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New York

President: Mr. Montalvo Sosa/Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Spasse
Brazil	Mr. Sénéchal de Goffredo Junior
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Ms. Koumby Missambo
Ghana	Mrs. Hackman
Japan	Mr. Iriya
Malta	Ms. Gatt
Mozambique	Mr. Kumanga
Russian Federation.	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates	Ms. Almenhali
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
United States of America.	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; and Ms. Mary Ann Wright, civil society representative.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Ebo.

Mr. Ebo: I am providing this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

Since the previous briefing to the Security Council on this topic, on 27 October (see S/PV.9457), the provision of military assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine has continued in the context of the full-scale invasion of that country, launched by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022 in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Over the past months, reported transfers of arms and ammunition to Ukrainian forces have continued. Information from Governments about their transfers of weapons systems and ammunition is available through open sources. Those transfers have reportedly included heavy conventional weapons — such as battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters, large-calibre artillery systems, missile systems and uncrewed combat aerial vehicles, as well as remotely operated munitions, small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We also take note of reports related to the transfer of depleted-uranium tank ammunition to Ukrainian forces. There have also been reports of States transferring, or planning to transfer, weapons such as uncrewed aerial vehicles and ammunition to Russian armed forces, including for possible use in Ukraine. As has been stressed by the High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs,

any transfer of weapons must take place within the applicable international legal framework, including relevant Security Council resolutions.

Reports related to the use of anti-personnel landmines and the use and transfer of cluster munitions in Ukraine are deeply concerning. I would like to strongly reiterate my call for an immediate end to the use of those horrendous weapons, which have lasting and devastating impact on innocent civilians long after conflicts have ended. Just recently, in his New Agenda for Peace policy brief, the Secretary-General encouraged Member States to commit to reducing the human cost of weapons, including by achieving the universality of treaties banning inhumane and indiscriminate weapons, such as the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects and its Protocols; and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction.

The influx of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict can contribute to escalation and presents significant risks of diversion and proliferation even after the conflict has ended. Measures to address the risk of diversion to unauthorized end-users and for unauthorized uses are essential for preventing further instability and insecurity in Ukraine, the region and beyond. Such efforts will also be key to post-conflict recovery.

In laying out his vision for a New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General calls on Member States to take measures to address challenges related to the diversion, proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons at the regional, subregional and national levels. A significant reduction of illicit arms flows, as stipulated by target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, can be effectively achieved only through strong cooperation and coordination by the international community.

To prevent the diversion and illicit trafficking of conventional arms and to regulate the international arms trade, States have also developed a number of instruments, including legally binding ones such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol. In addition, the Programme of Action on Small Arms and

Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument also remain essential tools for addressing the illicit trade in all its aspects.

Most recently, I welcomed the adoption of the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. This new regulatory instrument is a landmark achievement in our collective efforts to reduce the risks and human costs of illicit trafficking and diversion of conventional ammunition of all types and to prevent unplanned explosions at munitions sites. I call on States to join relevant treaties and agreements and to fully implement their legal obligations under conventional arms control instruments to which they are party, as well as their political commitments, to minimize the risk of the diversion of arms and ammunition. I would also like to raise the matter of transparency in arms transfers as a crucial confidence-building measure that can serve to reduce tensions, ambiguities and misperceptions among Member States. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms remains a key tool in that regard.

It has been consistently repeated, but is nevertheless worth emphasizing once again, that all parties to any armed conflict have a duty to protect civilians in armed conflict and ensure compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Under international humanitarian law, parties to an armed conflict are prohibited from targeting civilians and civilian objects, including civilian infrastructure, and have the responsibility to take all feasible precautions in the conduct of military operations to avoid, or at least minimize, the incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.

In that regard, the continued and intensified attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine remain very alarming. From 24 February 2022 to 11 December 2023, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded 28,711 civilian casualties in Ukraine, with 10,058 killed and 18,653 injured. The actual figures are likely to be considerably higher. Most civilian casualties continue to be caused by shelling and multiple-launch rocket systems in areas near the front line. However, attacks have recently escalated on populated areas across Ukraine. As it does for any other conflicts in the world, the United Nations strongly condemns attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and calls for their immediate cessation.

Regrettably, the use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles against civilians and civilian infrastructure continues. Just like any other weapon or weapon system, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles must not be used in a manner inconsistent with international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General has unequivocally urged all States to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as such use is highly likely to result in indiscriminate harm to civilians, including in Ukraine. I take this opportunity to call on all Member States to endorse and implement the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, adopted in November 2022, in a broad and meaningful manner.

The world cannot afford for this senseless war to continue. As the Secretary-General has repeatedly emphasized, the United Nations is committed to supporting all meaningful efforts to bring a just and sustainable peace to Ukraine, guided by the Charter, international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wright.

Ms. Wright: I am honoured to be able speak today about my concern on the issue of weapons in conflict areas in the world, including in particular Ukraine.

I myself was in the United States military for 29 years. I retired as a colonel. I taught the law of land warfare and the Geneva Conventions at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, at Fort Bragg. I was in the United States Army during the United States wars on Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, Grenada, Panama and the Central American wars in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. I was also a United States diplomat for 16 years and served in the United States Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. I helped reopen the United States Embassy in Afghanistan in December 2001. I was a part of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) in 1993 and 1994. For almost six months, I was the Head of the justice division of UNOSOM, where we tried to recreate the Somali police and judicial and prison systems. I resigned from the federal Government 20 years ago in opposition to the war on Iraq. Since then, I have been working with groups around the

world to say that war is not the answer, that we must use diplomacy and that we must stop killing people and work to control weapons.

I recount my history to underscore my unfortunate familiarity with conflict areas in many regions of the world and our challenge involving the reliance of many countries, including my own country, the United States, on military action instead of diplomacy to resolve disagreements and conflicts. As a retired colonel and a former diplomat, I speak on my own behalf, as well as a concerned citizen who, as a taxpayer, pays for the weapons that my country uses and sells to fuel wars that kill innocent civilians. I very much thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for noting, given the casualties, the urgent need to protect civilians in conflict areas. There is no doubt that the weapons supplied into conflict areas have — to say it generously — a detrimental effect on the prospect of settling the conflicts concerned. In fact, the continued supply of weapons will prolong any conflict. I therefore believe that the important question for the Security Council is: How does it get conflicts to end? Well, we know that in this institution in particular the process for getting to the resolution of a conflict is long and that many people are killed until an agreement is reached on a ceasefire, as a first step. I would like to refer to a little history of how long such agreements may take us to reach to get to the point where no more people are killed.

During the three-year Korean war, from 1950 to 1953, the discussions for a ceasefire began in 1951 and finally concluded in 1953, after 575 meetings. But, during that time, more than 4 million Koreans, 500,000 Chinese, 35,000 Americans and tens of thousands who were in the United Nations military command were killed. Currently, the United States is providing weapons in two conflicts— the Ukraine-Russia and the Israel-Gaza conflicts — which I know much more about because I am an American citizen and watch that stuff, including how much military equipment is being provided by my country. Just four days ago, on 7 December, at a press conference with Foreign Secretary David Cameron of the United Kingdom, Secretary of State Blinken said that, over the past two years, the United States has provided more \$70 billion to support Ukraine and that European allies have provided more than \$110 billion in weapons. Blinken said that,

“If you look at the investments that we’ve made in Ukraine’s defence to deal with this aggression, 90 per cent of the security assistance we’ve provided has actually been spent here in the United States with our manufacturers, with our production, and that’s produced more American jobs, more growth in our own economy. So this has also been a win-win that we need to continue.”

I would say to my Secretary of State that the win-win is not for civilians in conflict areas. The win-win is for the military-industrial complex, really of all our countries, and for the politicians and retired Government officials who are offered senior positions in such companies immediately after they retire. It is certainly not a win-win for the innocent civilians who are killed in the conflicts. I just want to say that fuelling conflicts with these enormous amounts of weapons profiting politicians and corporations, inside and outside the countries in conflict, must end. I do not know if Council members have watched the new *The Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal*, available on the Internet now, in which United States weapons manufacturers Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and General Atomics are put on trial by a citizens’ tribunal for knowingly producing and selling products that attack and kill non-combatants as well as combatants. Its next session is on 30 December, and we hope that members will watch it.

With regard to the whole issue of weapons and peace and trying to get the weapons of the world to stop killing innocent civilians, I would also like to say that when we do have peace talks, they must not be torpedoed. The United States is allegedly behind that, and I do not think it is “allegedly”. I think there is plenty of documentation. A former Chancellor of Germany has said that his efforts aimed at achieving peace between Ukraine and Russia were torpedoed by the United States, and ex-Prime Minister Naftali Bennett of Israel said the same thing. We must be working for peace, not trying to undo it.

As I come to the end of my statement — and I ask members to bear with me — with regard to the whole issue of civilian casualties, including 10,000 missing in Ukraine, the situation is horrible, and it is horrible everywhere. But right now, more than 18,000 people have been killed in the space of 70 days in Gaza. It is a horrific thing that the United States is participating in by protecting acts that the Israeli Government knows are killing innocent civilians. It is fine to go after

Hamas, but more than 18,000 people have been killed at this point, and it is continuing every day. I would certainly urge the United Nations to look very closely at that and to continue to work to get a ceasefire, which my country vetoed here in the Security Council on Friday (see S/PV.9499). It shames all of us Americans, and I definitely hope that we will continue to work on it. I want to see the General Assembly vote on it.

I will just end with a short poem. It was written for kids in Gaza, but it could be written for kids in Ukraine or anyone else. It is called “Write my name on my leg, Mama”.

“Write my name on my leg, Mama,
Use the black permanent marker with the ink that
doesn’t bleed if it gets wet.
Write my name on my leg, Mama and on the legs of
my sisters and brothers.
This way we will belong together,
This way we will be known as your children.
Write my name on my leg, Mama,
When the bomb hits our house
When the walls crush our skulls and bones
Our legs will tell our story, how there was nowhere
for us to run.”

On behalf of the people of the world who want to live in peace and safety, I say stop the killing, bring in ceasefires now in all of these military operations and hold negotiations instead of killing people.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Wright for her briefing.

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

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Ebo and Ms. Wright for their detailed briefings on the current situation with regard to the West’s supplies of arms to the Kyiv regime.

To describe the situation in Ukraine briefly, things are unfolding exactly as we have been predicting for months. Support for the anti-popular Ukrainian Government, which has sacrificed its people on the altar of Western geopolitical interests, has been rapidly declining and is now so tiny that Ukrainian media are embarrassed even to write about it.

The main reason is that Zelenskyy, the head of the Kyiv junta, has deceived Ukrainians numerous times and continues to do so. The first was when he went to

the polls in 2019 and defeated his rival by promising to stop the war in Donbas that his predecessors had unleashed in 2014. He also promised to protect the rights of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine and their cultural and historical identity. But in fact once he was elected he forgot all about it. The war intensified and the Russian language and its speakers, who are a majority in Ukraine, are being persecuted and harassed in violation of Ukraine’s Constitution, of which the country’s President is obliged to be the guarantor.

The second time he deceived Ukrainians was when he claimed that Ukraine would implement the Minsk agreements. It is clear to an overwhelming majority of the residents of Ukraine today that implementing it would have been by far the best solution for Ukraine, enabling it to preserve its inter-ethnic peace and territorial integrity as long as it behaved in a normal way for a democratic society. Instead, the Ukrainian President and his associates, as we know today from the revelations of former Western politicians, with the support of the United States and its allies were actively arming and preparing for a war with Russia and for membership in NATO, which was bound to create unacceptable risks and security threats for our country, as Washington, Brussels and Kyiv were all well aware.

Finally, the third time the Kyiv regime deceived Ukrainians was in April 2022, when it rejected favourable peace terms with Russia and chose a path of military escalation, as advised by former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Pentagon Chief Lloyd Austin, something that we are all also very well aware of now. The empty promises that it could defeat Russia, which were also militarily completely unachievable, were well supported by years of brainwashing by Russophobic and neo-Nazi Maidan-style propaganda and infatuated many young Ukrainians. Today the result is obvious to everyone — hundreds of thousands dead or maimed, economic devastation, rampant corruption and a brutal dictatorship. In order to maintain that dictatorship Zelenskyy has even gone so far as to cancel the presidential elections because his chances of re-election are too slim. To that we can add Zelenskyy’s lies about the numerous incidents in which civilian facilities were hit by Ukrainian air-defence systems deployed in residential areas and were then passed off as strikes by the Russian army. It is also worth reminding the Council of his lies about provocations such as those in Bucha and Kramatorsk, where the traces left by the Kyiv regime and its Western

sponsors are visible to the naked eye. All of that has created widespread disappointment among Ukrainians, who have come to realize that Zelenskyy is driving the country off a cliff.

Like a dying drug addict, the Ukrainian regime is now surviving exclusively on Western funding, which to a large extent is immediately plundered, and on Western supplies of arms, which are not having a significant impact on the battlefield. There are, after all, images of burning Western equipment all over the Internet. Those supplies are only delaying the inevitable collapse of the criminal, anti-popular, corruption- and nepotism-ridden Kyiv authorities.

The problem is not so much about the availability or lack of weapons and ammunition. As long ago as June 2022, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, who has often spoken in this Chamber, promised that without Western weapons, Ukrainians would fight with shovels. However, the problem is that the Ukrainians, now that they have been deceived, no longer want to fight. The people now know about the pointlessness of sacrificing themselves to the meat grinder. They know that new recruits and even the disabled are being sent to the front lines without any training and without their consent. As we learned recently, even underage orphans are being conscripted. The whole country remembers Zelenskyy's constant false promises that Ukrainians would not be forced to fight, and can now see what is really happening. Ukrainian men are being hunted and beaten, gymnasiums and clubs are being raided, and military recruiters are combing public transport and even storming residential buildings in search of more cannon fodder.

According to accounts by Ukrainian military servicemen recently published by Western media, the average lifespan of recruits mobilized in such a manner on the front line is 48 hours. Meanwhile, military recruiters readily accept bribes from anyone who can still give them, and the children of Ukrainian officials and deputies are simply enjoying themselves abroad, sometimes not even bothering to pretend to be refugees. It comes as no surprise that, in those conditions, the fulfilment percentage of the military recruiters' conscript recruitment plan in most regions of Ukraine does not even reach double digits. Western mercenaries also flocked home en masse, frightened by the huge losses and utterly barbaric conditions of service imposed upon them by the Ukrainian military command.

The rapidly growing reluctance of Ukrainians to fight can also be explained by the fact that many of them are beginning to wise up and realize that Russia is, in fact neither an enemy nor an aggressor, as the leaders of the Kyiv regime have been claiming for years. Since the beginning of the war in Donbas, more than 5 million residents of Ukraine have found refuge in Russia, actively sharing their positive experiences on social networks. In addition, the criminal attempts of the Kyiv junta to ban the canonical Orthodox Church, the persecution of its clergy and parishioners and the shameless confiscation of church property in order to establish a schismatic, pseudo-religious and essentially political organization have opened the eyes of many more.

If we add to that the optimistic news from the former Ukrainian regions that have recently joined our country, it has become obvious to many in Ukraine that they have been deceived for years. Russia and everything Russian have been tarnished as the enemy, whereas in fact the enemy comes from within the country — which had been in the most favourable economic and financial position of all the post-Soviet republics — and is actively pushing it towards complete collapse and economic and political bankruptcy. Will Ukraine be able to continue fighting for long under such circumstances? The answer is absolutely clear, and it aligns with the military reports coming from the front line these days. One would have to be blind not to see it.

In that regard, I have a question for our Western colleagues, from whom I am sure we will once again hear, like a broken record, statements about standing ready to help Ukraine to the very end. To whom will they supply weapons and ammunition when fewer and fewer Ukrainians are prepared to die for Zelenskyy's anti-people regime? I would like to remind them that no matter how many weapons the Ukrainian dictator begs for during his incipient circus show, with hands outstretched towards the United States, they will all either be crushed by the Russian army on the battlefield or simply abandoned. Leading Western military experts are already starting to recognize it. And that will affect in no way whatsoever the achievement of the goals of our special military operation, which was launched to save the lives of residents in the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics and to ensure the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. If they really want to help Ukraine, they should rid it of the anti-people

regime, which they control, and which is prepared to sacrifice even the entirety of its own people for its own narrow interests.

I also wish to draw their attention to how unsightly their actions appear from the outside. Indeed, in order to convince America's Congress of the need to allocate new volumes of assistance to Zelenskyy and his clique, United States officials have finally dropped their masks and discarded all of their apparently unnecessary verbal fluff about democracy, freedom, human rights and so on. They have finally told the truth, which is what we warned about from the very beginning: military assistance to Ukraine is a commercial project that benefits the United States, with 90 per cent of the allocated funds returning to the United States, including through job creation, tax revenue increases and the rearmament of the armies of the United States and its allies through the disposal of obsolete military equipment in Ukraine. That is precisely how it is being presented now, in an extremely cynical manner. All of our colleagues at the United Nations who are following the narrative can see that for themselves and can see that there is no benefit or positive outcome for Ukraine from everything that is happening. As we have repeatedly warned, Ukraine finds itself a bargaining chip in someone else's geopolitical game.

One final point: perhaps some of our colleagues will be set on edge by the fact that we are referring to the head of the Kyiv regime as not only a Western puppet, but also a dictator. After all, it is clear that assisting dictators is not accepted in Western political culture — with the exception of that of the United States, which, as history shows, does not care who it helps — but they should judge for themselves how the situation stands in Ukraine with respect to democracy. We have seen more and more evidence of that of late. I have already mentioned the cancellation of the presidential elections and flagrant violations of the right to freedom of religion, in addition to corruption and nepotism. The Western media, however, is now rehashing those stories in various ways. Information has also come to light regarding the fight against dissent and opposition, including the ban on opposition media.

All of those phenomena under the Zelenskyy regime have grown to unprecedented proportions, even for Ukrainians, and began long before the start of our special military operation. Thousands, if not tens of thousands, of people in Ukraine are being imprisoned and subjected to torture just for their beliefs and for

simply reading the news in Russian or listening to Russian music, etc.. Simply using Russian in public is grounds for punishment, despite the fact that its status as an official language is enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine. Here I would recall the arrest of the Ukrainian human rights activist and anti-fascist Elena Berezhnaya by the Security Service of Ukraine as far back as 16 March last year. She had repeatedly spoken at the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international forums, but the fate of that 67-year-old woman remains unknown.

Among those being persecuted are not only Ukrainian citizens, but also foreigners. Thanks to the popular American journalist Tucker Carlson, it became known just yesterday that journalist Gonzalo Lira, an American citizen who lived in Kharkiv and revealed the truth about the Zelenskyy regime in his blog, has been detained by the Security Service of Ukraine and tortured since July this year. The United States authorities have done nothing to obtain his release and have generally completely ignored his fate, despite repeated appeals from his father.

I would like to once again summarize the current situation for the representative of the United States. The American authorities are shelling out tens of billions of dollars to a dictatorship mired in corruption, supplying it with weapons, including depleted uranium shells and cluster munitions, causing civilians to suffer. Meanwhile, the American authorities have not lifted even a finger to free an American citizen who is being detained and tortured in Ukraine and who is in mortal danger. Has anything I have said bothered the representative of the United States at all? I am sure members will agree that it is very similar to the plot of a Hollywood action movie — during the finale, good and just forces must intervene and correct an intolerable situation. But life is not a movie. In real life, sometimes it is the villains who lecture others and feign to teach them about democracy and human rights.

Nevertheless, I can assure the representative of the United States that this story will, without a doubt, come to an end soon enough, and both the United States and other Zelenskyy regime apologists will not like the outcome — but it will happen whether they like it or not. What can they do? They have worked hard towards such an end and deserve it. I would advise that they prepare for it and draw the necessary conclusions as soon as possible, before the sinking Kyiv regime drags them down into its vortex.

Mr. Spasse (Albania): Let me start by thanking the briefers for their remarks.

Since the beginning of the unjustified military aggression by Russia against Ukraine, one of the main goals of the Kremlin has been to undermine the role and the support of the international community. The choice is very simple: either we accept that Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, can violate the Charter of the United Nations and change borders by force, or we react against it by supporting Ukraine in defending its country, the security architecture of Europe, the principles of international law and the foundations of the international rules-based order.

The international community made a clear choice when the General Assembly massively voted to condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In that context, we cannot condone Russia's continued cynicism in the Security Council in its attempts to blame the supply of arms by Western countries as the cause of the conflict. Although the Russian Federation has expressed such concerns in the Chamber, its military attacks in Ukraine continue, including with the use of drones and other weapons acquired by Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The main targets are critical and civilian infrastructure, the energy-supply system and the agriculture infrastructure.

According to a recent study of the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies, the huge population loss caused by the war, primarily due to refugees, could bring about demographic problems for Ukraine. The working-age population could shrink, negatively affecting the reconstruction and economic recovery process of the country. That is the aim of Russia — to destroy Ukraine as a factor in the region and to make life there unbearable, hoping that Ukraine will accept the conditions of the Kremlin. And that is why we will continue to stand with Ukraine by supporting it politically, economically and militarily until a just and lasting peace is achieved, based on the Charter and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Kumanga (Mozambique): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. I would like to thank the briefers — Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; and Ms. Mary Ann Wright, civil society representative — for their insightful contributions.

Arms transfers and arms races are clearly concerning issues that could further escalate the conflict. They create an environment that is not conducive to deterrence, which is an essential factor for any peace initiative to thrive. The case of Ukraine is an example of that, and this is happening in the context of the calls reiterated by the Security Council, United Nations entities and the international community at large for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Unfortunately, those calls have been disregarded and are falling into a vacuum.

While we recognize the sovereign right to self-defence, the importance of responsible arms transfers cannot be overemphasized, in particular now, when there are increased risks of non-State groups using arms for terrorist purposes. That is because irresponsible and illicit arms transfers have the potential to prolong and exacerbate the conflict, undermining the prospects for lasting peace, with spillover effects for the region and globally. Additionally, stocks of arms can leak and end up in the wrong hands, representing an additional threat to international peace and security in an already fragile and sensitive context.

In that regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of greater transparency in arms transfers, within the existing international legal framework. As a matter of fact, transparency is a necessary and indispensable confidence-building measure. It has the potential to prevent or reduce ambiguities and suspicions, improve international cooperation on disarmament and arms control and prevent misperceptions and miscalculations. With that in mind, we call on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to the relevant international instruments, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Tracing Instrument.

Mozambique's position is consistent and well-known. Time and again, we have advocated for a political and negotiated solution as the only way to end this conflict and set the ground for lasting and sustainable peace between the two countries.

Ms. Almenhali (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Ebo, for his briefing. We

also listened carefully to Ms. Wright's statement, and we welcome the participation of Ukraine's representative in this meeting.

Regarding the topic of our discussion today, and as we mentioned in previous meetings, all States Members of the United Nations have the right to self-defence, including by developing their security and defence capabilities. However, at the same time, we stress that, in order to do so, there should be appropriate oversight mechanisms, especially with regard to the transfer, storage and distribution of weapons, due to their potential repercussions on regional and international security and stability. In that context, we once again welcome all measures taken to address the risk of arms diversion related to the war in Ukraine.

We also stress the importance of making efforts, including through the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, with the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. In that regard, we emphasize the importance of continuing to build on such efforts, including by continuing to exchange information and enhancing coordination and cooperation at all levels.

However, eliminating all threats and repercussions related to this conflict will not be possible without a permanent and sustainable cessation of hostilities, which requires us to spare no effort in supporting all endeavours towards achieving peace in Ukraine, while preserving its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. That is what the United Arab Emirates will continue to advocate and support. In the meantime, until this war stops, we continue to stress the need for the parties concerned to do everything in their power to limit the repercussions of the conflict and reduce its risks, including by complying with their obligations in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Ms. Koumby Missambo (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing. I also took note of Ms. Mary Ann Wright's remarks.

The death toll of the war in Ukraine has reached unbearable proportions. More than 10,000 people have been killed and 18,679 have been wounded, and more than 10 million people have been displaced, against the backdrop of the constantly deteriorating humanitarian

situation. We remain particularly concerned about the increase in bombings and attacks on civilian populations and essential infrastructure, including port and grain facilities. Drone attacks continue to target civilian buildings, schools, hospitals and energy facilities. My country reaffirms its opposition to the war because, as the war drags on, the destruction spreads at an alarming rate. The World Bank's most recent projections of Ukraine's reconstruction needs indicate a bill of \$411 billion, with needs concentrated in the eastern regions — those most affected by the fighting. Since that assessment, which dates back several months, those projections have no doubt already been far exceeded.

In addition to the damage in terms of loss of life and destruction of civilian and military installations, the consequences of the war in Ukraine will also have to be assessed in environmental terms, in particular the consequences of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam, as well as in terms of the invisible wounds and trauma left on the women, children and men whose lives have been shattered. At the same time, information on the conclusion of new military alliances and some countries' revision of their armaments policies are concerning signs that indicate the scale of the retreat on international disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation commitments.

We reiterate our call on the warring parties to refrain from using weapons of mass destruction and from targeting civilian populations and infrastructure essential to life. We echo the call of the Secretary-General and the International Committee of the Red Cross for the imposition of new red lines on a global scale to limit the humanitarian effects of autonomous weapons systems. The use of such weapons, the effects of which extend over time beyond conflicts, is not compatible with disarmament objectives. My country calls on all parties to redouble their commitment to prevent the effects of the massive circulation of conventional arms by intensifying control and marking measures. Indeed, the uncontrolled circulation of weapons is a breeding ground for insecurity and resilient terrorist groups. The trend towards trivializing the use of military force, with an increased use of weapons of mass destruction, massive rearmament and the obvious revival of interest in nuclear deterrence by many countries, is fuelling tension and reviving risks to peace and security in the world. A real breakthrough is needed to reverse this disturbing trend and to reconnect our Organization,

and in particular the Security Council, with its primary vocation of protecting present and future generations from the scourge of war.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my country's constant appeal to all parties, and in particular to regional and subregional organizations, to prioritize dialogue and negotiation with a view to ending this conflict and achieving peaceful coexistence among all parties.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Ebo, for his briefing.

We all know why Russia calls repeated meetings on this topic. Six hundred and fifty-five days since the start of its illegal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia has failed to accomplish its war aims. It has failed to break the spirit and resistance of the Ukrainian people, and it has failed to mislead the international community, as evidenced by the more than 140 countries that have repeatedly and overwhelmingly condemned Russia's aggression and its humanitarian consequences. More than 140 Member States have repeatedly urged Russia to stop its offensive and immediately, unconditionally and completely withdraw all troops from the sovereign territory of Ukraine. We expect Russia to spout any justification it can, no matter how absurd, to mask its failures on the battlefield. Russia has tried to question the motives of the dozens of countries that have provided assistance to Ukraine, as well as Ukraine's right to self-defence as reflected in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Russia can end this war today. It can end its war crimes and atrocities against the people of Ukraine. It can cease its attacks against Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure. It can stop its forced deportation of Ukrainian children and return them to their families. It can withdraw its forces and start meeting its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council. Instead, Russia spends its time in the Council criticizing legitimate assistance provided to defend Ukraine from Russia's illegal actions. Meanwhile, it is a fact that Russia procured armaments for its aggression against Ukraine through channels expressly prohibited by the Council and its resolutions.

Our information indicates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has provided Russia with more than 1,000 containers of military equipment

and munitions, which will increase the human toll of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine. In return for its support, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is seeking Russian military technology and assistance, including fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, armed vehicles, ballistic missile production equipment and materials and other technologies to advance its military capabilities and objectives. That expanding partnership, including technology transfers from Russia to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, undermines regional stability and the global non-proliferation regime. Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea must be held to account for actions undermining long-standing obligations under Council resolutions.

At the same time, the Kremlin has turned to another regime unconcerned with human rights, international security, the global non-proliferation regime or maintaining peace: Iran. Tehran has been providing Russia with guided aerial bombs and artillery ammunition — lethal equipment to end Ukrainian lives. We have provided clear evidence on the transfer of Iranian unmanned aircraft to Russia, which occurred while restrictions under resolution 2231 (2015) prohibiting such transfers were in place. With armaments from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, Russia can prolong its brutal war against Ukraine.

It is the height of hypocrisy for Russia to claim before the Council that legitimate support for Ukraine's self-defence is prolonging the conflict, while it has repeatedly violated Council resolutions to fuel its war of aggression. They are resolutions to which Russia itself agreed. We once again urge Russia to cease its aggression and withdraw from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing, and I have also taken note of Ms. Wright's remarks.

Today's meeting is yet another attempt by Russia to deflect from its responsibility for the war against Ukraine and its consequences. Once again, the narrative presented ignores the fact that the military aggression against Ukraine constitutes a grave violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia has not only attacked a Member State, but also international law and multilateralism as a whole. There is no doubt about

who is the aggressor and who is the aggressee. As we reaffirmed at the seven previous meetings on arms deliveries this year, Ukraine has the right under the Charter of the United Nations to ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We reiterate that it is imperative to implement multilateral conventions and instruments on arms transfers effectively and comprehensively. All States have a responsibility to fulfil their obligations. In particular, the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions 1718 (2006) and 2231 (2015), must be respected. Efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, always on the basis of the Charter, must be pursued. Switzerland is actively committed to that goal. To promote a peaceful settlement, we continue to urge Russia to cease all combat operations and withdraw all its troops from Ukrainian territory.

The plight of civilians risks worsening with the onset of winter and continued attacks on vital infrastructure. That situation is particularly dangerous for children and other vulnerable people, including the elderly, sick and disabled. We again urge all parties to spare the civilian population and infrastructure and to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid throughout Ukraine.

Alongside humanitarian aid, an inclusive and participatory reconstruction process must be supported. Demining, which Switzerland has made a priority in Ukraine, is a precondition for reconstruction, and is urgent.

Furthermore, it is crucial that the damage caused by the war is recorded and that justice is done to the victims. The fight against impunity for the most serious crimes is a priority for Switzerland, and we support efforts to ensure accountability. That also applies to the perpetrators of crimes of aggression, who must answer for their actions. That is why Switzerland is committed to supporting the creation of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

Let me conclude by reiterating Russia's military aggression against Ukraine cannot be justified.

Mrs. Hackman (Ghana): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor. I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Adedeji Ebo, for his briefing and also take note of the views expressed by Ms. Mary Ann Wright.

My delegation concurs with the need for measures to avoid the possible proliferation and diversion of weapons from the war in Ukraine into other conflict areas given the risk of escalation and the threat to peace and stability in many other fragile environments.

We note the commitments expressed by concerned States to take the necessary steps, including the tracking of weapons designated for Ukraine and urge sustained compliance with the applicable non-proliferation measures in that regard.

In reaffirming Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence, under customary international law and deliberately codified in the Charter of the United Nations, we reiterate our call for an immediate end to the war and urge the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian Federation's troops from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

It is regrettable that, after 22 months of sustained fighting across several front lines, a much-needed peaceful settlement continues to elude the parties, to the detriment of innocent civilians. Thousands of lives have been lost, and many more livelihoods have been destroyed. With the onset of the winter season, humanitarian conditions continue to worsen, particularly for vulnerable populations.

We have stated in previous meetings and continue to believe that ending the war is an important step to upholding the fundamental principles of the international rules-based order and is most necessary to alleviate the burden borne by the ordinary people of Ukraine.

It is also our view that the time to end the war is past due and that there is no alternative to the peace in Ukraine. In that light, we reiterate our support for peace through the channels of diplomacy and dialogue. We encourage the international community to not be resigned to the emerging reality of a protracted war, but rather to intensify efforts aimed at bringing the parties together at the negotiating table.

The warring parties must be impressed upon to resort to any of the models — or a combination thereof — offered under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It must also be emphasized that peace efforts in Ukraine should, of necessity, be guided by the principles of international law so as to ensure a just, comprehensive and lasting solution.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate the several calls for the protection of civilians, in line with the obligations of the warring parties under international humanitarian law, and once more urge compliance with the requirements for distinction, proportionality and military necessity in order to avoid causing harm to civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Ebo, for his briefing.

By calling for today's meeting, the Russian Federation seeks to paint a different picture, based on an alternative reality. It hopes to divert the Security Council's focus away from Russia's aggression. It tries to rationalize the unjustifiable. It is yet another cynical attempt to present the aggressor as the victim, and the victim as the aggressor.

Yet again, we find ourselves recalling the facts. On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation launched a full-scale invasion against its neighbour, Ukraine. In doing so, it violated the latter's sovereignty and territorial integrity and brought war back to Europe. Those actions also constituted a serious breach of the Charter of the United Nations and were a direct affront to international law and the multilateral system.

Since then, more than 10,000 civilians have been killed, thousands more have been injured, and millions have been displaced — creating another human-made humanitarian catastrophe that continues to threaten global food security. That dire situation persists, and it is having devastating consequences on Ukraine's population, especially during these cold winter months.

The deaths, injuries and level of destruction of civilian objects are staggering. Most civilian casualties continue to be caused by shelling and the use of multiple-launch rocket systems by Russian armed forces in areas near the front line. Adding to Russian missiles, drone attacks and shelling, several reports have shed light on Russia's systematic use of landmines in Ukraine, which have resulted in more than 600 civilian casualties.

Against that backdrop, we reiterate that Ukraine has the right to defend itself from this Russian aggression, as enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. It has the right to protect its citizens, its borders, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity — just like any other member of the Organization.

Over the past weeks, we have seen another escalation in Russian attacks on populated areas across Ukraine, resulting in more civilian casualties. Furthermore, on Holodomor Remembrance Day, Russia launched one of its largest drone attacks since the beginning of its invasion, shelling Kyiv and its surroundings for more than six hours. Many civilians were injured, and more than 12,000 households were left without electricity.

We unreservedly condemn such attacks. All attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure must stop immediately. They are prohibited under international humanitarian law and are completely unacceptable.

Wars have a disproportionate impact on women and children, and this one is no exception. Harrowing testimonies of rape and sexualized torture continue to be reported from Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian children face major disruptions in access to basic-health care services and quality education and continued grave violations of their rights, including forced deportations. We welcome the Ukrainian Government's commitment to ending and preventing grave violations against children through the development of a prevention plan. We urge Russia to adopt and implement an action plan without further delay.

Once again, we also urge Russia to end its hostilities and withdraw its military forces, equipment and proxies from the entire internationally recognized territory of Ukraine.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

Last Wednesday, when we met to discuss the humanitarian situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9494), Russia complained that the Council was holding too many meetings on that issue. Russia's call for an eleventh meeting on the subject of arms transfers therefore raises questions. Russia has now made a ritual of these meetings, where it tries, to no avail, to reverse the blame for the outbreak of war in Ukraine.

The end of this war and its tragic consequences depends on Russia, which can put an end to it at any time, without prejudice to its own security. Russian missiles and the drones that Russia has been acquiring from Iran for months, continue to strike the whole of Ukraine on a daily basis. On 25 November, Kyiv suffered one of the biggest attacks since the start of the conflict. Since then, Russia has stepped up its strikes

on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Just this morning, the Ukrainian capital was targeted by Russian missiles and drones.

For almost two years now, Russia has been pursuing this war of aggression, which it launched on its own, in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, and which it has decided to keep going, despite repeated calls from the General Assembly to put an end to it. If Russia puts an end to its strikes and withdraws its troops from Ukrainian territory, as demanded by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022, the war will end.

To wage this war, Russia is using arms and munitions acquired from Iran and North Korea, in violation of resolutions adopted by the Council. Russia is also using irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and announcing the deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus. It does not hesitate to undermine the foundations of our multilateral system, international law and the efforts undertaken over the years by the Security Council in the area of non-proliferation.

Together with its partners, France has chosen to support the Ukrainian people in their right to legitimately defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

France will continue to help Ukraine to defeat Russian aggression. It will continue to provide the military equipment necessary for the Ukrainian people to defend themselves against Russian strikes against their territory and critical infrastructure. International stability and security are at stake. Russia must not win this war, because force must not prevail over law; sovereignty and territorial integrity must not be flouted with impunity.

France will also continue to help Ukraine to meet the humanitarian needs created by Russia's aggression. It will also continue to support the efforts of Ukraine and its partners to reduce the global food insecurity resulting from the Russian aggression.

It is time for Russia to realize that our support for Ukraine will not waver. And that there is only one possible outcome: a peace in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which respects Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the briefers for their briefings.

It is in no one's interest to prolong and complicate the Ukraine issue. Over the past year, the military spending of the countries concerned has increased dramatically reaching record levels.

At the same time, more than 700 million people are threatened by hunger and more than 700 million lack access to a basic necessity: drinking water. A total of 2 billion people are facing various forms of economic hardship. Extensive inequalities, injustice and other cases that defy reason persist. Developing countries remain confronted with formidable obstacles on their journey towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call on countries to focus more on those issues and channel their finite resources and efforts to more meaningful goals.

With the regard to the issue of war and peace, China's position is very clear. We always stand on the side of peace and dialogue — be it with regard to Ukraine or the Middle East, conflicts in Africa or hotspot issues in Asia-Pacific. We all hope that the flames of war can be expeditiously quelled and that disputes can be resolved through political means as soon as possible. The international community should adhere to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security; advocate peaceful coexistence and promote dialogue and reconciliation towards a world of lasting peace and common security.

Mr. Iriya (Japan): I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Adedeji Ebo, and the other briefer for their briefings.

Russia has repeatedly requested Security Council meetings on the same topic in an attempt to distract the world's attention from the undeniable fact that it is Russia that started the unprovoked war of aggression.

Russia should be concerned about what its own weapons are doing in Ukraine before worrisome about international support for Ukraine to respond to Russia's aggression. Russia itself, the aggressor, should know very well why the international community is supporting Ukraine in the first place, including through the provision of arms. That is to assist Ukraine in exercising its right of self-defence from aggression. We would like to emphasize that the transaction in violation of Security Council resolutions and the necessary support for Ukraine are two completely different things.

No support should be given to a State that is violating international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It would be particularly unacceptable if support were rendered in violation of existing Security Council resolutions. All Member States should refrain from supporting Russia's aggression either directly or indirectly.

In that regard, as indicated in the joint statement of 26 October by the Foreign Ministers of Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America, arms transfers from North Korea to Russia, several of which we have confirmed have been completed and which directly violate relevant Security Council resolutions, are absolutely unacceptable. They not only exacerbate the situation in Ukraine, but also severely undermine the non-proliferation regime, which we all must value and uphold.

In addition, we are deeply concerned about the potential for any transfer of nuclear or ballistic missile-related technology to North Korea, which would further threaten the peace and stability of the region, as well as across the globe. We call on North Korea and Russia to abide by their obligations under all relevant Security Council resolutions and immediately cease all activities that violate them.

Threats by Russia of nuclear weapon use, let alone any use of nuclear weapons by Russia in the context of its war of aggression against Ukraine, are inadmissible.

We join the deep regret expressed by the Secretary-General with regard to the decision by Russia on 2 November to promulgate and put into force a law to revoke its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We reiterate that Japan deeply deplores that decision as it goes against the international community's long-standing efforts towards the entry into force and universalization of the Treaty.

As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is strongly committed to international efforts towards realizing a world without nuclear weapons. Bringing the CTBT into force is exactly for that purpose, and it must be achieved without further delay.

Ukraine is the country defending itself against an unprovoked aggression, which is a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why we are repeatedly calling on Russia to withdraw immediately and unconditionally.

Our steadfast commitment to supporting Ukraine's fight for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity will never waver. We are taking additional steps to support Ukrainians in their pursuit of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace that will uphold all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and the prohibition of the use of force.

Mr. Sénéchal de Goffredo Junior (Brazil): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo for his briefing, as well as Ms. Mary Ann Wright for her remarks.

Brazil reiterates its deep concern about the use of increasingly lethal and destructive weapons in the conflict in Ukraine. That disturbing trend, combined with the dangerous rhetoric of nuclear escalation, hinders the prospects of a peaceful resolution to the conflict and raises global concerns about threats to peace and security that go far beyond the countries directly affected by the conflict.

As we have stated many times previously, the increasing of flow of weapons into the conflict zone jeopardizes collective security and peace efforts. The use of certain weapons is a cause of particular concern, such as the widespread deployment of landmines in vast areas in Ukraine. Additionally, the risk of weapons diversion to criminal and terrorist groups poses an alarming threat. That not only jeopardizes the immediate and future safety of the civilian population in Ukraine, but also presents a significant risk to peace and security.

In addition, we urge all Member States to adhere to the Arms Trade Treaty and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and underscore the importance of transparency in arms transactions and in the prevention of their diversion.

Furthermore, the protection of civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine is crucial and should be a priority for all parties to the conflict. Brazil reiterates its call for de-escalation and the start of negotiations, either directly or indirectly through third parties, in accordance with Article 33 of the United Nations Charter. Only through diplomatic negotiations fuelled by good political will can we achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Ebo and Ms. Wright for their briefings.

This is the seventh time this year that Russia has called for a Security Council meeting on the supply of Western weapons to Ukraine. They have once again invited a Western briefer to support them. It is obvious what they are trying to do. These debates are clear evidence of a campaign to try to influence public opinion in the West and to undermine political support for Ukraine. It is a campaign driven by the Kremlin to serve the Kremlin's interests alone. This campaign is intended to help Russia to subjugate Ukraine and annex its territory, without Ukraine having the means to defend itself. But it is manifestly not in the interest of anyone else around this table to allow Russia, through violence, to violate and undermine the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity that underpin the international order and that provide stability to our world. That is why we are proud to support Ukraine's right to self-defence, and that is why we will continue to supply Ukraine with the military assistance it needs for as long as it takes. That is all the more important when Russia itself is sourcing weapons from Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of Security Council resolutions, and using them to target civilians and Ukraine's critical national infrastructure.

The Russian Government is not only sending enormous volumes of weapons to Ukraine; it is also sacrificing the lives of more and more of its own citizens to prolong an invasion that is based on lies — a conveyor belt of Russian fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, being sent to their deaths. Since Russia's invasion began, over 300,000 Russian soldiers have been killed or wounded, many times more than in the 10 years of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. President Putin now plans to conscript another 170,000 as cannon fodder for his Government's war. It is hard to see how it is in the interests of the Russian people that the Russian Government prolongs its aggression. It is certainly not in the interests of the Council that Russia succeeds.

Let us not forget that for Russia this is a war of choice; for Ukraine it is a war of survival. We must therefore continue to give Ukraine all the support it needs to defend its sovereign territory. We must demonstrate our resolve to protect and uphold the Charter of the United Nations. And we must ensure that Ukraine secures a just and lasting peace.

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

The delegation of Ecuador listened attentively to the briefings given by Mr. Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and Ms. Mary Ann Wright. We recognize the presence of the representative of Ukraine.

We recognize the right of self-defence in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. We insist that the Russian Federation put an end to the military aggression in order to allow a ceasefire that would make it possible to move towards a just and lasting peace.

Ecuador is concerned about the risks posed by the flow of weapons and ammunition, and we support the recommendations of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, stated once again today, regarding the measures necessary to mitigate those risks. We stress the desirability of increasing weapons and ammunition marking, registration and traceability standards, and of implementing any measure aimed at preventing the diversion, spread and escalation of the conflict. Ecuador reiterates the need to prioritize the protection of civilians and the objective of achieving global stability above any other logic of industry, production or distribution.

Finally, the supply of defence materials and systems must contribute to the protection of civil infrastructure and the population. All supplies of weapons or ammunition must be subject to sufficient guarantees to ensure that, at the time of their use, the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution are respected. Likewise, any weapon or ammunition that is not compatible with those principles should not be transferred or used.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Dvornyk (Ukraine): I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for his briefing.

I recognize Putin's representative in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union. Just five days ago in this very Chamber, that very representative complained about the practice of trying

“to keep the Ukrainian issue alive in the Security Council by any means necessary, and to do that they have to get us to meet in this Chamber from time to time” (S/PV.9494, p. 11).

Also at that meeting, that delegation said that “nothing extraordinary has happened in Ukraine that requires an open Security Council meeting” (*supra*). At that meeting, let me recall, my delegation informed the Council about the outrageous facts of the execution by Russian troops of two Ukrainian prisoners of war; the killing of Ukrainian civilians, including entire families, by Russian shelling; and the heavy missile and drone strikes across the entire territory of Ukraine that occurred daily. Indeed, bringing death and destruction to other nations has never been something extraordinary for Russia; on the contrary, this is almost the only thing that Russia has always been eager to do.

What extraordinary thing has happened, therefore, that the Russian delegation requested this meeting — and again, on the tiresome issue of weapons? Is it the fact that Ukrainians continue to resist and remain committed to restoring the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their State within its internationally recognized borders? Or is it due to the resilience of the Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, which continues to stand firm against the relentless Russian attacks and inhumane bombardments that have destroyed both the city and its outskirts?

Last week, the online media Important Stories reported on an appeal written by more than 100 relatives of mobilized soldiers from Russian military unit 95411. They claimed that Russian soldiers were intentionally being exterminated in near-suicidal “meat assaults” on Avdiivka, all in an effort to seize the city before 14 December. That is the date that the so-called “Direct Line with Vladimir Putin” is scheduled. That is an annual performance where Putin pretends to answer random questions from ordinary citizens. Naturally, the announcement of any military victory would serve the purpose of that propaganda show. And the only chance, in Moscow’s view, for the Russian troops to advance, in addition to throwing new cannon fodder into suicidal attacks across the entire front line, is to ensure Ukraine is running out of weaponry — weaponry that Ukraine requires to defend itself and its citizens. From

the first days of the Russian war of aggression, the Ukrainian people have clearly realized what Russia’s presence on Ukrainian territory would mean for them: lost lives, entire cities and villages reduced to rubble, extrajudicial executions, torture, persecution for expressing Ukrainian identity and stolen property. You name it.

We therefore reiterate that we will continue to exercise our right to self-defence in strict accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, as long as Russia’s troops remain on the territory of our country and as long as they persist in killing Ukrainians and terrorizing Ukraine with missile and drone strikes. We are grateful to our allies, which continue to support our noble fight, in particular by supplying weapons. Weapons in the hands of soldiers defending their homes and loved ones from the ruthless invasion should never be viewed as a factor of insecurity and deterioration. Is it deterioration that tonight our air defences were able to shoot down all 18 drones and 8 ballistic missiles that Russia launched on the Ukrainian capital? And we reject any hypocritical attempt to equate the responsibility of the party that defends itself on its own sovereign territory and the party that violates the Charter and persists in the unprovoked war of aggression.

The only root cause of the enormous suffering, the high toll of casualties and the destruction and environmental disaster throughout Ukraine, and far beyond, is Russia’s unprovoked and full-scale invasion. As soon as it is over and Russia’s troops withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine and as soon as accountability for the most serious crimes under international law is ensured, the path to comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with the Charter, will be open. That vision is embedded in both General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, of 23 February 2023, and Ukraine’s peace formula plan. We urge the Security Council to concentrate its efforts on turning that vision into a reality.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.