



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

Provisional

9533rd meeting

Monday, 22 January 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. De Rivière (France)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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24-01658 (E)



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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): 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 Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Ebo.

Mr. Ebo: I provide this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, who is currently out of office.

Almost two years have passed since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which represents 23 months of death, destruction and unbearable suffering and devastation.

In line with my previous briefings on this subject, over the past months, the provision of military assistance and transfers of arms and ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces have continued. According to publicly available information, those transfers have 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 and small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. In addition, there have been reports of States transferring, or planning to transfer, weapons such as uncrewed aerial vehicles, ballistic missiles and ammunition to the Russian armed forces and that those weapons have been used in Ukraine. Needless to say, and as has been repeatedly stressed by the High Representative, any transfer of weapons must take place within the applicable international legal framework, including relevant Security Council resolutions.

Reports related to the transfer and use of cluster munitions throughout the conflict are very concerning. The Secretary-General has repeatedly called for an immediate end to the use of cluster munitions. In line with his long-standing position, those weapons must be rendered inoperable and consigned to history. In addition, mines and explosive remnants of war have resulted in widespread land contamination, rendering land unusable for agriculture, while impeding the movement of people in Ukraine.

States that are not yet party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction should make all efforts to accede to these instruments. I also urge all the relevant parties to abide by their obligations under 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 not to transfer or use any mines prohibited by its Amended Protocol II.

As has been stressed by the High-Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the large-scale influx of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict raises significant concerns for peace, security and stability, including as a result of diversion and proliferation even after the conflict has ended. 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. As stipulated in Target 16.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a significant reduction in illicit arms flows can be effectively achieved only through strong cooperation and coordination by the international community.

States have established a number of instruments, including legally binding ones such as the Arms Trade Treaty and the Firearms Protocol, that should be fully leveraged to address risks of diversion and illicit trafficking. In addition, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument also remain essential tools for addressing the illicit trade in all its aspects. The implementation of the recently adopted Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management will help to counter any diversion of

conventional ammunition of all types more effectively and to prevent unplanned explosions at munitions sites. I reiterate my call to all States to join the relevant treaties and agreements and to fully implement their legal obligations under instruments for conventional arms control to which they are party, as well as their political commitments, in order to minimize the risk of the diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse of arms and ammunition.

The Secretary-General has unequivocally urged all States to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, which is highly likely to result in indiscriminate harm to civilians, including in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. I once again call on all Member States to endorse and implement in a broad and meaningful manner 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. The conference on the Political Declaration coming up in Oslo in April will be an opportunity for more States to join the Declaration and to commit to strengthening the protection of civilians.

The steady stream of attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure remains seriously distressing. I want to once again repeat unequivocally that all parties to any armed conflict have a duty to protect civilians in that conflict and ensure compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. That is an unambiguous obligation. Between 24 February 2022 and 21 January of this year, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights verified 29,731 civilian casualties in Ukraine, with 10,287 killed and 19,444 injured, and the actual figures are likely to be considerably higher. Let me say it again. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international law and must stop immediately. Regrettably, the use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) and missiles on civilians and civilian infrastructure has continued, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. Just as with any other weapons or weapon systems, armed UAVs and missiles must not be used in a manner that is inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

The United Nations will continue working for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with international law, which includes the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the General Assembly. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call to all States to do their part

to prevent further escalation and lay the foundations for sustainable peace. The only way to end the suffering and devastation is by ending this war.

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

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

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we are once again discussing the situation in Ukraine in the context of the supplies of weapons and mercenaries that it continues to receive from the West, which we recently confirmed when we began to take measures to eliminate French mercenaries near Kharkhiv. We have just heard a briefing with updated information from Mr. Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and we are grateful to him for the information and recommendations he has provided to the Security Council.

It is now blindingly clear to an overwhelming majority of unbiased experts that the key factor hindering the quest for a peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis is the West's continued support for the Kyiv regime, despite the fact that it is obviously in its death throes and unable to achieve the goal dictated to it, which is inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia or, as we have been hearing lately, at least weakening my country.

The reality is that despite the complete failure of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the battlefield, the Kyiv regime's Western patrons are still pushing them with maniacal persistence to continue their senseless military confrontation, using lying slogans alleging that the collapse of the Zelenskyy regime is an existential threat to Ukrainians and that Russia wants to enslave them. To those who understand the genesis of the Ukrainian crisis there is clearly not a grain of truth in such claims. The special military operation that Russia launched in February 2022 was neither against Ukraine nor the Ukrainian people, with whom we still have fraternal ties. It is no coincidence that almost 7 million Ukrainians have found sanctuary in Russia since 2014. We were forced to launch a military operation against the overreach of a criminal regime emboldened by impunity that despite our years of enormous effort refused to abandon its war on its own

citizens in southern and south-eastern Ukraine or its policy of total discrimination against Russian-speaking Ukrainians, who are still a majority in the country.

The Zelenskyy regime did so not just in violation of the Minsk agreements approved by the Security Council but of the elementary principles of the functioning of a civilized society and in gross violation of fundamental human rights, including the rights of national minorities, which are enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution. Meanwhile, during this entire time the Western patrons of the Kyiv regime who were behind the anti-constitutional coup in Kyiv 10 years ago not only failed to rein in the ringleaders of the Kyiv clique but under the cover of the Minsk package of measures surreptitiously began to arm Ukraine and prepare it for war with Russia. We know that for a fact now from the confessions of direct participants in the process who drafted and signed the Minsk agreements and submitted them for the Council's consideration and approval.

The reason for the West's cynical and criminal behaviour is obvious and has been openly expressed lately in Washington and other capitals. With no losses from the ranks of its own soldiers, the West is using Ukrainians to wage a war on Russia, which must be put in its place. President Biden even called it a great investment, and other American officials and their British colleagues from the foggy shores of Albion have used similar expressions.

The representatives of the current Administration now sound even more cynical in their efforts to get their opponents in Congress to agree to a new aid package for Ukraine. In particular, we have learned from their speeches that 90 per cent of the military budget allocated by the Americans to the Kyiv regime actually remains in the United States, since it is being spent on developing the country's military-industrial sector and on modernizing weapons. Meanwhile, the old junk is being disposed of in Ukraine. Most major Ukrainian factories and companies, including those manufacturing lithium, have also been sold to the Americans. In addition, fertile land is being leased to them under indefinite leases at very low prices. One striking example of that is the Soros entities' acquisition of fertile black soil for the disposal of waste from the Western chemical industry. Secretary of State Blinken has emphasized that the continued provision of aid to Ukraine guarantees the creation of new jobs in the United States. It is as if he is not talking about

financing a war that has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives in Ukraine, but rather about some lucrative business venture.

It is surely time for Europeans — and I am appealing to those of them with common sense — to finally wake up and realize that the United States, with the help of Zelenskyy's regime, is not only waging war against Russia but also carrying out its strategic task of drastically weakening Europe as an economic competitor. Washington has undermined its energy security, provoking dangerous crisis trends in the European economy and social sphere.

I will not even dwell for very long on the topic of the terrorist attacks on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines. The United States is dead set on blocking any attempt to conduct an honest international investigation of that, and the current European leaders, first and foremost in Germany, are obediently silent, having resigned themselves to public humiliation. At the same time, most European Union members continue to obediently follow Washington's orders to supply more and more weapons to Kyiv, emptying their arsenals, which they will replenish by purchasing products manufactured by the United States military-industrial complex. The Europeans will be forced to find enough money for that.

The death merchants have no shame whatsoever that their weapons, including cluster munitions and depleted uranium shells, are being used methodically, mercilessly and deliberately to knowingly strike purely civilian objects, as was the case with the strikes on residential neighbourhoods in Belgorod on 30 December and a market and some stores in Donetsk yesterday. The blood of dozens of dead civilians is on the hands and conscience of those who both arm the Zelenskyy regime and officially declare that the Kyiv authorities themselves have the right to determine the targets of their strikes. We remember how the Anglo-Saxons bombed Dresden in February 1945 without any military need, and how they relatively recently razed to the ground Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria. And now they have groomed very worthy successors for their barbaric terrorist methods.

The insane years-long pumping of weapons into the completely corrupt Zelenskyy regime has another very dangerous aspect. In an effort to maximize their profits from the conflict, those in charge in Kyiv are simply reselling some of the weapons supplied by the West on the black market. One can find plenty of advertisements for such weapons on the dark web. It would be hard to

imagine that this is happening without the knowledge and participation of Western businessmen, because, as they say, one hand washes the other. One of the most recent examples of this is the American M-16 rifles that have been transferred to Kyiv, which anyone can buy online with cryptocurrency. Of course, terrorist groups are taking advantage of the situation. The weapons fall into their hands and spread across Africa, the Middle East and even Latin America, further de-stabilizing already unstable regions.

This scandalous situation has reached such a scale that it is no longer possible to keep silent. Even the United States has had to officially recognize the problem. For example, a recent Pentagon report mentioned that the value of diverted weapons intended for the Armed Forces of Ukraine is in excess of \$1 billion, and I am sure that that is a modest figure. Some 40,000 weapons, including drones and grenade launchers, have simply not yet been accounted for, because no inventory was kept. It is my understanding that American inspectors have now gone to Kyiv to see for themselves what is happening on the ground, and we wish them every success.

We have repeatedly heard and will probably continue to hear today from our Western colleagues the disingenuous logic that can be summarized as follows: “if Russia stops fighting, the war will end, but if Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine will end”. The highest echelons of the United States even went so far as to say that Russia would then attack Poland, the Baltic States and Finland. There are many things that can be thought up in the hope of wheedling money out of Congress and European parliaments, by convincing them of the need to incessantly continue to help Ukraine, to the detriment of their own citizens and down to the very last dollar and euro.

In demanding Russia stop the special military operation, they understand perfectly well that if that suddenly happened, the Kyiv regime, after having licked its wounds, would then continue on its course of extermination of everything Russian and the Russian cultural, historical and religious identity that existed on the land for centuries. The Zelenskyy regime would continue to promote its rabid, misanthropic nationalism — which is foreign to the majority of the population — glorifying those who, together with the Nazis, exterminated hundreds of thousands of Jews, Roma, Russians, Poles and Ukrainians during the Second World War. The dictatorship would be strengthened,

the fight against the opposition and any kind of dissent would continue, and there would be many more political prisoners. And Western democracies would continue to ignore what is happening right before their very eyes and approvingly keep silent — just as they are doing now, even after an American citizen, journalist Gonzalo Lira, was tortured to death in a Ukrainian security service prison cell for publishing objective materials that were critical of Zelenskyy’s regime. Has anyone — I am referring to officials — in the West, especially the United States, said a word about that death? No. And today, Western delegations and representatives of the Kyiv regime are unlikely to find the courage to comment in any way on what is yet another egregious crime by Zelenskyy and his clique. Instead, we will continue to hear about “Russia’s aggression” and how they pledge their unwavering support for the Kyiv regime.

The deceitfulness and cowardice of Zelenskyy’s patrons was clearly demonstrated in the despicable staging of events in April 2022 in Bucha. Our many demands to be at least provided with the names of those who were allegedly killed by Russian servicemen remain unanswered. I have repeatedly addressed the Secretary-General on this subject, but to no avail. It seems he is simply not allowed to even try to establish the truth, because it would expose the Western puppeteers.

And what would happen if Ukraine stopped fighting? The lives of hundreds of thousands of people would definitely be saved — those whom the Kyiv authorities are trying to capture like cattle on the streets, in bars and churches, to be used as cannon fodder and sent to die for Western geopolitical interests and what they call “democratic values”. The Ukrainian people did not have any interest in being at war with Russia. They do not have it now either. There are only the interests of the Anglo-Saxons, their minions and the criminal, rotten top Kyiv leadership, who are intertwined with the West, as they have to cover for one another, and are afraid that they will be finished, the day after the war ends. They collectively sabotaged the Minsk agreements, stomping out a chance for peace in April 2022 when the United States and United Kingdom forbade Kyiv from concluding a peace treaty. They do not want peace even today, despite the fact that the Kyiv regime survives only thanks to Western handouts, as even the country’s talking heads recognize.

A majority of Ukrainians are beginning to realize who their real enemy is and who has been pulling the wool over their eyes for years, scaring them with

lies about Russia and trying to erase our common history. The changes in Ukrainians' understanding are clearly visible on social networks, for instance. Despite ruthless censorship, the truth is getting through about how people live in Crimea and the other areas that have recently reunited with Russia. Contrary to the predictions of Kyiv propagandists, Russians and Ukrainians, as well as other nationalities, live there together in peace and harmony. The new authorities are solving people's problems, improving their lives and developing their infrastructure, not thinking about how to line their own pockets. The contrast is so obvious that it is useless to deny it, which is why Ukraine and the West are trying everything they can to suppress that information — this truth. It is very dangerous for them, because it shows how Russians and Ukrainians can and should live in conditions when the West is not allowed to interfere in the relations of two brotherly peoples or use the old colonialist method of pitting them against each other.

And just as brothers and good neighbours should, once the goals of the special military operation have been implemented, whether by military or peaceful means, that is how they will live. Let me point out that we have never given up on a peaceful solution and have always remained ready to talk. The talks will not be about how to keep the leaders of the Kyiv regime in power and indulge their fantasies, but about how to overcome the legacy of its 10-year destructive plundering of the country and violence against its people and eliminate the reasons for the situation that is tragic for Ukraine. All the other supposedly peaceful plans and formulas that the Kyiv regime and its sponsors have vainly continued to promote have nothing to do with peace and serve only as a cover for prolonging the war and extracting money from Western taxpayers. It is sad that the Secretariat is compromising its reputation by participating in the utterly surreal so-called Copenhagen format. Those formulas are a road to nowhere and the sooner that Washington, London, Paris and Brussels realize that, the better it will be for both Ukraine and the West, whose crusade against Russia has already created clear risks to both its reputation and its existence. I would advise them to heed that advice before it is too late.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank Deputy High Representative Ebo for his informative briefing.

Almost two years ago, during its presidency of the Security Council, the Russian Federation decided to

violate fundamental principles of international law by launching a full-fledged war of aggression against its sovereign neighbour, acting in complete opposition to its duty to maintain international peace and security. Today's meeting is yet another attempt to rationalize the unjustifiable and to seek to provide a narrative where the victim is the aggressor and the aggressor is the victim.

Malta condemns Russia's current campaign, begun on 29 December, of systematic air strikes against civilian targets and critical infrastructure in Ukraine. Just last week it shelled the cities of Kharkiv and Odesa, injuring at least 20 civilians. Those relentless and inhumane attacks destroyed civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, medical facilities and life-supporting infrastructure. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international law. They are completely unacceptable and must stop. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the number of civilians confirmed killed since February 2022 has risen to more than 10,200, including 575 children, while more than 19,300 people have been injured.

The transfer to Russia of ballistic missiles, as well as any other arms and related material, from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran violates multiple Security Council resolutions, undermines the global non-proliferation regime and inflicts further suffering on the Ukrainian people. We condemn those violations in the strongest terms and call for all parties to fully abide by all pertinent resolutions. On top of Russia's drone attacks, shelling and destruction, several reports have shed light on Russia's systematic use of anti-personnel landmines and the use and transfer of cluster munitions in Ukraine. Malta echoes the Secretary-General's call for an immediate end to the use of those horrendous weapons, which have lasting and devastating consequences for innocent civilians long after a conflict ends. Russia's aggression has also exposed millions of Ukrainians to increasing risks of gender-based violence, trafficking, deportation and exploitation, with women and children the worst affected. Furthermore, beneath the physical damage to victims and survivors lurks deep-rooted psychological trauma that will affect millions for years to come. Malta will continue to help Ukraine in the face of the humanitarian needs created by the Russian aggression.

Malta also strongly supports all ongoing accountability processes and the important work of the International Court of Justice and the International

Criminal Court, as well as the essential mandates of the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine in ensuring the right to reparations for victims and for their country.

In conclusion, Malta reiterates that Ukraine has an inherent right to defend itself from Russia's aggression, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Just like any other State Member of this Organization, it has the right to protect its citizens, its borders, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity. Once again, we reiterate our call on Russia to end its hostilities and withdraw its military forces, equipment and proxies. The maintenance of international peace and security can be ensured only through a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing just now and welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at today's meeting.

It seems that the conflict in Ukraine is becoming protracted and complex, which China finds regrettable and worrisome. Given the increasing number of factors contributing to insecurity and instability globally, ending the Ukraine crisis, halting the hostilities and restoring peace is more urgent than ever. All parties should work harder to that end.

First, we must be committed to common security. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected. Security is indivisible. No country should attempt to secure itself at the expense of the security of another, nor can regional security be guaranteed by beefing up or even expanding a military bloc. The consequences of NATO's eastward expansion indicate that seeking so-called absolute security at other countries' expense will only widen the security and trust deficits and can do nothing to make our world more peaceful and stable. NATO would do well to learn a lesson in that regard. Russia and Ukraine are neighbours that cannot move away from each other even if they want to. Both should take each other's legitimate security concerns seriously. The ultimate way out of the conundrum lies in an effort on the part of both countries and all parties concerned to build a balanced, effective and sustainable security architecture guided

by the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

Secondly, negotiations must be resumed as soon as possible. There are no winners in conflict or war. Peace cannot be achieved by supplying weapons to the battlefield, and prolonged fighting will result only in more civilian casualties. We urge strict compliance with international humanitarian law and effective protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We must remain highly vigilant about nuclear safety risks. Diplomatic efforts must not be abandoned under any circumstances.

We call for the prompt launch of direct engagement and the incremental resumption of negotiations, with a view to forging consensus to end the hostilities. The international community and the United Nations should create the necessary conditions, and all parties should refrain from non-constructive actions or irresponsible rhetoric.

Thirdly, given the high incidence of devastating attacks and civilian casualties, the destruction of infrastructure and the inclement winter weather, humanitarian needs must be effectively addressed. Humanitarian needs in conflict areas are on the rise, and the humanitarian situation is distressing. We support the efforts of the international community and humanitarian organizations to step up relief to help the people in the affected areas get through the winter, improve humanitarian conditions on the ground and head off a humanitarian crisis of a greater magnitude.

Fourthly, we must spare no effort to curb the spillover of the crisis. As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict drags on and certain hotspot issues risk flaring up, the world cannot afford to see the further spread of geopolitical clashes. At the same time, the global economy is slowing down, developing countries are finding it even harder to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adverse impacts of the Ukraine crisis and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have further chilled the icy-cold global economy. Countries with significant influence should take a responsible approach, refrain from politicizing, instrumentalizing or weaponizing the world economy and should instead work together to maintain global food, energy and financial security, as well as the stability and smooth functioning of industries and supply chains.

The Ukraine issue is where it is today as a result of a range of complex factors that deserve our

serious reflection. If we look around, we can see that the world is beset with wars and conflicts, risks and challenges — constituting myriad uncertainties and threats to international peace and security. Complex problems defy simple fixes. In the face of all those challenges, the ultimate solution is for us to work harder to build a community with a shared future for humankind and shape a world imbued with lasting peace and universal security. Each country should play its part and work together to that end. China will continue to stand on the side of peace and justice and will work tirelessly to achieve international peace and security.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his insightful briefing.

I took note of the concern expressed about the risks of the diversion of weapons and ammunition and the need to ensure that arms transfers comply with relevant disarmament instruments and Security Council resolutions. As a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty, the conventions on biological weapons, chemical weapons, cluster munitions and anti-personnel landmines, among others, Guyana echoes the call for compliance with international law and international disarmament instruments and obligations. We share the view that the supply of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict situation has the potential to further escalate or prolong the violence and risks of diversion. We therefore urge all parties to ensure that all transfers are transparent, compliant with international legal frameworks and have provisions for controls to prevent their irregular transfer.

We are of the view that the only effective means of preventing further escalation or instability in Ukraine and the broader region is to end this war. Its prolongation poses increasingly grave risks and consequences for all countries and global peace and security. As Director Ebo recalled, estimates to date indicate that there have been almost 30,000 civilian casualties, including 10,000 killed since the start of the war two years ago. The scale of current humanitarian needs in Ukraine remains quite vast, with more than 14 million people in need of multisectoral humanitarian assistance. Equally alarming is the fact that 4 million people, including nearly 1 million children, are still displaced within Ukraine, while more than 6 million continue to live as refugees in neighbouring and other countries. The United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees estimates that close to \$1 billion is needed to support the humanitarian needs in Ukraine and in host countries. Those figures are staggering.

As we call upon the international community to scale up humanitarian support, we urge the parties to commit to a serious political and diplomatic process towards ending the conflict peacefully, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. War has no place in the twenty-first century. It is time that we come together to end the hostilities and deploy the necessary resources to rebuild lives.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I also thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

Almost two years have passed since the Russian Federation began its illegal armed invasion of Ukraine, and we continue to witness mounting civilian casualties as the war's impacts continue to reverberate around the globe.

My delegation has repeatedly expressed concerns about civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure inflicted by Russia's attacks. Indeed, our long-standing common principles, generally upheld by the international community and the United Nations itself, have been under attack as well.

As the majority of States Members of the United Nations have repeatedly affirmed, Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine, as well as its annexation of Ukrainian territories through the use of force, constitute serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Russia's claims cannot justify its illegal invasion nor the tragic humanitarian consequences the war has caused.

Furthermore, Russia's use of weapons from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a direct violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, as any arms transactions with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are prohibited by those resolutions, all of which Russia voted in favour of and were unanimously adopted.

Besides ammunition provided by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, short-range ballistic missiles supplied by the same country hit Ukraine on 30 December, 2 January and 6 January. Russia's use of North Korean missiles in Ukraine also has significant implications on nuclear non-proliferation globally, as well as in the Korean peninsula.

Since it is unprecedented for Security Council resolutions to be so seriously and flagrantly violated by a permanent member of the Security Council since the establishment of the sanctions regime against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2006, it is difficult to fathom the repercussions.

The missile in question was a short-range ballistic missile, which the Democratic People's Republic of Korea claims to be capable of having nuclear warheads mounted on it, and the flight range corresponds to the Korean peninsula. It generates revenue for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is likely to be used to further the development of its illegal nuclear and missile programmes. It could open the door for more arms sales to other States and non-State actors.

What is more problematic for us is the probability that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea may receive in return from Russia something important for its military capabilities, in particular nuclear and missile-related technologies. My delegation is strongly concerned about the recent visit of the Foreign Minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Choe Son Hui, to Moscow accompanying a senior official in charge of arms development and production. It is alarming that they were carrying documents, accidentally spotted by the media, that indicated their interest in continuing military cooperation with Russia. Under that deeply troubling backdrop, it is distressing to see that such a blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions is being committed by none other than a permanent member of the Security Council. My delegation condemns the ongoing military transactions between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In conclusion, my delegation strongly urges the Russian Federation once again to immediately withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine and to put an end to this brutal war. Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity should be respected. Ukraine's exercise of its inherent right to self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, must receive international support and assistance. The Republic of Korea is firmly committed to working with the international community towards a lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions, and we will maintain our support for Ukraine in the areas of security, humanitarian affairs and reconstruction.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Deputy High Representative Ebo for his briefing.

It is unfortunate that the Russian Federation continues to call for repeated meetings on this topic and to use the Council as a stage for its blatant disinformation, which we have unfortunately had to listen to this morning. It is cynicism of the highest order to claim that legitimate and lawful support for Ukraine's self-defence is prolonging Russia's war of aggression. It bears repeating that there are hundreds of thousands of Russian troops on Ukraine's internationally recognized territory. There is not a single Ukrainian soldier on Russian soil.

The Russian representative's accusations would sound more credible if his Government respected international law, the Charter of the United Nations and Security Council resolutions. The Secretary-General has reiterated on many occasions that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. No amount of conspiracy theories and baseless accusations erase the fact that Russia's violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity started this war. It is President Putin's single-minded pursuit of the obliteration of Ukraine and subjugation of its people that is prolonging it. Russia's imperialist designs are obvious, and this meeting is another effort to distract from its war crimes and aggression. It is an arsonist blaming the firefighters so it can continue its crime.

As its invasion has faltered, Russia has sought more gasoline for its fire. It turned to Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to procure additional weapons to use against Ukraine, its cities and its people. Russian forces have now used, against Ukraine, ballistic missiles originating from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and acquired in violation of Security Council resolutions at least three times. Last year, the United States brought to light clear evidence of Iran's unlawful transfers of armed Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles to Russia, despite restrictions in place at the time of this acquisition under resolution 2231 (2015). Those unlawful arms transfers and potential technology transfers from Russia to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea undermine regional stability and the global non-proliferation regime. The Council must hold to account any country that undermines its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

It is clear no country has paid a bigger price for Russia's aggression and wants peace more than Ukraine. The Ukraine-led peace formula meetings are a clear sign of continued interest from the international community in a just and lasting peace based on the United Nations

Charter. Last week, more than 80 countries gathered in Davos, Switzerland, for the fourth iteration of those meetings. Contrast those efforts with Russia, which speaks of an openness to dialogue while launching massive aerial assaults against Ukrainian cities. While Ukraine has been engaging in diplomacy with the international community, Russia has responded by launching missiles. Russia even attacked Ukraine while the Secretary-General and an African peace delegation were visiting Kyiv. Do not just listen to Russia's words. Look at its actions.

Russia can end this war today, but until it chooses to do so, the international community must continue to support Ukraine, the United Nations Charter and the principles necessary to bring about a just and lasting peace. Russia must immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, cease its unlawful procurement of materiel originating from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and meet its responsibilities as a member of the Council and the international community.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I would like to start by thanking the French presidency for convening this important briefing on Ukraine. I also thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his valuable insights.

Despite repeated pleas for peace and multiple sessions of the Security Council on Ukraine, any plausible resolution remains elusive as we approach the 700th day mark since the conflict started. The persistence of hostilities is a clear indication of the shortcomings of our existing diplomatic attempts. It is critical that we find faster, more practical ways to help quell this Ukraine conflict and reach a sustainable settlement.

As we have stated repeatedly, the unchecked flow of weapons not only exacerbates the conflict but also complicates any peacemaking efforts. The involvement of multiple States in supplying arms to both sides of the conflict further complicates the international legal landscape and hinders diplomatic efforts. Regrettably, the ongoing flow of weapons reflects the prevailing military mindset among the belligerents, who are convinced that their disagreements can only be resolved by force and military means. However, history has, time and again, shown that military solutions rarely result in lasting peace and often perpetuate a vicious cycle of bloodshed and humanitarian disasters.

Experiences from various parts of the world, particularly from Africa — our own continent — shows that military victories are often pyrrhic. Therefore, in order to achieve durable peace, the parties need a paradigm shift from military force to genuine communication and sincere negotiation. They owe it to their people and future generations.

As we entered 2024, we hoped for a course correction towards de-escalation and stability, which would have provided some breathing room for negotiations. Instead, this new year has seen heightened turmoil worldwide, reflecting our collective failure to invest adequately in resolving protracted conflicts globally.

The Ukrainian conflict exacerbated instability and changed the nature of conflicts far afield. The ripples can be felt even in Africa, posing significant challenges to the implementation of the Silencing the Guns initiative. The Silencing the Guns initiative already contends with complex root causes of conflict such as poverty, inequality and political marginalization. Now, it must also navigate an increasingly militarized global landscape.

Moreover, the crisis impacts socioeconomic systems in Africa and beyond. Disruptions in energy supplies have raised costs worldwide. Supply chain breakdowns and trade stoppages affect industries globally. African economies also suffer from financial market volatility and currency fluctuations. That illustrates how geopolitical shocks reverberate across continents, highlighting the interconnectedness of our socioeconomic systems.

We have long advocated for dialogue and negotiation as the sole paths to decisively end hostilities and build foundations for enduring peace. That approach aligns with the principles of peaceful conflict resolution upheld by various international bodies, including the United Nations. The emphasis on negotiation over military actions reflects Mozambique's own experience and its commitment to the principles of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Confidence-building measures are critical in laying the groundwork for peace and ensuring the success of negotiations. The largest exchange of prisoners early in the year, mediated by the United Arab Emirates, is a prime example of such measures in action. To build on that momentum, further initiatives could include ceasefires, communication channels for crisis

management, engagement in arms control measures and opening up access for humanitarian aid.

In the light of the ongoing escalation, Mozambique urges a renewed emphasis on diplomacy to achieve peace in Ukraine.

Finally, we firmly believe open communication and mutual understanding to be the critical keys to a lasting peace.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Deputy to High Representative Ebo for his briefing.

Let me focus on three messages that we would like to convey at today's meeting.

First, with regard to the arms transfers, we would like to state our deep concern about the military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as well as Russia's import of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ballistic missiles. Those actions constitute serious violations of multiple Security Council resolutions and should be further addressed by the Council.

Secondly, the Russian Federation is waging a war of aggression against its neighbour. It is as simple as that. It is indeed cynical and quite audacious for it to present its own aggression as concerns for European autonomy, European taxpayers, European soil and European civilians, who it keeps bombing. We say, "No, thank you."

A number of countries, including my own, are responding to the request for help from Ukraine with one sole purpose: helping Ukraine to protect its citizens, helping Ukraine to defend itself on its own territory, in accordance with the right to self-defence of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

We are looking forward to the day when Russia withdraws its troops, peace returns to Ukraine and the two neighbours are able to coexist peacefully. Until then, we will be calling on Russian Federation to stop the aggression and to comply with the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 on the inviolability of European frontiers and with Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations on refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State.

Thirdly, my country entered the Council with the declared aspiration to contribute to building trust, peace and security whenever and wherever it can. The same international law, international humanitarian law

and international human rights law that the Russian Federation is applying to the situation in Gaza applies to Ukraine as well. We remind the Russian Federation of its call for the rejection of double standards.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing. Let me also thank the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Adedeji Ebo, for his briefing.

Sierra Leone continues to express grave concern about the regrettable serious situation created in Ukraine by the war with its serious ramifications for international peace and security. As already noted, that is based on our fundamental belief in the sanctity of the Charter of the United Nations, its principles and the purposes of the Organization. Accordingly, Sierra Leone has been consistent in expressing commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and respect for its principles and international law, including the principles of sovereign equality of all United Nations Member States, the territorial integrity and political independence of Member States, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

As we have already outlined our principal position on the conflict in Ukraine in the Chamber, including reiterating our call for the full respect of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, we have the strong conviction that the parties to the conflict, as well as the involved parties, must take meaningful steps towards the immediate cessation of hostilities and encourage good-faith diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.

As noted already by our briefer, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that, at the end of 2023, well more than 10,000 civilians had been killed and more than 18,000 injured since the conflict in Ukraine began in February 2022. More than 10 million have been forced to flee their homes, including more than 6.3 million who have sought refuge outside Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine has been going on for more than two years without an end in sight and with a seeming military stalemate. In that regard, Sierra Leone notes the Russian Federation's claim that Western arms transfers to Ukraine are prolonging the war and undermining efforts to resolve the conflict. Additionally, Sierra Leone also takes note of the claims by some members of the Council that the Russian Federation is receiving

arms from sanctioned Member States, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions.

Sierra Leone is of the firm view that the supply of weapons in any armed conflict creates risks of escalation and diversion of resources from socioeconomic development. That has been demonstrated in the Ukraine conflict with the increase in the death toll and the massive destruction of civilian infrastructure over the past two years. Sierra Leone therefore calls for measures to prevent the diversion of ammunition and weapons — such as pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification — to help to support conflict prevention and post-conflict recovery, among other things. Sierra Leone condemns any form of illicit transfers of weapons and reiterates that any transfer of weapons must take place within the applicable international legal framework.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is not improving, and we have previously stated in the Council that more than 14.6 million people — about 40 per cent of the Ukrainian population living in Ukraine — will need humanitarian assistance in 2024.

In our view, the focus in the Ukraine conflict should be threefold.

First, we must focus on seeking an end to the conflict. We therefore call on the parties to the conflict to cease hostilities and engage constructively in order to find a political and diplomatic solution, as envisaged in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Secondly, we must address the dire humanitarian situation, especially in Ukraine. That cannot be fully addressed if fighting is ongoing. With no end to the conflict in sight, the destruction of life and property will continue on both sides of the conflict in a vicious cycle of violence.

Thirdly, we must avoid a nuclear catastrophe. With fighting going on in and around nuclear facilities and plants, there is no denying the possibility that they could be hit by a projectile from either side in the conflict, which would in turn lead to a situation that no one in the Council is willing to contemplate.

Let me conclude by further reiterating Sierra Leone's call for an immediate cessation of the hostilities and for full respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We

encourage good-faith diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, which includes giving due consideration to the legitimate concerns of all the parties involved.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We acknowledge the presence of Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, at today's meeting. We thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his informative briefing. And I welcome Ukraine's participation in today's meeting.

Ecuador has underscored that war, occupation and armed violence result in human rights violations and abuses. The recent report of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine reveals an alarming increase in the number of civilian casualties there. Between 29 December 2023 and 20 January of this year alone, hundreds of civilians were wounded or lost their lives as a result of the increasing number of missile and drone attacks by the Russian Federation. The deaths that occurred yesterday in the occupied city of Donetsk highlight the pain and suffering that civilians face.

My delegation has also recognized the inalienable right of every nation to self-defence, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including, of course, Article 51, which is a pillar of the concept of peaceful coexistence between nations. We recognize the risks posed by large-scale flows of weapons and ammunition, which can contribute to possible escalation and lead to diversion and proliferation even after a conflict has ended. Measures to counter those risks are therefore pivotal for regional security and stability and post-conflict recovery, as well as for preventing conflict in other regions. We reiterate the need to prioritize the protection of civilians and respect international humanitarian law's restrictions on the use of explosives in populated areas and regarding the destruction of civilian infrastructure indispensable to a population's survival.

Any transfers of weapons should take place in accordance with the applicable legal framework and subject to guarantees that can ensure that the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution are upheld. Besides that, we reiterate our urgent call on all the parties to the conflict to ensure unfettered access for experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency to all areas of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine. It will be vital to guarantee the plant's security and protection if we are to prevent an accident

that would have devastating consequences not only for Ukraine but for the region and the entire world.

Ecuador appreciates all international efforts designed to prioritize negotiations and diplomacy. We again call for an end to Russia's occupation of and military aggression against Ukraine, as stipulated by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022, in order to pave the way for a peaceful solution rooted in respect for the principles of the Charter.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

Two years ago, Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since its illegal and unprovoked attack began, more than 300,000 Russian personnel have been killed or wounded. Mothers and wives of Russia's soldiers have been arrested or ignored. Thousands of Russian anti-war protesters have been detained. Media organizations have been shut down, and many journalists are now in Russian prisons. Russia's military modernization has been set back 18 years. Russia's defence industry is now stripping down fridges for parts. It orders its weapons from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of multiple resolutions agreed in the Chamber, under the Russian Foreign Minister's instruction. Its purchase and use of Iranian drones involve the violation of a Security Council resolution by both States.

And for what? Was it to lose more than half of the land it has seized since February 2022 and a fifth of its Black Sea Fleet? Was it to have its economy deprived of more than \$400 billion by sanctions and by the hundreds of thousands of young Russians who have emigrated for a better future? This war benefits no one — not Russians, and certainly not Ukrainians. The last time the Russian Foreign Minister was here (see S/PV.9421), he spoke of protecting the rights of Russian-speakers in Ukraine. Yet the only threat to any civilians in Ukraine continues to come from Russia, which has continued to impede access for humanitarian organizations to millions of people in need. The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has reported a systematic pattern of torture of Ukrainian civilians by Russian authorities. Russian missile strikes continue to strike population centres, with some of the most intense waves so far falling during the New Year.

And Russia says it wants peace. But while Ukraine, the United Kingdom and approximately 80 other countries were in Davos last week, discussing President

Zelenskyy's plans for peace based on principles of the Charter of the United Nations that everyone here has signed up to, the Deputy Head of Russia's National Security Council was proclaiming that there could never be peace while an independent State of Ukraine existed. That is not peace. It is subjugation, which would threaten Ukraine's very existence as a State and usher in a new era of global instability.

That is why the United Kingdom will continue to replenish Ukraine's air defences to help it shield its civilians from those brutal attacks. It is why we have signed a new long-term agreement on security cooperation and announced £2.5 billion more in military aid and £18 million more in humanitarian aid for Ukraine. It is because Ukraine's security matters for global security. As my Prime Minister said on his recent visit to Kyiv, we remain unwavering in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its borders and to ensuring Ukraine's ability to defend itself, resist future coercion, choose its own future and prosper peacefully.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): I thank Deputy High Representative Adedeji Ebo for his briefing.

Algeria is deeply concerned about the hotspots and tensions that are increasing worldwide while our collective efforts fail to bring about lasting and peaceful solutions to conflict. At this complicated juncture, the Security Council, the primary organ responsible for maintaining international peace and security, has fallen short in fulfilling its mandate. That is mainly due to worsening polarization, which contributes only to prolonging crises and escalating tensions.

Algeria shares the concern regarding the use of weapons and ammunition of increasing lethality and destructive power. The flow of such weapons and ammunition into conflict areas will only increase the loss of life, prolong the suffering of the population and further hinder the prospect of foreseeable solutions. We call upon all parties to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

No effort should be spared to alleviate human suffering. Unfortunately, there is at this moment no effort, no initiative and no mediation to stop the hostilities. Our focus as the Security Council should be on promoting peaceful solutions by creating the conditions for inclusive and constructive dialogue.

That endeavour must be guided by the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. Algeria believes that only a just and lasting peace based on the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the legitimate security concerns of all parties can resolve the crisis. We also believe that it is paramount to promote and intensify international diplomatic efforts to achieve peace, not only in Ukraine but everywhere in the world.

At this juncture, I am sorry to remind the Council that the Palestinian territories should not be exception. The carnage perpetrated by the occupying Power and the killing of 24,000 Palestinians in Gaza must also stop now — 24,000 victims in three months, compared to 10,000 during the war in Ukraine in two years. I cannot describe otherwise the horror of killing hundreds of innocent children and women every day in Gaza and depriving an entire population of basic services and humanitarian assistance indispensable to their survival. Let us not forget the Palestinians in Gaza. For us, Palestinian lives also matter.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing.

In 1956, the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time, Dag Hammarskjöld, reminded us here in this Chamber that:

“The principles of the Charter are, by far, greater than the Organization in which they are embodied, and the aims which they are to safeguard are holier than the policies of any single nation or people.” (S/PV.751, p. 1)

The universality of those principles forms the backbone of international law and of relations between peoples and nations. One of those fundamental principles is the prohibition of the use of force. Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine is a flagrant violation of that principle, a violation that Switzerland condemns in the strongest possible terms.

After almost two years, the suffering caused by this war reminds us of the centrality of the Charter and its principles. As the Secretary-General said in Davos, Switzerland, last week, “when global norms collapse, so does trust”. That is why Switzerland once again urges Russia to cease hostilities immediately and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory. Under the Charter of the United Nations, Ukraine has the right to

ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We reiterate that compliance with multilateral conventions and instruments on arms transfers, including the resolutions of the Council, is essential. We are particularly concerned by reports that Russia may have received weapons and even used ballistic missiles from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in recent attacks. We call on Russia and all other States Members of the United Nations to comply fully with their commitments under the relevant United Nations resolutions, such as resolution 1718 (2006), which prohibits all arms transfers to and from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Almost two years since the start of the military aggression, the Ukrainian population is relying on international solidarity to stay warm and to have a place to live and food to eat. The unprecedented intensification of Russian attacks on towns and infrastructure throughout the country, in extreme winter conditions, is killing civilians by the hundreds and exacerbating humanitarian needs. We also deplore the attacks on civilians in Russian-controlled eastern Ukraine, notably in Donetsk on Sunday. We recall that international humanitarian law must be respected at all times and that the parties to the conflict must ensure the protection of the civilian population and respect the rules governing the conduct of hostilities.

We echo the call by the United Nations to meet the needs of Ukrainians inside and outside their country in 2024. I can assure you that Switzerland will continue to make its contribution. However, as long as the military aggression persists, the suffering will continue. Efforts to achieve a just peace in Ukraine must therefore be redoubled.

True to our long-standing commitment to peace, we stand ready to support any initiative and dialogue aimed at achieving peace in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The participation of 82 countries and international organizations in the fourth meeting of national security advisors in Davos last week attests to the growing desire to discuss the principles for restoring lasting peace in Ukraine. We welcome that willingness to work for peace on a transregional level.

Switzerland wishes to make its contribution in that respect. That is why, at the request of the Ukrainian President, we have committed ourselves to the efforts aimed at consolidating a common understanding of

the path to lasting peace in Ukraine, shared by the broadest possible representation of countries. A high-level conference would thus help lay the foundations for future peace negotiations, bringing together all parties in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, which calls for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

This war ultimately concerns all the signatory States to the Charter, as it contravenes that universal treaty. As an elected member of the Security Council and beyond, we are deeply committed to upholding the principles of the Charter and to protecting and restoring peace on our continent and elsewhere.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Adedeji Ebo for his briefing.

Russia has called for this meeting, claiming that Western arms transfers to Ukraine are aggravating the crisis and undermining efforts to achieve a peaceful solution. One loses count of how many times Russia has requested similar Security Council meetings since its aggression against Ukraine began in February 2022 simply for its political purposes.

Russia has expressed its concern about the support for Ukraine, which is to assist Ukraine in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity against it. There is no doubt that this support is just and legal under international law. On the other hand, Russia is ruthlessly using its own weapons, including those obtained from North Korea against Ukraine, in violation of Security Council resolutions, on top of its aggression — which is itself a violation of the Charter of the United Nations in the first place. Russia has killed so many civilians and then calls for peace without hesitation. Given the countless number of victims and injuries, no reasonable person can be convinced by its words. Accountability remains of the utmost importance.

As repeatedly emphasized, this is not merely a European issue. It affects the whole of the international community, including Japan. Russia has been challenging the legitimate international judicial institutions, such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, and ignoring the voices of the General Assembly and people around the world. Its actions shake the very foundations of the international order based on the rule of law. Therefore, this is not about choosing sides between Russia and others, nor is it a conflict between the West and Russia, as Russia often claims. In this war of aggression, there

are only those who violate the Charter of the United Nations and those who defend it. That is an undeniable fact, which cannot be changed no matter what Russia attempts to do. We respect the calls for and efforts towards peace by many countries. Peace is desired by all. Once again, Japan emphasizes that a just and lasting peace in Ukraine must be based on the Charter of the United Nations, and the call for peace should indeed be directed at Russia. Just as Russia initiated this war of aggression, Russia can decide to end it.

Japan has experienced many natural disasters and was recently hit by a major earthquake. We received messages of sympathy and solidarity from all over the world, including from countries in difficult situations, such as Ukraine. We are grateful for all of them. The suffering of the Ukrainian people is not caused by a natural disaster. The aggression by Russia is an entirely man-made disaster. It can be stopped by Russia. Japan once again calls for Russia's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the entire internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. We will stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes.

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

I would like to thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

For almost two years now, Russia has been bombarding us with all kinds of pretexts to justify its war of aggression against Ukraine. However, its edifice of lies does not stand up to the facts: Russia has, every day since 24 February 2022, had the choice to cease its aggression, without compromising its own security in any way. Furthermore, Ukraine's backers are no more responsible than Ukraine itself for the continuation of the conflict.

Our support falls within the framework of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It allows Ukraine to defend its territory and its population. Antiaircraft capabilities help it to protect itself against Russian strikes that target civilians and civilian infrastructure. By training the Armed Forces of Ukraine, we are helping them to repel the assaults of the Russian forces. That support goes further than just the case of Ukraine. The fight that the Ukrainians are waging is also a fight for our Charter and our collective security. It is a fight for the territorial integrity of every Member State to be respected, without fear of being attacked by a neighbour.

Russia, meanwhile, remains indifferent to the calls to desist and continues its illegal war. It is ignoring both the International Court of Justice, which, on 16 March 2022, ordered it to withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, and the General Assembly, which, by an overwhelming majority on four occasions, has affirmed and reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In order to wage its illegal war, Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, is acquiring drones from Iran and ballistic missiles from North Korea, in violation of the Council's resolutions. In doing so, it is weakening our non-proliferation regimes.

Russia claims to be concerned about a peaceful settlement of the conflict. In reality, only Ukraine has launched a credible process to work towards a just and lasting peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and involving a growing number of countries. We support Ukraine and will continue to support it.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I recognize Putin's representative in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

I am not surprised that the person for whom the Russian Ambassador requested this meeting has quickly extracted himself from the Chamber. Nevertheless, we acknowledge the importance of the Security Council's platform for documenting the testimonies of the modern reincarnations of Von Ribbentrop and his henchmen. Those testimonies will undoubtedly be used in future trials against war criminals, and justice will be served, even if now the unjust state of affairs is so pervasive.

In 1952, Fritz Bauer, who played an essential role in the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials, formulated the term "Nazi unjust State" and tried to enable remembrance and enlightenment in the midst of a justice system that was surrounded, as in Russia today, by a population for whom turning a blind eye, keeping quiet, lying and the brazen awareness of injustice were the order of the day. His credo was: "Nothing belongs to the past, everything is still present, and has the potential to become the future."

We reiterate that the Russian war against Ukraine and the occupation of the Ukrainian sovereign territories have been and remain the only source of suffering for

the civilian population. Only yesterday, the Russian army shelled more than 100 Ukrainian cities, towns and villages in nine regions, from Chernihiv and Sumy to Mykolayiv and Kirovohrad. The most brutal Russian attacks were in the Donetsk region. The Russian Federation initially requested this meeting to discuss the issue of weapon supplies. Indeed, transfers of weapons and military equipment that Russia receives, in particular from Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, continue to fuel the conflict and result in an increased toll of casualties among the civilian population of Ukraine.

The same Fritz Bauer, who I have already quoted, once told his colleague some years after the military defeat of the Nazi regime, that "as soon as I leave the confines of my office, I am on enemy territory". When I leave my office here in New York, I am not on enemy territory, and prior to the Security Council meeting, a group of Member States delivered a joint statement on the matter of the supply of weapons and munitions to the Russian Federation by some States in violation of the relevant Council resolutions. I am not alone, as members saw an hour ago, and I am not on enemy territory here in the Council. I invite everyone to read the statement very carefully, and those wishing to can still join the statement.

Another testimony, or rather full confession, was made last week by a certain Medvedev, the former Russian President and currently Putin's deputy in the Russian Security Council. He openly and honestly outlined on his Telegram channel the real goal of Russia's war on Ukraine, which is to kill all Ukrainians as long as they want to have their own independent country. Any other understanding of his statement is hardly possible, given that he said that

"[t]he existence of Ukraine is fatally dangerous for Ukrainians. They will understand that life with Russia in a large, shared State, which at the moment they do not very much want, is better than death — their deaths and the deaths of their loved ones. And the sooner Ukrainians realize that, the better".

That is plainly and simply a manifesto for genocide, one that could only be compared to another such manifesto, written almost 100 years ago and known under the title *Mein Kampf*. Much has been said about the fact that that Russia's actions and words precisely echo those of the Nazis. It may seem awkward that Russia accuses others of neo-Nazism in order to

justify its aggression, but in fact it is an example of the psychological phenomenon of projection, when one attributes one's own thoughts, feelings and ideas to others. The catchphrase "war until the last Ukrainian", which the Russian delegation has so often used in this Chamber as an accusation, is therefore in fact its keen desire. According to Mr. Medvedev's admission, the Russians are indeed going to wage a war down to the last Ukrainian, simply because their model of the world includes neither Ukraine nor Ukrainians. And that is the only reason why Russia is so obsessed both with Ukraine's resilience and the global solidarity with my country — solidarity that in particular results in supplies of weapons to assist Ukraine in exercising its right to self-defence, in strict accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is imperative to underscore that Russia's determination to inflict harm on Ukrainian civilians has not diminished but has in fact significantly intensified. Russia has increased its numbers of attacks and of missiles launched across Ukraine. The casualty figures have dropped because most Russian missiles do not reach their targets, and that is solely due to the bolstered air defence provided by our allies. That is what is literally saving our children, alongside the evacuation measures implemented by Ukrainian authorities to protect residents in the most dangerous areas.

Yesterday marked the hundredth anniversary of the death of Lenin, another idol of Russians today and the leader of the Bolsheviks' coup d'état in Russia. Some of us may recall how often Putin has publicly blamed him for creating Ukraine. It may therefore seem baffling that the Russian invaders' initial actions in many occupied Ukrainian settlements included the re-erecting of Lenin's monuments. However, that was quite logical, as the current Kremlin dictator has striven to follow closely in the footsteps of his Bolshevik predecessor. In reality, Lenin had a very straightforward maxim that he repeatedly communicated to his accomplices, which was "if we lose Ukraine, we lose our head" — and the Russians have indeed lost their heads.

The colonial and imperial attitude to Ukraine has always been a hallmark of the Russian authorities, whether they are tsars, Soviet communists or Putin's criminals. And from their perspective, peace in the current war is a way to lose Ukraine. That is why the Russian Federation so strongly opposes the implementation of the peace formula. To ask a rather rhetorical question, what exactly is it that Russia objects

to? Is it the idea of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, or the fact that the peace should be based on the principles of the Charter? And regardless of Russia's sentiments, the peace process is well under way. The fourth meeting of national security and foreign policy advisers on the implementation of the peace formula was held in Davos on 14 January. More than 80 States and international organizations participated in the meeting, testifying to the rapidly growing interest in the peace formula. The meeting focused on discussing specific points of the formula, notably the withdrawal of Russian troops and a cessation of hostilities, the restoration of justice, environmental safety and the prevention of an escalation or repetition of the aggression, in a confirmation that we are moving towards the end of the war.

In addition, two special sessions were held on food security and the humanitarian aspects of the war. As stated in the press communiqué by the meeting's co-Chairs, Ukraine and Switzerland, the meeting outlined the prerequisites for preparing for a meeting of leaders of States and Governments, giving impetus to a high-level meeting to establish a common and universal basis for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on the Ukrainian peace formula. It was also emphasized that Ukraine's security is an integral part of world and regional security. The war against Ukraine therefore continues to be one of the main destabilizing factors for global security, and in that context, the peace efforts must be significantly strengthened if we are to end the war in a just and comprehensive way. The task of the world community should not only be to end the war but to overcome the consequences of all the crises it has caused throughout the world.

Symbolically, today my country marks the Day of Unity of Ukraine. Unity has many dimensions and manifestations. It is the resilience of Ukrainian soldiers defending their native soil from a bloody aggressor. It is a record number of participants in Davos promoting peace for Ukraine. It is solidarity with Ukraine, including here in this Chamber. It is assistance from our allies aimed at enhancing our defence capacities. It is also a shared commitment to the values of democracy, freedom and justice. I encourage the Council to be guided by that perception and spirit of unity, as it is essential for the prospects of the efforts to maintain international peace and security as a whole.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.