highest.

In conclusion, Gabon reiterates its call for de-escalation and good-faith negotiations to put an end to the conflict.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Kuleba (Ukraine): I thank the United Kingdom presidency of the Security Council for convening today's meeting. My gratitude also goes to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Today marks nine years since Russia shot down civilian airliner Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 over Ukraine, killing all 298 people on board. Ukraine mourns the victims of this crime.

The case of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 is also a prime example of Russian lies and abuse of its illegal presence at the Security Council. Instead of admitting guilt and cooperating with the investigation, Russia chose to promote conspiracy theories in order to confuse the public. In 2015, Russia shamelessly used its Security Council veto to prevent the establishment of a relevant international tribunal, despite its own denial of responsibility (see S/PV.7498). The Dutch trial finally put an end to all the Russian nonsense. The court determined that Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was hit by a Russian Buk missile fired by armed groups controlled by Moscow and that the missile system was returned to Russia after the strike. The bottom

line is that no number of lies can change the truth and pervert justice.

In every situation, the Russian strategy is to kill, lie and deny. Our strategy should be the opposite: strength, truth and accountability. Today we are facing two more situations of this kind. The first was another set of lies and denials we have heard in this room. The second is Russia's killing of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Russia is blackmailing the world. This blackmail affects the lives of millions of Ukrainians and tens of millions more around the world, primarily in Africa and Asia, who face the threat of rising food prices and hunger. Ukraine makes no demands in relation to the deal. We simply wanted to continue operating and expand the Initiative's capacity. We want our grain to be freely exported and reach foreign customers all around the world.

At the same time, Russia has been systemically obstructing the Initiative's normal functioning. Russia deliberately decreased the number of inspections at the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, limiting the capacity to one or two vessels per day. On 29 April, Russia fully blocked the functioning of Ukraine's Pivdennyi seaport. The last grain vessel departed the port of Odesa on 16 July. As of now, Russia has fully blocked the functioning of the Black Sea Grain Initiative even without announcing its termination.

Whatever Russia is saying to excuse its behaviour, it should be noted that, while blocking our ports, Moscow is increasing exports of its own grain, including that which was stolen from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Last year, when the Initiative was introduced, grain prices around the world immediately dropped. Together with other factors, it had a positive long-term effect. In June 2023, prices were 23 per cent lower than they were in March 2022, when Russia started the illegal blockade of our seaports. The immediate outcome of Russia pulling out of the deal now will be that prices will go up again, hurting those most vulnerable, primarily in Asia and Africa. Russia must stop playing hunger games with people around the world.

I call on all States Members of the United Nations to firmly demand that Russia resume its participation in the deal in good faith and stop its hunger games. Russia must keep politics out of global food security.

I must also draw the attention of the Council to another threat that Russia poses. Since Russia occupied the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in March 2022, Ukraine and neighbouring nations have been living in fear of a nuclear incident. Russia has violated all seven nuclear safety and security pillars of the International Atomic Energy Agency by stationing its military at the plant and turning it into a military base. Despite international pressure, Russia refuses to withdraw from the plant. Today Russia remains in full control and bears full responsibility for the situation there. Russia is also spreading ridiculous conspiracy theories about Ukraine allegedly planning an attack on the plant.

Whether it is the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, or any other major Russian crime, the Russians' strategy remains the same: kill, lie and deny. I take this opportunity to say it again officially and unequivocally. Ukraine has never had and cannot have any intention of causing any incidents at our own nuclear power plants in our own country. The only force that has the capacity and the motives to cause any such incident is Russia. By acting together and calling out liars now, we can prevent them from executing their malicious plans.

I want to believe that the era of Russian crimes, lies and denials is coming to an end. Russia is losing its illegal war against Ukraine. Putin's regime is getting weaker by the day, and the recent Wagner mutiny has demonstrated that fact not only to the whole world, but also to the Russians themselves. Every defeat on the Russian battlefield brings Putin's regime closer to realizing the futility of aggression. We should all work together to bring this realization closer, for when the Kremlin's chief liar realizes that no one believes his lies any longer, he will be forced to call a halt to the war.

The Security Council has been unable to take concrete actions in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter for more than 500 days of Russia's full-scale invasion, as well as for more than nine years of its aggression, and that applies not only to the case of Ukraine but to other conflicts raging in the world. The root problem is well known, and its name can be found on the fourth plate to the right of the presidency. Despite the fact that this plate was placed on the table more than three decades ago, the United Nations Charter still says nothing about the legitimacy of its presence in this Chamber. We firmly believe that the future reform of the Security Council needs to include an essential component, the decision to deprive

Russia of its illegally obtained status as a permanent member and the veto right that comes with it. The Security Council and the entire world will become a much healthier place once Russia is out of the Council.

While some international organizations are paralysed by fear of poisonous Russian influence, it is a Ukrainian soldier who assumes responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world today. A Ukrainian soldier restores peace and security with each step forward and each liberated settlement in Ukraine, basically putting into action what the Security Council is supposed to maintain and enforce.

That comes at a steep cost. But there is no other choice. Please honour the sacrifice and keep assisting us in bringing peace closer. Ukrainians will always be grateful for the support of the Security Council, and our victory will also be its victory against the scourge of aggression in the world.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for giving the neighbouring countries the chance to take the floor in this debate as well.

I am representing a neighbouring country of Ukraine, a country which has been living in the shadow of the war for more than 500 days, a war with serious and direct impacts and consequences on our country. The Hungarian people have already been paying a high price for this war, even though they bear no responsibility for it. I am representing a nation whose citizens are among the casualties of this war, given the fact that there is a significant Hungarian community living in Ukraine, around 150,000 members of which, as Ukrainian citizens, are being mobilized to join the army in Ukraine. And a lot of them, unfortunately, have already died.

As a representative of a neighbouring country and a nation whose citizens are dying in this war, I would like to continue to argue in favour of creating peace as soon as possible. Although I understand that is not totally in line with the mainstream positions, we continue to do so even if we are criticized and attacked for our position. And as a neighbouring country and as a representative of a nation whose citizens are dying in this war, we still believe that the solution is not on the battlefield, but around the negotiating table.

We hear very often that the circumstances and the conditions are not conducive to launching negotiations to find a diplomatic solution. Allow me to express a different opinion. We believe that the conditions to launch negotiations to reach a diplomatic solution are getting worse and worse every day. The longer this war goes on, the more weapons will be present in our neighbourhood, the more people will die and the devastation and destruction in our neighbourhood will be more and more severe. So, we wish that the international community would bring more peace than weapons to our neighbourhood. And we all know that, if we cut off the channels of communication, then we will literally give up any hope for peace. Therefore, we really appreciate and respect the efforts to make peace in our neighbourhood and the missions that are launched with that objective.

We would like to express our respect to the Holy See, the President of Türkiye and the African countries, which although they are located far away from the war, they are confronted with very serious challenges as an impact of the war as well.

I also would like to highlight the importance of the safe supply of food all around the world, especially in fragile regions. Shortages of food can very easily cause serious security-related challenges, which at first might be local, but then they spread around the world and become global as well. They can end up provoking further migratory waves, which will further increase the global threat of terror. We all see that we cannot cope with one security-related challenge, so how can we cope with more?

Unfortunately, if one takes into consideration the past 80 years, it is not an exaggeration to say that global security is currently in the worst shape it is has ever been. There are open and shameless references to nuclear capabilities, and the chance of an outbreak of the Third World War is more imminent than ever before.

We also see a regrettable long-term consequence that the world is making huge efforts to be divided into blocs again. And we Central Europeans have very bad historic experiences in that regard. No one would like to hear that, and based on history, it might be uncomfortable for many to hear that. But whenever there was a conflict between East and West, we Central Europeans were always left alone, and we always lost on those occasions.

So, when we argue in favour of a civilized cooperation between the East and the West by which we might have some small chance for the future, we do it because that is in our national interest. And the longer this war takes, the chances of achieving that will be much smaller.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Mr. Rau (Poland): I would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening this meeting, which is of even more importance in the light of the most recent developments concerning the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Russia's unilateral withdrawal from the deal generally means one thing: Russia decided to fan the flames of its imperial war against Ukraine with rekindled economic aggression against the most needy and vulnerable State and societies of the global South. We call on the parties remaining in the initiative to fulfil their commitments which are so essential to the global food market.

The Ukrainian people have been fighting Russia's full-fledged aggression for more than 500 days now. That blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations by a Security Council permanent member has been the most overwhelming threat to world peace and security since the Cold War because of its far-reaching and long-lasting consequences.

Let me point to three major concerns that this aggression causes for the whole international community.

First, the Russian invasion conclusively demonstrates the complex and interlocking nature of threats to international security. We clearly see that this war transcends the Ukrainian and Russian borders, and today's developments, which I already mentioned, regarding the Black Sea Grain Initiative are the most urgent and direct reminder of that. We must also not forget about the constant undermining of the security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which continues to pose enormous potential risks and unpredictable consequences to all of us. Also, the recent destruction of the dam in Nova Kakhovka by Russia brought significant costs to the whole ecosystem of and around the Black Sea and to all its coastal States. Moreover, we have addressed the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in our debates on children in armed conflict, sexual violence in conflict, cybersecurity and the destruction of cultural heritage. All those aspects

require constant attention and the determination of the Security Council, as the institution responsible for world peace and security.

Secondly, the international law-abiding community cannot tolerate impunity. The perpetrators of international crimes must be held accountable. Each and every aggressor must reckon with legal consequences. Otherwise, they will feel encouraged to continue on the same path. We view accountability as a prerequisite to ensuring lasting peace in the future.

Poland supports the existing institutions, including the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the European Court of Human Rights. We are also engaged practically in the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of Russian aggression. We are pleased that a recent meeting of the proposed tribunal's core group took place in Poland. We equally support efforts to establish an international mechanism for reparations for damage caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We also joined the Enlarged Partial Agreement on the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine, which was adopted at the recent Council of Europe Summit, in Reykjavík.

Finally, let us remember that every peace effort in Ukraine must propose only rightful solutions, as an unjust peace or a frozen conflict would only prolong instability and attract further aggression. Any sustainable peace solution must be based on the United Nations Charter and its fundamental principle of territorial integrity. The international community must therefore remain steadfast in defending the United Nations Charter. We must continue to put pressure on the aggressor and support the victim in exercising its right of self-defence. The world must keep supporting the just cause of Ukraine. We strongly appeal to the Security Council members and to the entire United Nations family to show determination in defending the fundamental principles of the international order.

The President: I now give the floor to the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Ms. Baerbock (Germany): “Mum, come and get me.” Those were the words that Natálja Schornyk had been desperately waiting for. Weeks earlier, Russian troops had arrived at a school in Kupyansk, near Kharkiv, in Ukraine — the school that Natálja's 15-year-old son, Artém, went to every day, like a normal schoolboy. They took Artém and a dozen of his schoolmates away.

Natálja told reporters that, for weeks, she had no idea where he was. She did not know if he was still alive. Then, at last, Artém was able to contact her. “Mum, come and get me.” That is what he told his mother on the phone. It took Natálja months to find her son and to get him back. She managed to travel to the place in Russian-occupied Ukraine where he was being held and took him home, finally, back into her arms. The story of Artém and Natálja is just one of many.

Since the start of Russia's war of aggression, Russian authorities have transferred and deported thousands of Ukrainian children to Russian-occupied territory and to Russia itself. Those who have been able to return, like Artém, describe shocking experiences — how they were forced to speak Russian and to sing the Russian national anthem in Russian children's homes, how their names and ages were changed in order to erase their identities so that their parents could never find them again, how they were threatened with being adopted by Russian families. Since I learned about those crimes, I have not been able to stop imagining how I would feel if these children were my own two little daughters. And I know that my colleagues from Africa, Asia and Latin America feel the same.

During the recent visit to Ukraine and Russia by a delegation of African Heads of State and Government, the participants made it very clear that, with regard to these children, humanity must come first. So let us work on that issue, especially as I am aware that we here in the Chamber are not all on the same page about every aspect of this war. But humanity is what unites us. All of us have experienced the tragedy of war in our regions. But when an aggressor does not even stop at children, tragedy turns into horrendous inhumanity. Recognizing that, the African colleagues proposed the return of the deported children as a first confidence-building measure. I want to wholeheartedly echo their proposal: I would like to invite everyone gathered here to join forces with international organizations, Ukrainian authorities and non-governmental organizations to investigate Russia's deportations and together find ways to bring the children back home. Despite all our differences, one conviction should be beyond debate: The deported children belong with their parents. They need to be returned home to Ukraine now.

I would like to say to Russia that it can fool itself, but it cannot fool the world. In the past 500 days, the world has been to Bucha, Irpin and Kharkiv. The world has seen Russian atrocities. The world has spoken to the

mothers, like Natálja, whose children Russia has taken. The horror of the deported Ukrainian children is the tip of the iceberg of the unspeakable suffering that Russia's war has brought to so many children around the world. By bombing roads, blocking ports and laying mines in grain fields in Ukraine, Russia has been adding fuel to the fire of a global food crisis. As a result, families on every continent struggle to make ends meet, and children go to bed hungry every night.

And now, with its announcement that it will withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Moscow is threatening even more people and more children with starvation. By helping to bring down global food prices, the Initiative has been a lifeline for the weakest and most vulnerable around the world. As the Secretary-General pointed out, after Russia pulled out of the Initiative, we immediately saw wheat prices jump this morning. This is about humanity. It is about us.

I therefore call on Russia to stop using hunger as a weapon, stop abducting children and stop its illegal war on Ukraine — in the name of humanity.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Luxembourg.

Mr. Asselborn (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like, Mr. President, to thank your country, the United Kingdom, for organizing this ministerial meeting, during its presidency, on the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the prospects for a just and lasting peace. I welcome the participation of my Ukrainian colleague and friend, Dmytro Kuleba.

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the Benelux countries — Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and my own country, Luxembourg. We support the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Nine years ago today, on 17 July 2014, Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 was shot down by a Russian missile fired from an agricultural field in eastern Ukraine, a territory that was then under the effective control of the Russian Federation. As a result, 298 people of 17 different nationalities lost their lives, including Dutch and Belgian nationals and a family living in Luxembourg. We reiterate the demand contained in Security Council resolution 2166 (2014) that those responsible for that incident be held to account and that all States cooperate fully with efforts to establish

accountability. We denounce the disinformation spread by Russia yet again at this meeting.

We are deeply shocked by the devastating impact of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. A growing number of testimonies and reports describe unbearably brutal attacks by the Russian armed forces against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, the sieges of cities in Ukraine, trafficking in persons, and rape and other forms of sexual violence targeting women and children in particular. We recall the need to implement Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilian infrastructure, including resolution 2601 (2021), which called for measures to protect schools from attack. For the first time, the armed forces and affiliated armed groups of Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, have been listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2023/363), and indiscriminate attacks on the ground continue.

Russia's aggression is aimed at destroying Ukraine's economy. It also has an impact on food security around the world. In that context, we strongly welcome the Black Sea Grain Initiative promoted by the Secretary-General. We call for its full implementation and long-term extension and deeply regret Russia's decision to suspend its participation.

Criminal accountability is essential to guarantee and maintain international peace and security. Peace and justice go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing. The fight against impunity for atrocities committed in Ukraine is also important to deter the commission of crimes in the future, in Ukraine and in other countries.

I would also like to reaffirm our commitment to the work on accountability for the crime of aggression. We welcome the establishment of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, which has just begun its activities in The Hague. We fully support efforts to establish a tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression. Finally, we support the register of damage for Ukraine established by the Council of Europe.

Allow me to give a one-sentence response to my colleague from Hungary. Hungary is not being criticized for arguing in favour of peace, but rather for its frequent stances that seek to weaken solidarity around the use of sanctions that would at the very least limit the financial means to continue the war.

The Benelux countries support the peace formula presented by President Zelenskyy. The peace plan is credible and compatible with the Charter of the United Nations and with the aspirations of Ukrainians. The adoption on 23 February, by a large majority of 141 votes, of the General Assembly resolution on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations underpinning a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine (resolution ES-11/6) demonstrated the international community's support for that peace formula. We support efforts to achieve a peace in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the full solidarity of the Benelux countries with the Ukrainian Government and people. Together with our European partners, we will continue to support Ukraine on the basis of our shared values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights.

The President: I now the Federal Minister for the European Union and Constitution at the Federal Chancellery of Austria.

Ms. Edtstadler (Austria): More than 500 days have passed since Russia launched an unprovoked and unjustifiable war of aggression against its neighbour, Ukraine. That blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and ongoing aggression and occupation of Ukrainian territory by a permanent member of the Council must not go unaddressed. As members of the international community, we cannot stand idly by while the fundamental principles of our shared legal and security order are under threat. An attack against one member of the Organization is an attack against all of us, as implied by the Charter and our system of collective security.

In recent decades, significant progress has been made in advancing international law and building guardrails aimed at safeguarding the rule of law. However, faced with such a flagrant breach of the Charter, we have no choice but to reiterate that respect for international law is not an option — it is an obligation. We must not accept living in a world where the law of the powerful overrides the rule of law. It is our collective responsibility to work towards a future where might does not make right. Blatant violations

of international law must be met with resolute consequences by the international community.

The United Nations was created out of the ashes of the Second World War and the horrors of the Holocaust, to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, as the Charter states. Yet, the silence of the Council — the most powerful body within the Organization — in the face of the Russian aggression, is a fundamental concern. We should never get used to the reality of the war in Ukraine. Indeed, we should never get accustomed to any war around the world. We urgently need a global system capable of responding to such threats, a Security Council that is effective, representative, reflective of today's world and equipped to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The war has already led to terrible consequences for the civilian population of Ukraine. Thousands of civilian lives have been lost. Nearly one third of Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes. I witnessed the destruction and horrors of this war myself during my visit to Ukraine last November. I myself had to take shelter from the missiles falling on Kyiv, and I saw the destroyed residential buildings, where so many people lost their lives. Austria vehemently condemns the deliberate attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure. The humanitarian consequences, such as the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, cannot be overstated. Many of those acts constitute war crimes, and some, as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has found, may even amount to crimes against humanity. Recognizing that impunity fuels the cycle of atrocities, the perpetrators must — and they will — be held accountable. In that regard, my country fully supports all efforts to do so, including by the International Criminal Court.

The repercussions of the war extend far beyond Ukraine. They are felt all around the globe. Let me be clear: the impact on food and energy prices around the world are a direct consequence of the Russian aggression. We welcome the leadership of the Secretary-General and President Erdoğan of Türkiye in facilitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which reminds us that diplomacy and pragmatism have an important role to play, even in such challenging times. We urge Russia to reconsider its decision announced today and to enable the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The repeated implicit, but unmistakable, nuclear threats are unacceptable. The nuclear risks are higher today than they have been in decades, even higher than at the peak of the cold war. Nuclear weapons hold the potential for catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences, underscoring the urgent need for progress in nuclear disarmament and a departure from the nuclear deterrence paradigm. The international community must ensure that the taboo against any use of nuclear weapons is safeguarded and that any threat or use remains inadmissible. It is essential that the International Atomic Energy Agency secure nuclear energy facilities that have been targeted in the war. We appreciate Director General Grossi's proposals in that regard and express gratitude for the dedicated work of the teams on the ground.

This war of aggression must end. I call on the Russian Federation to immediately and without any conditions withdraw its forces from all of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. I call on all of us to not grow numb to the horrible consequences of the war, the suffering of civilians, the constant threat of a nuclear catastrophe or the economic repercussions felt around the world. Instead, let us use our collective strength to bring an end to the war and secure a just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

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

Ms. Balčytytė (Lithuania): Please let me to start with a word of appreciation to the United Kingdom presidency for granting our request to deliver this statement on behalf of the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I appreciate the continued engagement of the United Nations in documenting and reporting the crimes committed during Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine, which has now spanned more than 500 days, and the substantial efforts to alleviate global consequences of that brutal war of aggression.

As some speakers today have already stated, that war of aggression started long before a year and a half ago. On this date nine years ago, as we all know, Russia shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, killing 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board. We support all efforts to hold Russia and all those responsible to account for that brutal crime.

Although we acknowledge the efforts of our global partners in reaching peace in Ukraine, Russia cynically continues its unprovoked, full-scale war and shows no signs of ending it. Russia manipulates internationally agreed rules and facts and violates the Charter of the United Nations and other international agreements, abusing international structures, weaponizing disinformation and using brutal force. All of those actions set a precedent for the future. If Russia's actions are ignored and legitimized this time, the future of many countries in the world that have built peace, prosperity and sovereignty thanks to the rules-based world order will be put at risk.

We therefore believe that in order to ensure comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, certain prerequisites are essential. I will focus on some of them today.

First, the Ukrainian peace formula is the guideline we should follow in seeking just and sustainable peace. It gathered strong support in the General Assembly, and any attempts to adapt or simplify it would risk washing out its essence and pandering to Russia's manipulation. Ukraine must have the final say on peace on its own soil.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as countries bordering Russia, will continue our firm stance against appeals to yield to Russia's demands. We have all witnessed Russia's blackmail in relation to the Black Sea Grain Initiative, based on the manipulation of facts regarding its grain and fertilizer exports. If Russia were indeed prioritizing global food security, as it claims, it would have stopped inventing obstacles to the work of the Joint Coordination Centre and the continuation of the initiative itself. We therefore strongly condemn Russia for unilaterally abandoning the Black Sea Grain Initiative and choosing to further aggravate the global food security crisis.

Secondly, a just and lasting peace must be in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. Russia must stop its war and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops and equipment from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

As the United Nations community, we must ensure the protection of the core principles of our cooperation and condemn all those who are actively facilitating Russia's war. Belarus is participating

in the war by providing military equipment and training and by allowing its territory to be used for the offensive. Iran is supporting Russia with military equipment, undermining global sanctions. Both must end their assistance to Russia's aggression and return to compliance with international law. Belarus has, in fact, become a host for Russian nuclear weapons and elements of the criminal — or, according to Lithuania's position, terrorist — Wagner Group, which is responsible for brutal human rights violations not only in Ukraine, but also in Mali, the Central African Republic and elsewhere in Africa, where they operate under the guise of so-called security providers.

Thirdly, it is essential to recognize that Russia bears sole responsibility for inflicting immense suffering upon the Ukrainian population. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin in relation to the forced deportation of Ukrainian children. Those are only the first steps to bring the perpetrators to justice. Russia must also be held accountable for numerous war crimes, including the deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure and causing environmental disasters. There should be no hesitation in attributing those crimes. Regarding the crime of aggression, we all need to seek the establishment of a special international tribunal, following Ukraine's lead.

Together, we possess the capability and determination to assist Ukraine in the reconstruction of its schools, hospitals and roads. We have already started to do so without delay. However, it will take decades for Ukraine and its people to recover from the suffering that the war has inflicted.

There is no doubt that Ukraine has the inherent right to self-defence against the Russian aggression. We underline the decisions by the leaders of the European Union and NATO to offer robust financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as necessary. We also welcome the decision adopted at the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Vilnius last week with regard to strengthening NATO's eastern flank capabilities.

Let me reiterate the strong condemnation by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of Russia's war against Ukraine and express our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The use of aggression as an instrument in international

relations must be condemned and eliminated. Those responsible for Russia's war and use of military force against Ukraine must be brought to justice. We must unite in our efforts in pursuit of the supremacy of international law.

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

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

The Nordic countries would like to express our grave concern over the grim humanitarian consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the war's devastating global implications in areas already affected by humanitarian crises and food insecurity, such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, Yemen and beyond. All areas demand our immediate attention and concerted efforts.

Today the Nordics would like to share three messages on the following: first, the grave humanitarian situation in Ukraine; secondly, the global implications of Russia's aggression and the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative; and thirdly, our support for all meaningful initiatives towards a just peace.

On 9 July, several civilian casualties were recorded in yet another Russian attack on a humanitarian aid distribution site in the front-line town of Orikhiv. Not far from there, Russia's illegal military seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant continues to pose devastating and widespread risks in an area already severely affected by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam.

We strongly condemn Russia's indiscriminate warfare and intentional attacks on civilians, as well as Iran's provision of drones to Russia in violation of resolution 2231 (2015). All those responsible must be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights against Ukraine's civilian population, including the forcible transfer and deportation of children and conflict-related sexual violence. We also call on Russia to ensure full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to all areas under its temporary military control, as well as to persons detained by Russia or forcibly transferred by Russia, including children.

Secondly, we are concerned about the future of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The Initiative has helped

avoid a further deterioration of the global food crisis, amplified by Russia's war on Ukraine. We welcome the active engagement by the Secretary-General and Türkiye in facilitating the Initiative.

Since the launch of the Initiative, which has safely exported more than 32 million tons of grain and food stuffs, we have seen a lowering of global food prices. Fifty-six per cent of the exports have gone directly to developing countries. In May, exports dropped, however, to the lowest volume since the Initiative began, largely owing to Russian obstructions in the inspection and registration of shipping vessels.

Let us not forget that the Black Sea Grain Initiative would not have been needed had it not been for the Russian aggression, and Russia obviously bears a heavy responsibility for ensuring its continuation and smooth operation. We therefore deeply deplore today's news that Russia has suspended the Initiative and urge Russia to ensure a long-term rollover and full implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, in line with the Istanbul agreement, and to urgently lift all impediments that delay the operations of the Initiative.

The Nordics support all meaningful efforts to bring an end to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Such efforts must include Russia's complete and unconditional withdrawal of its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine, and respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We stand ready to support Ukraine's initiative for a just peace and all initiatives seeking to advance peace, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions. And we welcome the Group of Seven joint declaration of support for Ukraine and the intent to build on that framework to ensure Ukraine's long-term security.

In closing, the Nordics reaffirm their commitment to the United Nations founding principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes and to the security and well-being of the people in Ukraine and everywhere. Our resolve is unwavering for as long as it takes.

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

Mr. Skoog: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the potential candidate country

Georgia, and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this brief statement.

I want to thank the presidency of the Council for the opportunity to say a few words to the Council. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and, through her, the United Nations system for its continued support to the people of Ukraine under very difficult circumstances. I acknowledge the presence of Minister Kuleba at today's meeting.

We want to reiterate our resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression, which constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We also condemn the continued military support for Russia's war of aggression, provided by Iran and Belarus. The EU is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders, and its inherent right of self-defence.

Allow me to emphasize three points in my intervention — the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, the importance of addressing the global consequences of Russia's aggression and the need to hold Russia and its leadership to account.

The people of Ukraine, the international community and almost all members of the Security Council have repeatedly expressed their desire for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the United Nations Charter, the resolutions of the General Assembly and international law. We welcome all international efforts to that effect, including the recent visit by African leaders. The EU will sustain support to Ukraine and continue its work to ensure the widest possible international support for the key principles and objectives of Ukraine's peace formula. I underline what so many others have said today: that any initiative for sustainable peace in Ukraine must be based on full respect for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders.

With regard to the global consequences, we condemn Russia's decision to unilaterally terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We thank the United Nations, the Secretary-General and all involved for their efforts in attempting to reach an agreement. The Initiative's suspension creates widespread uncertainty in global markets and exacerbates the dire situation of food-importing countries, hurting the poorest and most vulnerable the most.

Russia continues to weaponize food and undermine global food security. At a time when 258 million people face hunger, that is deeply irresponsible. While continuing to commit its flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, Russia now, piece by piece, undermines the multilateral system, blocking Security Council action for humanitarian assistance to Syria and now preventing the extension, under United Nations auspices, of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Since its signing in Istanbul last year, the Initiative has eased pressure on global food prices by facilitating the export of more than 32 million metric tons of food stuffs. Contrary to what the Russia representative said earlier, according to the United Nations, more than half of exports went to developing countries and the proportion of wheat exported to the least-developed countries, including in sub-Saharan Africa, remained largely unchanged from pre-war levels. Furthermore, Ukraine is one of the main suppliers of the World Food Programme, which, without the Initiative, will now have to source its humanitarian assistance elsewhere, at a higher cost.

The EU spared no effort to support the United Nations in reaching a deal and finding a compromise, allowing for the renewal. We therefore urge Russia to reconsider its decision and resume the implementation of the Initiative. Let us not forget that the Black Sea Grain Initiative would not have been necessary if Russia had not started the full-scale war against Ukraine and blocked Ukrainian Black Sea ports.

In addition to the Grain Initiative, the EU solidarity lanes remain instrumental in bolstering global food security. They have allowed the export of more than 38 million tons of Ukraine's food and agricultural

goods. The EU and its member States remain committed to addressing the needs of countries vulnerable to food insecurity. That is why we are providing €18 billion to address food security needs globally, focusing on the most vulnerable regions. We reiterate our call on all countries to step up their assistance, in line with the humanitarian response plan of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and appeal for aid this year.

Finally, with regard to accountability, we remain firmly committed to ensuring that Russia is held fully accountable for its war of aggression against Ukraine. The International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine has started its support operations in The Hague. The work to establish a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine will continue.

We welcome the adoption of the Ljubljana-The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of the Crime of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes and call on all countries to become parties to the Convention as soon as possible. We also welcome the establishment of the Council of Europe's register of damage caused by the aggression and calls for work to continue, in line with the resolution of the General Assembly (resolution ES-11/5).

We need a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. We will continue to provide strong financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support to Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.