



Security Council

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Provisional

President: Mr. Afonso (Mozambique)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Gaouaoui
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. De La Gasca
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mrs. Frazier
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Polyanskiy
Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
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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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of sympathy on the passing away of Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The President: At the outset of the meeting, I should like, at the request of the delegations of the Russian Federation, China and Algeria and on behalf of the members of the Security Council, to ask that all those present now stand and join in observing a minute of silence in memory of the lives lost in a helicopter crash involving the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other passengers, and to present the Council's condolences and sympathy to their families and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: 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: Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; and Ms. Margaret Kimberley, activist and civil society representative.

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

I give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: Before I start, I would like to extend my condolences to the families of the deceased and the people of Iran following the passing of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, Minister for Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and the other passengers in yesterday's tragic helicopter crash.

Almost 27 months have passed since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. That

represents more than 800 days of death, destruction, widespread devastation and immense suffering for the Ukrainian people.

Regrettably, the security situation continues to deteriorate. The escalating attacks on Ukrainian villages, towns and cities, including in particular in the Kharkiv region, have led to more civilian deaths and injuries, as well as massive destruction of civilian infrastructure. Strikes have also been reported inside the Russian Federation, reportedly also resulting in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

The continued and intensified attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are unacceptable. All parties to any armed conflict have an obligation to protect civilians in armed conflict and to ensure compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Let me say it again: deliberate and direct attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and indiscriminate attacks, including disproportionate attacks, are prohibited under international humanitarian law. All such attacks must stop immediately. Attention should also be paid to the environmental damage and the impact on human health and ecosystems resulting from the use of weapons.

Turning now to the subject of today's briefing, over the past few months, the provision of military assistance and transfers of arms and ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces have continued. Much of the information from Governments about their transfers of weapons systems and ammunition to Ukraine 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 and small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. There have also 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 of those weapons having been used in Ukraine. I reiterate that any transfer of weapons and ammunition must take place within the applicable international legal framework, including, of course, the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Reports related to the transfer and use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions in Ukraine are deeply concerning. An immediate end must be brought to the use of those inherently indiscriminate

weapons, which have a devastating and long-lasting humanitarian impact on civilians. Ukraine is now one of the world's most heavily mine-contaminated countries, and it will require decades of clearance efforts, with the support of the international community, to ensure that communities are safe from the threat of mines.

The large-scale influx of arms and ammunition into any armed conflict raises significant concerns for peace and security, including as a result of diversion and proliferation, even after the conflict has ended. Importing, transit, producing and exporting States must act responsibly at every step along the arms and ammunition transfer chain to prevent diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse. Pre-transfer risk assessments, marking and record-keeping practices and tracing capabilities are of the utmost importance. To prevent the diversion of conventional arms and regulate the international arms trade, States have established a number of arms control treaties and instruments. They include the Arms Trade Treaty; the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition; the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument; and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. Universal participation in the relevant treaties and the full and effective implementation of those treaties and instruments must remain a priority.

From 24 February 2022 to 16 May 2024, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that conflict-related violence killed at least 11,017 civilians and injured 21,445 in Ukraine. It is very concerning that the number of injured civilians has increased significantly for the second month in a row. As in past months, the vast majority of civilian casualties are the result of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. The Secretary-General has consistently and unequivocally urged all sides to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as such use is highly likely to result in indiscriminate direct and long-term harm, and to ultimately take combat out of urban areas altogether. I take this opportunity to refer to 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.

Regrettably, the use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles continues to cause civilian deaths and injuries, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure. Just like any other weapons or weapons systems, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles must not be used in a manner inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

I wish to reiterate the United Nations commitment to support all meaningful efforts to bring about a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine, pursuant to the United Nations Charter and international law, including relevant General Assembly resolutions. It is time to put an end to this war.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Kimberley.

Ms. Kimberley: I am grateful for this opportunity to address the Security Council and to provide a briefing on the issue of peace as it relates to Ukraine and its connections with people in this country and all over the world.

As a journalist, the Executive Editor of *Black Agenda Report*, a member of the Black Alliance for Peace and of the United National Antiwar Coalition and as a citizen of the United States, the nation taking a lead role in continuing the crisis, I am eager to speak to this issue. As of now, the United States has allocated nearly \$175 billion for the Ukrainian war effort and to support the workings of Ukraine's civilian Government.

For the past two years we have seen a terrible war that would end if this country and others would stop providing arms and instead seek peace. There were opportunities for that to happen in March and April 2022, when the Government of Türkiye hosted peace talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. The possibility of peace was lost when my country and others subverted those talks by promising the Government of Ukraine that it would receive an endless supply of weapons with which to achieve a military victory. Not only has that victory been elusive, but thousands of Ukrainians — the people this country claims to care so much about — have lost their lives. And of course, many Russians have also perished. The goal should be for the death toll to end for both nations.

We do not have to guess why that huge sum of money has been spent. We need only recall what the President of the United States and his foreign policy

team have said publicly. The Secretary of Defence, in a rare moment of candour, famously said that the United States wanted to “see Russia weakened”. That is a dangerous goal for the United States to have at all. The world needs cooperation. It is the only way to avoid escalation and disastrous outcomes between the major Powers. The United States should not be attempting to weaken any nation but should instead be continuously engaged in finding ways to prevent and to end conflict.

Not only is the Secretary’s confession dangerous, but it has surely failed. President Biden himself said that United States-imposed sanctions against Russia would “turn the ruble to rubble”. No such thing has happened, and other nations have suffered economically from the futile effort to keep Russian oil off of world markets. Global South nations, in particular, were most impacted by what turned out to be a failed effort. More developed nations, those in Europe, have been deprived of affordable gas supplies that they reliably received from Russia for decades.

There have been other serious consequences, and some of them have fallen on people in this country, the one most responsible for continuing the crisis. Project Ukraine, as it is called, is a bipartisan effort, with both Republicans and Democrats supporting the continued infusion of huge sums of money to the defence industry, the military-industrial complex and to dubious projects in Ukraine itself. That funding is not spent on the military alone, but is also literally supplying many domestic Government functions within that country. Most Americans are unaware, for example, that small businesses in Ukraine are being supported with their public funds, with at least \$25 billion in non-military aid being spent.

It is not as if people in this country are not in need of help. Money for weapons continues, thanks to consensus among the political class, while needy people here are being removed from the Medicaid programme, which pays for health care for low-income people, as well as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Students take on thousands of dollars in debt to attend universities. The same Administration that is committed to spending money on weapons has never presented a plan to help the estimated 500,000 people in the United States who are unhoused. There are constantly calls to cut or end these programmes altogether, but the funding stream for war remains untouched. Democracy itself is in crisis because of these endless conflicts. War is not the only indicator of violence in the world, and peace

is not just the absence of conflict. War-making leads to immiseration, which is antithetical to the concept of peace.

The United States public does not have the unanimity of opinion on Ukraine that one would expect considering that billions of dollars have been allocated. Even those who say they support this effort also say that they would like to see negotiations too. A recent poll indicated that 71 per cent of people in this country would like to see a negotiated settlement instead of ongoing conflict.

But the millions of Americans who want an end to the conflict have been deprived of the representation we are supposed to have. Not only does the Administration refuse to reconsider its position, but there are reports that President Biden wants to prevent future presidents from playing a different role. According to President Zelenskyy, he is working with the United States and other NATO nations on a 10-year plan to provide weapons. Joe Biden can only serve for a maximum of four and a half more years, meaning that he wants to make a commitment that a future president could not change. In doing so, he invalidates the concerns of voters in this country and of the people who are supposed to represent them.

As a citizen of the United States, I am shocked by the lengths this country will go to in order to pursue a dangerous plan that is doomed to fail. The most recent tranche of United States weapons funding is dependent upon Ukraine mobilizing approximately 500,000 more men. Several million Ukrainians fled to nearby States in 2022, but are now being told that they cannot renew their passports abroad. They must return to Ukraine, where we see videos of men literally being press-ganged into service, dragged off the street and forced to join the military. The freedom that is allegedly being fought for seems to require a lack of freedom for Ukrainians who face the risk of death in the battlefield. This corruption requires a steady stream of indoctrination and propaganda in order to keep the United States population from asking questions or actively opposing the war. I suppose that this is why Secretary of State Antony Blinken thought it wise to perform with a Ukrainian band on his last visit to Kyiv. Not only that, but neither the Secretary nor his handlers were aware that the song he performed, *Rockin’ in the Free World*, is a lament about poverty and hopelessness in a supposedly free world, which is not truly free.

The Administration is so divorced from reality that it thought it wise for Secretary Blinken to play that song as men were rounded up to be cannon fodder.

I want to add that the conflict did not begin in February 2022. It began years earlier with the United States plan to have Ukraine join NATO. In 2008, William Burns, then United States Ambassador to Russia, revealed in a cable known to us, because of the work of Wikileaks, that doing so would cross a Russian red line and potentially lead to “a major split, involving violence or at worst civil war”. As we all know Wikileaks publisher Julian Assange languishes in a United Kingdom prison, facing extradition to the country that has made an example of him because he has revealed secrets such as that cable.

I reiterate that there have been peace proposals in the past two years, with the most recent attempt being made by the People’s Republic of China, which has developed a comprehensive 12-point plan that could mean the end of destruction and suffering if it is given serious consideration.

Lastly, I would make a plea to the United Nations to use its power to investigate a catastrophic event that is tied to the Ukraine conflict. On 26 September 2022, the Nord Stream pipelines were destroyed in an explosion which also sent 15 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, thereby contributing to global warming.

Investigations have been closed without conclusion and at least one internationally known investigative journalist has provided evidence of United States involvement. Sadly, no one in a position to investigate in this country has demanded that. It is imperative that the United Nations undertake an independent investigation of its own. That is possible only if fantasies about domination are finally and firmly rejected. Doing so would free nations to be honest with one another, to struggle over issues but to resolve them without death or expenditures of money that are better used for human needs.

I thank all Council members profusely for this opportunity and for the work of the Security Council in upholding the Charter of the United Nations on behalf of the people of the world.

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

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, in my national capacity I would like to express my sincere condolences to the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran with regard to the enormous tragedy that befell that country — a helicopter crash that claimed the lives of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other senior Iranian officials.

As the President of Russia said, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi was an outstanding politician whose entire life was devoted to serving his country. He enjoyed the well-deserved respect of his compatriots and those abroad. As a true friend of Russia, he made an invaluable personal contribution to the development of good neighbourly relations between our countries and made great efforts to advance them to the level of strategic partnerships.

A few days ago, our Western colleagues gathered us in this Chamber (see S/PV.9619) to depict the suffering of the people of Ukraine, who were without food and energy because of Russian air strikes on infrastructure in Ukrainian cities. That was all accompanied by zealous praise for the Zelenskyy regime, which is allegedly fighting for the freedom and independence of his country and enjoying the support of his people.

At the same time as our meeting, the Secretary of State, Mr. Blinken, was singing and dancing in a Kyiv nightclub, having treated himself to pizza in a nearby pizzeria, the walls of which were decorated with neo-Nazi symbols and photographs. The takeaway is that our Western colleagues lied to us once again, as Ukraine clearly has both food and power, despite the fact that our special military operation has been in effect for over two years. There are neo-Nazis too, which Kyiv’s leaders are not intending to fight if they chose to invite their American guest to such an establishment. And since he accepted the invitation, he clearly intends to continue to indulge them.

I do not think it will be a revelation to Council members if I say that those are not the only aspects with regard to Ukraine about which Western representatives are consistently lying or leaving things out. I will give you a number of other clear examples.

For several weeks now, among Western warmongers and backers of Kyiv, the mood has been positive because the United States has allocated its long-awaited large military aid package to the Zelenskyy regime. Some of it is indeed trickling down to Ukraine, and local corrupt senior officials are happy about that. However, the lion's share of the funds will be spent in the United States itself, and American officials are not even attempting to hide it.

In particular, according to the Head of the Pentagon, Mr. Austin, of the tranche allocated in April, amounting to \$61 billion, approximately \$50 billion will be spent in the United States military industrial complex. We should add another twist to this statement, which he did not mention. The largest weapons manufacturers — RTX Corporation, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics — raised prices for their products by almost 6 per cent a couple of weeks before the military aid package was approved in order to scale up their profits.

There is also a sharp increase in the capitalization of Western military corporations since the beginning of the conflict. The undoubted leader here is Germany's Rheinmetall, which is controlled by the American investment company BlackRock. Since February 2022, its capitalization has increased by 547 per cent.

If Council members do not believe us, they can listen to the Ukrainian boss. This is what he said about the new United States allocation in a recent interview with ABC television station: "This money is not being given to Ukraine. This money is being spent on American factories and will create jobs in the United States." Furthermore, military experts say that there is no *Wunderwaffe* that the West can give to Ukraine to reverse the extremely negative trends that the Ukrainian armed forces are seeing on the battlefield. Recently, Western Russophobes welcomed the transfer by the Americans of long-range army tactical missile systems, which Russian air defence systems are currently shooting down by the dozen. We are destroying them just like the lauded Leopards and Abrams tanks. The same fate awaits the notorious the F-16s when the Kyiv regime gets them.

Against that backdrop, the NATO sponsors of Zelenskyy's clique occasionally lose their nerve, because by supplying arms to Ukraine, NATO countries are systematically violating their international legal obligations under the treaties to which they are parties.

The international Arms Trade Treaty stipulates that State exporters must objectively assess the risk that the weapons they supply could be used to commit violations of international humanitarian law and they should not approve those transfers if there is reliable information about the recipient's intention to use the weapons against civilian objects. Those crimes are being conducted by the Bandera junta, which is shelling Belgorod, Donbas and other Russian regions on a regular basis. The West is demonstrating an incredible selective blindness and is also allowing for attacks on Russian facilities. That is already affecting the mood of Western voters, although Washington, London and Brussels are trying to attribute it to Russia's malicious influence.

The truth is that, since 2014, Washington and its allies have been attempting to use Ukraine as an experimental guinea pig to spite Russia and, ideally, hamper its development. However, the main aspect in the transformation of that guinea pig was the pumping of weapons into Ukraine under the guise of the Minsk agreements and brainwashing it to make it Russophobic, nationalistic and neo-Nazi. The American authorities and their comrades-in-arms have succeeded in that, because the guinea pig has grown aggressive and reckless. But no matter how hard the Western puppeteers try, a guinea pig cannot grow into another, more powerful animal, and as soon as that laboratory specimen had exhausted its potential, they simply wrote it off. Now their task is to make more money, to dispose of as many old weapons as possible and to test as many new ones as they can.

That is the bitter truth of what is happening to Ukraine now. That is why Ukrainians are being captured in the streets by the thousands and thrown into the senseless meat grinder. Keeping this grinder working is in the interests of only the Western puppeteers of Ukraine and the Maidan leaders, who betrayed Ukraine's interests and whose senior figure will lose any formal legitimacy tomorrow. Those Western puppeteers also prevented Ukraine from concluding an acceptable peace treaty in March and April 2022. Today they are leading Ukraine into complete and unconditional collapse.

Those who truly care about Ukraine and Ukrainians are persistently trying to find an effective way to resolve the Ukrainian crisis. I think they took note of the words of Mr. Borrell Fontelles, from the beautiful garden of Europe, who said that if the West stopped supplying arms to the Kyiv regime, the conflict in Ukraine would be over in two weeks' time. One could not put it

more accurately. No matter how much Kyiv's Western sponsors try to present their assistance as a contribution to Ukraine's self-defence, it is obvious to any unbiased and sober-minded onlooker that without their malicious interference, the conflict would have ended long ago, or rather would not have started at all. After all, Russia and Ukraine are brotherly nations, and they will remain so after the puppet regime in Kyiv ceases to exist. It is no coincidence that millions of Ukrainians have fled to Russia and feel completely safe in our country.

It is important that those members of the Council who are trying to make efforts towards a diplomatic settlement of the Ukrainian crisis realize that. We have never given up on diplomacy, unlike the leader of Kyiv, who has also legally banned himself from any negotiations with Russia. Since, as recognized by the Western and Ukrainian press, today is the last day of his legitimate term in office in accordance with the Constitution of his country, any possible mediators should take that into account. After all, it simply makes no sense to discuss any issues, let alone sign documents, with a leader who has lost their legitimacy.

Besides, any potential negotiations should proceed from a fair consideration of Russia's security concerns and the new territorial realities. The pseudo-peace conference scheduled to take place in June in Switzerland is a continuation of previous failed meetings in Copenhagen, Jeddah, Malta and Davos, and has no added value whatsoever. Discussions at that meeting will be based on Zelenskyy's so-called peace formula — a fact that the representative of the Kyiv regime confirmed to us at the Security Council meeting last week (see S/PV.9625). The Kyiv leader makes no secret of the fact that the main objective of the meeting is to develop an ultimatum that is detached from reality and that will subsequently be imposed on our country. Of course, all those efforts will be futile.

The West is now actively convening countries of the global South to attend those gatherings in order to portray their participation as comprehensive support for Ukraine. We will surely hear similar appeals today. Make no mistake — the devious plan of the event's sponsors is to offer guests a supposedly non-confrontational agenda, emphasizing nuclear and food security, freedom of navigation, detainee and prisoner exchange and the return of children. And then their participation in the event will be presented as alleged support for a point-blank ultimatum to Russia.

Switzerland's efforts to present itself as a neutral mediator also, frankly, look strange. We are well aware that Bern has long forsaken its impartiality, having joined all of the European Union's sanctions packages against Russia and openly supported the Kyiv clique.

Leaving aside all those futile efforts by the Western sponsors of Zelenskyy's regime, a genuine settlement of the Ukrainian crisis through political and diplomatic means is still possible. It requires that the West stop arming the Banderite regime in Kyiv; that Ukraine return to its neutral, non-aligned and non-nuclear status and undergo demilitarization and denazification; and that the rights of Ukraine's Russian-speaking citizens and national minorities be fully upheld. In other words, it requires that the root causes that provoked our special military operation be eliminated.

If Bern and its allies were interested in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict, they would propose those issues for discussion at the conference. However, they are still under the illusion that they can defeat Russia on the battlefield by using the Ukrainians. In that they are in error, as Russian troops are proving on the battlefield. I hope that all Council members realize that there will be no lasting peace without addressing the root cause of the Ukrainian conflict. We are ready to work with anyone who shares that position and who does not want to be responsible — together with the collective West and the Zelenskyy regime — for the senseless destruction of tens of thousands of Ukrainians who do not want to continue fighting.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Russia's pretence that it is assistance to Ukraine and not its own aggression that is prolonging the war is as disingenuous as it is cynical. Let us not forget who started the war. Russia conveniently omits the fact that more than 140 countries have repeatedly condemned its aggression against Ukraine and called for its immediate withdrawal from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory. We understand the omission, because the fact is inconvenient. It does not fit Moscow's narrative that it is fighting the West. It does not fit Moscow's narrative that it is somehow the victim, as it attempts to brutally subjugate another Member State of the United Nations.

Russia makes appeals to the Council while it brazenly violates Council resolutions. When caught, Russia obfuscates and distracts — right out of the Russian playbook that we all know. That includes its

procurement of Iranian drones last year in violation of resolution 2231 (2015) and its continued violation of multiple resolutions regarding unlawful arms transfers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since December 2023, Russian forces have used Democratic People's Republic of Korea ballistic missiles to strike Ukraine nearly a dozen times. Since September 2023, Russia has procured more than 11,000 shipping containers of munitions and related materiel from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of the United Nations arms embargo.

Last month, media reported that the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) inspected debris in Ukraine from a missile fired into Kharkiv. Per the reports, the Panel conclusively determined the debris was from a Democratic People's Republic of Korea Hwasong-11 series ballistic missile, and we all know the export of such missiles constitutes a violation of the United Nations arms embargo on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The media also highlighted the Panel's review of the telemetry that showed the missile was launched from Russian territory. That telemetry data, in conjunction with the missile's identification, proved the Russian Federation procured the missile from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is no coincidence that when the Democratic People's Republic of Korea sanctions Panel of Experts began reporting on those violations, Russia vetoed the renewal of the Panel's mandate.

Earlier this month, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia for its use of chemical weapons against Ukraine. We assessed Russian forces used the chemical weapon chloropicrin and riot control agents as a method of warfare to dislodge Ukrainian forces from fortified positions. The use of such chemicals is not an isolated incident. Russia retains an undeclared chemical weapons programme, which the world has seen from its use of Novichok nerve agents in assassination attempts abroad. The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances.

We are also concerned by reports that Russia is seeking to procure ballistic missiles from Iran. Acquiring those weapons would represent a significant escalation in Iran's support for Russia's war of aggression. We urge all countries to cease their military cooperation with Russia, which goes towards supporting an illegal war of aggression against Ukraine.

We are also deeply concerned about the massive support China is providing to Russia to rebuild its defence industrial base. The overwhelming majority of machine tools and microelectronics the Russian military is getting from abroad are coming from China. Let me be clear: Russia could not sustain its war of territorial conquest without that support. We call on all countries to instead support Ukraine's pursuit of a just and lasting peace, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

The international community's participation in the upcoming summit on peace in Ukraine, hosted by our Swiss colleagues, will be crucial in supporting the Council's primary objective: the maintenance of international peace and security.

Until Russia ceases its attacks and withdraws from Ukraine, the United States will remain committed to providing Ukraine what it needs to defend itself, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I take this opportunity to express our deepest condolences to the families, the people and the Government of Iran on the loss of the President, the Foreign Minister and other officials in the tragic helicopter crash.

I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for the update provided and take note of Ms. Kimberley's contribution. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in today's meeting.

Guyana is alarmed by the rising civilian casualties sustained in the war. Even as we voice our concern about the impact of the countless explosive devices launched every day from the ground and the air against cities, towns and critical civilian infrastructure there continues to be an escalation in attacks, with intense missile and drone strikes increasingly jeopardizing the availability of essential services. Many of those attacks violate the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

Guyana condemns the use of violence against civilians and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and calls upon the parties to uphold their obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and to ensure the safety of civilians, their homes, schools, hospitals and other critical infrastructure. We commend

the humanitarian community for supporting the millions of people in need amid the tragedy and welcome their continued efforts to scale up the humanitarian response.

Guyana also wishes to register its concern about the grave risks posed to regional and global security by transferring weapons into an active conflict. We maintain that the supply of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict situation has the potential to further escalate or prolong the violence and increase the risks of their diversion to unauthorized end users. We call upon all parties involved in the transfer of arms to the conflict zone to ensure that the transfers are done in compliance with relevant disarmament instruments and Security Council resolutions. We further call for controls to prevent their irregular transfer and for the parties to desist from the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, which will continue to have lasting and devastating impacts on the lives of civilians long after the war ends. Guyana deplores the use of such weapons and urges full compliance with international disarmament instruments and obligations.

We further underscore that the only effective means of preventing further escalation or instability in Ukraine and the broader region is to end the war and to do so through peaceful means.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu and Ms. Kimberley for their briefings.

I offer our condolences to the people and the Government of Iran, as well as to the families of all the victims of the helicopter crash on Sunday.

Ukraine is facing an ever-intensifying brutal onslaught by Russia, which has been escalating its attacks, particularly in the east and the north-east of the country. Attacks increased by 17 per cent between March and April, most of which have included glide bombs, which can pack hundreds of explosives in a single blast.

Russia continues to target power plants and substations in Ukraine, as part of a systematic campaign to cut off electricity and essential services to thousands of civilians. A week ago, the Council met to discuss the humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression. On that occasion, we highlighted the overwhelming toll that the war has brought to civilians, hospitals, schools and energy infrastructure. We cannot turn a blind eye to that suffering. On the contrary, it should be at the centre of our considerations.

With regard to arms transfers, the reports that the Russian Federation is procuring weapons and ammunition from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and using them in Ukraine are deeply worrisome. Debris from a missile that landed in Kharkiv was from a North Korean Hwasong-11 series. Seen in that light, Russia's decision to veto the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) is even more troubling and disconcerting.

Apart from that, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that more than 10,500 civilians have been killed and more than 20,000 injured in Ukraine since February 2022. Most of those casualties are a result of the use of explosive weapons, including armed uncrewed aerial vehicles, with wide-area effects in populated areas. Beneath the damage and destruction, lie deep psychological wounds caused by Russia's war. Since 10 May, nearly 8,000 civilians have been forced to flee from their villages and settlements in the Kharkiv region.

Attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure violate international humanitarian law and are completely unacceptable. They must stop immediately. We stress once again the need for full accountability for all crimes committed against Ukraine.

The upcoming summit on peace in Ukraine, to be held in Switzerland in June, will send a clear message in that regard. Malta welcomes that effort, which will provide a framework for dialogue on ways to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Until that day comes, we remain firm in our position that Ukraine has the inherent right to defend itself, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is entitled to protect its citizens, its borders, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity, just like any other member of the United Nations. It also has the right to rely on its allies to do so.

On this occasion, we also reiterate that the Russian Federation holds the key to ending the war. It can do so right now by withdrawing its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I extend my gratitude to Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing and take note of Ms. Kimberley's remarks. I also welcome the participation of the delegation of Ukraine in today's meeting.

At the outset, allow me to begin by reiterating the obvious fact that the war in Ukraine began as a result of Russia's armed invasion more than two years ago, in blatant violation of both international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Since then, Ukraine has been exercising its inherent right to self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, alongside the assistance of the international community.

In that regard, it is frankly preposterous that the Russian Federation, which began this brutal war by invading Ukraine, requested today's meeting on the issue of weapon transfers to Ukraine. Instead, military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea would be a more relevant topic today.

Last month, Russia cast its veto (see S/PV.9591) on the mandate extension of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which had been faithfully carrying out its duty for the past 15 years. That veto was wielded because Russia did not want the Panel to reveal the uncomfortable truths that Russia wanted to conceal — the illegal supply of North Korean munitions and ballistic missiles to Russia.

However, Russia's veto will not be able to hide the truth or stop ongoing international efforts to uphold the global non-proliferation regime. We once again urge the Russian Federation to protect the global non-proliferation regime by immediately ceasing its military cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which, again, is a blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions.

As the war in Ukraine enters its third year, civilian casualties continue to increase, and humanitarian suffering due to the destruction of civilian facilities, such as energy infrastructure, is intensifying. Just last week, we discussed the dire humanitarian situation facing the Ukrainian people.

It is deeply deplorable that Russia has expanded the front into Ukraine's north-eastern borders near Kharkiv over the past week, despite the international

community's firm condemnations. It has been reported that nearly 10,000 Ukrainians have fled from the Kharkiv border area.

As repeatedly emphasized in previous meetings on this important file, my delegation once again stresses that all of the devastating events and human suffering transpiring in Ukraine are a direct result of Russia's illegal invasion. Only Russia can end the war; and Russia must end the war.

For its part, the Republic of Korea will continue to stand with the Ukrainian people until they achieve just and lasting peace in their lands.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): It will have escaped no one's notice that the Security Council's handling of the Ukrainian dossier is now marked by alternating meetings focused on Russia's attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine and meetings that could be described as retaliatory, where Russia accuses the international community of providing military support to Ukraine.

The link between these issues — between last Tuesday's meeting (S/PV.9625) and today's — is direct and obvious. Russia is carrying out daily attacks on Ukraine, some of which deliberately target the Ukrainian civilian population, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. In recent weeks, we saw the extent of the damage deliberately caused by Russia to the Ukrainian energy sector. France and its partners are backing Ukraine to defend its people against these assaults.

What does Russia want when it demands that we stop supporting Ukraine? Would it like to be able to raze Ukrainian cities to the ground without hindrance? Would it like to permanently deprive the population of water, gas and electricity? Would it like for each of the missiles and drones it sends out to meet no resistance, hit its target and cause maximum civilian deaths?

We will not let Russia destroy Ukraine. To do so would be to trample the Charter of the United Nations and all the principles on which our collective security is built. It would be to let Russia re-establish the law of the jungle. Most countries in the world aspire to live in peace, without fear of aggression from a neighbour. Our collective destiny is also at stake in the defence of Ukraine. For each and every one of us, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine touches on fundamental security interests.

That is why France, with its partners, will continue to support the Ukrainian people in exercising their right to self-defence. That is the purpose of the security cooperation agreement we signed with Ukraine on 16 February, in line with the joint declaration of support for Ukraine of 12 July 2023.

Russia is using illegal means to wage its illegal war. It is obtaining arms and munitions, including ballistic missiles, from North Korea. And in order to conceal those flagrant violations of Security Council resolutions, it blocked the renewal (see S/PV.9591) of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), thus depriving the States Members of the United Nations of an impartial and public tool on the implementation of sanctions.

Russia continues to acquire thousands of drones from Iran. Those drones target civilian populations, railway stations, railways, residential buildings, shopping malls and thermal and hydroelectric power stations. We are very concerned about allegations of ballistic missile transfers from Iran to Russia, which would represent an unacceptable escalation and cannot go unanswered.

Russia claims to be concerned about the consequences of arms deliveries to Ukraine for the prospects of a peaceful settlement to the conflict. In reality, it could not care less. Every day, Russia shows us that it is interested only in the balance of power. As such, there is, unfortunately, no other way to get Russia to stop its war than to give resolute military support to Ukraine. Only thus can we create the conditions for negotiating a just and lasting settlement to the conflict that respects international law.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

There is much irony to Russia calling yet another meeting on weapons proliferation in a month where we have seen the appalling destruction of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure. As we speak, Russian forces continue their devastating attacks around Kharkiv. As United Nations experts visiting Ukraine in April discovered, that includes the use of ballistic missiles from North Korea.

Russia's procurement of weapons from Pyongyang is in violation of numerous Council resolutions, and is in addition to its use of thousands of Iranian drones

since 2022. We urge North Korea and Iran to cease all support to Russia. We note that any transfer of ballistic missiles or related technology from Iran to Russia would be a significant escalation.

Russian forces have also admitted to using riot control agents on the battlefield. The United Kingdom agrees with the United States determination that Russia has used chloropicrin against Ukrainian forces. Both are a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This is a war that Russia cannot win, and it is costing young Russians their future. The military takes up 40 per cent of Russian Government spending. Every Kinzhal missile costs \$7 million, as much as 130 Russian teachers' salaries. At the current rate, by next year, Russia will have been responsible for well over half a million personnel killed and wounded over three years of its needless war.

Yet Russia shows no signs of wanting peace. The Russian Permanent Representative said himself in the Chamber that soon,

“the only topic for any international meeting on Ukraine will be the unconditional surrender of the Kyiv regime”. (*S/PV.9600, p.16*)

Ukraine wants peace, but it is defending itself from a neo-imperial war of aggression. It has the right to project force beyond its borders to do so.

Along with Ukraine, we support Switzerland's upcoming summit on peace. It will be an opportunity to demonstrate global unity on principles for a just peace based on the Charter of the United Nations.

Our support for Ukraine will endure as it continues to fight Russian aggression, as it secures the just and sustainable peace it deserves, as it rebuilds and recovers and as its sovereign right to chart its own course is guaranteed.

Mr. Gaouaoui (Algeria): Before I start, I should like to convey our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran after the tragic loss of life in a helicopter crash of the President, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other officials and passengers.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing. I listened carefully to the remarks made by Ms. Margaret Kimberley.

Algeria's position on the crisis in Ukraine is clear and consistent. It is our strong belief that only a genuine, inclusive and constructive dialogue between the parties could bring about a just and lasting peace to the Ukraine crisis. We also believe that any solution has to be in line with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate security concerns of all parties.

From that perspective, Algeria has repeatedly called on the parties to abandon the mindset of confrontation and escalation and to give priority to peaceful solutions through dialogue and negotiations. We continue to encourage the international community, as well as the Council itself, to focus on efforts that will lead to peace by creating the necessary conditions conducive to genuine dialogue between the parties.

Unfortunately, the conflict is still plagued by a trend towards more tension, more hostilities and more escalation, not to mention the consequences of polarization that are steadily building. In such a context, the influx into conflict areas and the use of weapons and ammunition, with increasing lethality and destructive power, can only be a source of concern. The use of weapons can only lead to the loss of more lives, including among civilians, the suffering of populations and the destruction of infrastructure, as well as further hinder the prospect of foreseeable solutions to the conflict.

Equally of concern is the risk of those weapons falling into the hands and control of criminal or terrorist groups, a situation that could pose major threats to peace and security. Therefore, we call upon the parties to accord high importance to preventing the risk of the proliferation of weapons and ammunition and to spare no effort to prevent that risk. In particular, we urge them to prevent weapons and ammunition from falling into the hands of criminal or terrorist groups.

To conclude, we once again call upon all parties to uphold the Charter of the United Nations and to fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. It is crucial to give priority to the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure to alleviate the suffering of people.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I join my colleagues in expressing our deep condolences on the death of President Raisi, Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian and the accompanying delegation.

I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing. I have also taken note of Ms. Margaret Kimberley's remarks.

While we are once again witnessing attempts to divert attention from responsibility for the situation in Ukraine, the relentless Russian attacks on Ukraine, its people and its infrastructure continue unabated. Last week, at the Council's meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9625), we were informed that, according to figures from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, more than 700 civilian casualties were recorded across Ukraine in April alone. In addition, attacks on civilian infrastructure have increased at an alarming rate. The situation in Ukraine's Kharkiv region is of particular concern, with escalating hostilities and intensified Russian attacks, resulting in further civilian casualties, displacement and a worsening humanitarian situation. We would like to express our deep gratitude to the humanitarian personnel who are facilitating the evacuation of the population closest to the hostilities.

On the eve of the annual debate on the protection of civilians, we recall that all parties to a conflict are obliged to give priority to the protection of civilians and people who are not, or are no longer, taking part in hostilities. We stress the urgent need for strict compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights.

We hope that by agreeing to host the first summit on peace in Ukraine we will make a contribution in that regard. The global vision of the summit is to enable a future peace process by providing a forum for a range of ideas and implementing practical measures to bring about the achievement of that goal. The summit, to be held on 15 and 16 June, aims above all to promote a common understanding with a view to a potential future peace process. We hope to be able to count on the constructive participation of Council members, in order to make progress towards a global, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

Neutrality does not mean indifference. Outside the military realm, the law of neutrality does not prevent Switzerland from engaging to promote a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. We believe that the organization of a high-level summit on peace in Ukraine is an extension of that commitment.

The deaths, injuries, destruction and immense suffering we are witnessing would not have occurred without Russia's military aggression against Ukraine — a flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. To achieve a peaceful solution, we renew our appeal to Russia to immediately de-escalate the situation, cease all hostilities and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory. The Charter of the United Nations commits us all to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We also recall that Ukraine has the right to ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Switzerland is deeply dismayed by the fact that Russia's military aggression appears to continue to be fuelled and intensified by transfers of arms and munitions to Russia from third parties. We have repeatedly stressed that States must respect and comply with their obligations under international arms control instruments. That includes the relevant resolutions of the Council.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): We are deeply saddened by the sudden passing away of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, the Foreign Minister, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and others. On behalf of the Government of Japan we would like to express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of Iran and the bereaved families and to offer our sincere prayers for the deceased.

I thank High Representative Nakamitsu and the other briefer for their presentations.

Russia has repeatedly requested Security Council meetings on this topic and has made its own unique arguments, squandering the Council's precious time and resources. It is a tragic irony that a permanent member of the Security Council condemns those defending themselves from its own aggression, which is a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

Russia has been criticizing the continuous, legitimate support for Ukraine of the international community. On the other hand, it has procured weapons from North Korea in violation of the Security Council resolutions for which Russia voted. It has also raised concerns within the international community about what North Korea is getting in return. Moreover, it is truly regrettable that, on 28 March (see S/PV.9591), Russia chose to cast a veto to block the renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee

established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). If the Panel had existed, as 13 Council members affirmatively hoped, its report would certainly have included further investigation into sanctions evasion and even violations by North Korea and Russia. We once again condemn in the strongest terms such acts by Russia, which serve its own interests above its solemn responsibility of a permanent member of the Security Council, the guardian of world peace rather than the destroyer thereof.

Japan reiterates its insistence that peace in Ukraine must be based on the Charter of the United Nations. Russia's aggression against Ukraine undermines the most fundamental principles of international law. The security of Europe, the Indo-Pacific region and beyond is inseparable. Unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force must not happen anywhere in the world. What is at stake is the peace and security of the international community as a whole. We continue to spare no effort to bring about a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Our resolve to stand with Ukraine and the Charter of the United Nations will never waver.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I wish to thank the briefers for their contributions, and I also want to welcome the representative of Ukraine to this Chamber.

Let me make two points on behalf of my delegation.

First, and this cannot be emphasized enough, any country under foreign invasion has a right to defend itself, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the applicable international legal framework. Our aid to Ukraine supports that inalienable right, and we will continue to provide such aid until the war of aggression ends.

Secondly, Slovenia would like to recall that the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) travelled to Ukraine in April and ascertained that a missile that landed in Kharkiv in January was in fact a Hwasong-11 series missile originating from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Slovenia is deeply concerned about the mounting evidence of Russia's missile procurement from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is a violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and must be urgently addressed. We would also like to express our dismay at the Security Council's inability to extend the mandate of the 1718 Panel of Experts, which should have been extended but was instead vetoed by the Russian Federation (see S/PV.9591).

It is high time for the Council to fulfil its mandate as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and ensure that peace and security comes to the Ukrainian people. In this era of erosion of the respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions and sanctions, we must reflect on how to rebuild trust to secure the relevance of this organ, and above all to secure our future.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to extend our deep condolences following the tragic passing away of President Raisi and Minister for Foreign Affairs Amir-Abdollahian in the helicopter accident, as well as to extend our sincere sympathy to their families and to the Government and the people of Iran. President Raisi and Minister for Foreign Affairs Amir-Abdollahian made important contributions to promoting the development of the Sino-Iranian relationship and friendly cooperation in the region.

I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing, and I listened carefully to the statement by Ms. Kimberley.

The crisis in Ukraine drags on. The continuing flow of large quantities of weapons and ammunition onto the battlefield, their expanding variety and scope, their increasing lethality and the cumulative risks of their diversion and proliferation are deeply concerning. The Security Council has considered the issue of weapons supplies to Ukraine on many occasions, and the positions of the parties have been made very clear to each other. I would like to reiterate that weapons may end wars, but they do not bring about lasting peace. Conflicts may have different starting points, but they all end with diplomatic negotiations. China calls on all parties concerned to put peace and humanity first, concentrate their resources and energy on diplomatic efforts towards a cessation of hostilities and a ceasefire and work together to promote an early political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine.

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, China has always maintained an objective and impartial stance, communicated with all parties and persisted in promoting peace talks. Two weeks ago, during his visit to three European countries, President Xi Jinping fully elaborated on China's position on Ukraine to the European leaders. He emphasized that China understands the impact of the Ukraine crisis on the

people of Europe and hopes that a ceasefire will be achieved as soon as possible so that peace and stability can return to the European continent at an early date. Last week, President Xi Jinping and the visiting Russian leader also had an in-depth exchange of views on the Ukraine crisis, stressing that a political solution to the crisis is the right direction. It is necessary to address both the symptoms and the root causes of the problem and to promote building a new type of security architecture that is balanced, effective and sustainable. I would once again like to urge the parties to the conflict to show political will, move towards each other and start peace talks at an early date, so that a ceasefire can be reached. We urge the international community to create conditions and provide assistance to that end. China stands ready to continue to make unremitting efforts and play a constructive role in promoting an early political settlement of the Ukraine issue.

My American colleague just made groundless accusations against China in his statement. Some of the comments are totally unacceptable. I would like to respond to them in the following three points.

First, China is not the creator of, or a party to, the Ukraine crisis, and neither have we provided lethal weapons to either party to the conflict. We have not done what the United States has been doing, which is deliberately prolonging the fighting. We will not do that, and we will not profit from the crisis. Our position is above board and crystal clear, namely, to promote peace talks and a political settlement.

Secondly, China has the right to carry out normal economic and trade cooperation with all countries in the world, including Russia, and such cooperation should not be interfered with or undermined. China always has in place very strict control over the export of dual-use items. We urge the United States to stop attacking, smearing and slandering China and spreading fabrications and to stop unilateral sanctions against, and the unreasonable suppression of, Chinese enterprises.

Thirdly, the international community is crystal clear about the intentions of the United States regarding the Ukraine crisis. We advise the United States that diverting attention and shifting blame is not the right way to resolve the Ukraine crisis. We also advise the United States to stop taking advantage of the Ukraine crisis to advance its geopolitical strategy, provoke bloc confrontation and serve its own agenda.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her informative briefing. I also listened carefully to Ms. Kimberley, and I would like to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine this morning.

Ecuador's historical position has been, and continues to be, one of rejection of armed violence, militarization and armament, a position compatible with the firm recognition of the right to legitimate self-defence, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Considering that Ecuador has already expressed its position on the countless occasions on which the Council has debated this issue, I will focus today on three main points.

First, the international legal frameworks governing the transfer of arms and ammunition must be respected. They are not temporary reference points. It is imperative to adopt measures to counter the threats posed by the massive flow of arms and ammunition in any armed conflict, including the risks of diversion, proliferation and escalation.

Secondly, Ecuador joins the call of the Secretary-General and the international community for all parties to refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas and to move fighting away from urban areas. Targeted attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and are unacceptable.

Thirdly, the use of weapons that cause indiscriminate and disproportionate effects must cease immediately. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the provisions of 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, among others, must be fully respected and implemented.

Just six days ago, the Council held a briefing on the grave humanitarian situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9625), at which it was stated that it is civilians who pay the highest price in armed conflict. The lives lost, the communities destroyed and the human suffering cannot be ignored. They are incalculable. Ecuador regrets that the protracted invasion of Ukrainian territory continues to exacerbate the risks of escalation,

in a context in which global military spending in 2023 reached \$2.44 trillion, representing an increase in real terms of 6.8 per cent over 2022.

In conclusion, I reiterate Ecuador's call for the Russian Federation to withdraw its military troops from Ukrainian territory, and I urge the international community to strengthen collective efforts to facilitate peace talks in order to stop the violence in Ukraine and promote peaceful coexistence between the parties.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone learns with immense sadness of the passing of the President, the Foreign Minister and other officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran. On behalf of my delegation, we express our deepest condolences to the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran on this very tragic loss, and may the souls of the departed rest in peace.

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing. I also thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her helpful briefing. We also note the contribution of Ms. Margaret Kimberley. I wish to welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in this meeting.

Sierra Leone takes note of the different perspectives presented on the supply of arms with respect to the conflict in Ukraine since the onset of the conflict two years ago, including those relating to the right to self-defence and breaches of neutrality. The continuous supply of weapons has the potential to prolong and escalate the level of violence in the conflict, and we therefore underscore the importance of all parties to the conflict adhering to international legal frameworks in all weapons transfers and, most importantly, adhering to their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure. We reiterate that all transfers of weapons in conflict situations should take place within the applicable international legal frameworks and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and should include pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition.

As we deliberate on arms supply relating to the conflict in Ukraine, it is important that we also highlight the devastating effects of weapons of war on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The proliferation of both small arms and highly lethal weaponry in conflict situations, including in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation, is a major challenge to efforts to resolve conflicts, protect civilians and restore peace

and security across the world. A case in point is the reported building collapse and the deaths of at least 15 people in the 12 May missile attack on an apartment building in the Russian city of Belgorod. We can also bear witness to reports of civilian casualties, damage to civilian infrastructure and the mass displacement of civilians in Ukraine.

Reports from the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNICEF indicate that, to date, there have been at least 32,100 civilian casualties and 10,946 deaths, of which 2,000 are children, in Ukraine. OCHA also reports that 14.6 million people — roughly 40 per cent of Ukraine's population — need some form of humanitarian assistance, while approximately 9.7 million people have been forcibly displaced by the war.

The alarming civilian casualty figures and the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine underscore the urgent need for all parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of civilians and refrain from attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, in line with international humanitarian law. Sierra Leone reiterates its commitment to upholding the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, emphasizing the importance of respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity and of encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and good-faith diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all involved parties.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Mozambique.

I wish to begin by conveying Mozambique's deepest condolences to the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the tragic loss inflicted upon them by the untimely death of President Ebrahim Raisi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other senior officials and passengers.

I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Ms. Margaret Kimberley, activist and civil society representative, for their insightful briefings. I acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in this meeting.

We have been holding meetings to consider this topic on a regular basis, since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Since the previous meeting, on 12 April (see S/PV.9601), the situation in Ukraine has not improved. On the contrary, it has worsened, and civilians continue to bear the brunt of death, danger and destruction. The trend of incremental arms supplies to Ukraine reflects the escalatory nature of the conflict, a conflict that is marked by unbridgeable levels of mutual distrust and the primacy of a military solution over a negotiated settlement. The risks of proliferation and the unintended consequences of escalating arms supplies are obvious. Such escalation can worsen insecurity and displacement and divert resources away from peace and understanding.

Mozambique fully recognizes the legitimate right of each and every country to self-defence. It is a right that is enshrined in our Charter. In situations of conflict, we consider that equal measures of effort must be deployed so that peace and security are not endangered at the local, regional and international levels. Striking a balance between legitimate defence and preventing exacerbated violence is crucial. In that regard, we underscore the importance of arms control and responsible arms transfer within the spirit of Article 11 of the Charter of the United Nations and the existing international legal framework. We call on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to all relevant international instruments on disarmament.

It is against that backdrop that Mozambique has consistently advocated for a political and negotiated solution as the most viable way to end the conflict and lay the foundation for a lasting and sustainable peace between the two sisterly and neighbouring countries. For that purpose, we reiterate our call on the parties to immediately cease hostilities, resume direct negotiations without preconditions, and actively engage in a constructive and meaningful dialogue.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I will be very brief. In response to the remarks made by my Chinese colleague, the United States will continue to call out those States that provide support to Russia's

industrial base as it carries out its brutal aggression against the people of Ukraine. Our calls will not cease until that support to Russia ceases.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I too will be very brief. The position of China on the Ukraine crisis is objective and impartial, and we are committed to promoting peace talks towards a political settlement of the crisis. We also hope that the countries concerned will not undermine the collective efforts of the international community to seek a political solution to the issue and will play more constructive roles for a ceasefire and the restoration of peace.

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

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I would like to express my appreciation for the briefing by High Representative Nakamitsu. I recognize Putin's envoy in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

There is nothing remarkable about Ms. Kimberley's participation in today's meeting other than her wonderful choice of the colours of the Ukrainian flag — yellow and blue. That is about it. We have already highlighted the detrimental impact of such Russian propaganda displays on the credibility and integrity of the Security Council. It is a mockery of the Council's mandate when the aggressor demands that the Council address complaints about the victim of aggression still having weapons to defend itself. It is a mockery of common sense when the aggressor makes such demands after opening a new front and thus significantly expanding the area of hostilities, human suffering and destruction.

The northern part of the Kharkiv region, particularly the town of Vovchansk, is now suffering the same fate as other hotspots in the Russian war against my country. Settlements are being razed to the ground. People are fleeing their homes. Those who cannot evacuate are subjected to inhumane treatment by Russian soldiers. Unfortunately, there have already been reports of executions of local residents by Russian soldiers in the northern part of the town of Vovchansk. In particular, the Kharkiv Prosecutor's Office is investigating the murder of a disabled person in a wheelchair near the local hospital committed by Russian forces. That was discovered through footage filmed by a Ukrainian reconnaissance drone on 17 May.

Yesterday Russian airstrikes killed 12 civilians, including a pregnant woman, in the villages of Cherkaska Lozova, Novoosynove and Kivsharivka in the Kharkiv region. As Russian terrorists once again resorted to double-strike tactics, two paramedics were among the victims.

Russian guided aerial bombs, ballistic and cruise missiles, shells and mines continue to destroy Ukrainian infrastructure, kill Ukrainian people and poison the natural environment of Ukraine.

We are alarmed that Russian troops flagrantly violate the Chemical Weapons Convention by resorting to artillery shelling with chemically hazardous substances. In April alone, 444 cases of use by Russia of ammunition containing hazardous chemicals were recorded. That is 71 cases more than in March.

We remain concerned about Russia's ongoing attempts to exploit the occupation of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant as a part of its military strategy. Russia continues to use its territory to launch drones and train drone pilots, taking advantage of the fact that the defence forces of Ukraine cannot return fire in the 1.5 km-wide zone around the plant.

Russia's obsessive tendency to request Council meetings on weapon supplies is in fact a manifestation of their desire to expand such a no-return-fire zone to the entirety of Ukraine. For Ukraine, however, this is a matter of survival. We are, therefore, grateful to our allies, who continue to support our fight. Air defence systems will help to protect Ukrainian infrastructure. Fighter jets will help to push back the Russian aircraft that currently launch guided aerial bombs from deep within their territory. Armour and artillery will help to move the front line away and restore normal life in the territories occupied by Russia. Ukraine will continue to exercise its inherent right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations until threats to its people and its sovereignty are removed and the Russian aggression is stopped.

Since the beginning of the Russian aggression, illegitimacy narratives have been the backbone of Russian propaganda. To justify its aggression in 2014, Russia made claims about a so-called coup d'état in Ukraine. To justify Russia's invasion in February 2022, Putin openly called for the Ukrainian army to topple the Ukrainian Government, labelling it illegitimate. To justify its unwillingness to end the war, Russia keeps repeating its illegitimacy narrative like a broken record,

this time by misinterpreting or completely ignoring the provisions of the Ukrainian Constitution and Ukrainian laws regarding the term of authority of the President of Ukraine.

Let me clear up Russia's mess and set the record straight, so that there is at least some use in this massive misuse of the Council by the Russian delegation. In accordance with article 103 of the Constitution of Ukraine, the President of Ukraine is elected by the citizens of Ukraine for a five-year term, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage, by secret ballot — something that was perhaps not very well-known in Russia until now. Paragraph 1 of article 108 stipulates that the President of Ukraine will exercise his or her powers until the newly elected President of Ukraine assumes office. That constitutional provision enshrines the fundamental principle of the institutional continuity of presidential power. Paragraph 6 of article 103 stipulates that the procedure for conducting the election of the President of Ukraine is established by law.

And the law, in turn, is very clear. In accordance with article 19 of the law of Ukraine on the legal regime of martial law, it is prohibited to hold an election of the President of Ukraine, as well as parliamentary and local elections, under martial law. In accordance with article 20 of the election code of Ukraine,

“in the event of martial law or a state of emergency being imposed in Ukraine or in its separate territories, the election process of national elections and/or local elections held in these territories or their parts shall be terminated from the date of entry into force of the respective decree of the President of Ukraine”.

Article 11 of the law of Ukraine on the legal regime of martial law stipulates that in the event of the term of power of the President of Ukraine expiring during a state of martial law, the President's powers are extended until the new President of Ukraine, elected after the abolition of martial law, assumes office. Martial law in Ukraine was announced by the decree of the President of Ukraine on the imposition of martial law in Ukraine of 24 February 2022 — the day Russia started its invasion. According to the Constitution of Ukraine, that decree was endorsed by the Ukrainian Parliament. It remains effective today, because Russia continues its war of attrition.

The broad area of active combat and Russia's regular missile and drone strikes across the entire territory of Ukraine make it impossible to ensure adherence to international standards and commitments on the right to democratic elections, including proper election administration, a safe environment for campaigning, international monitoring and voting. After the termination or abolition of martial law or a state of emergency, the electoral process that has been suspended in that connection shall begin again. The election code of Ukraine envisages that the decision on calling elections, the electoral process of which was suspended or did not begin owing to the imposition of martial law or a state of emergency, shall be adopted by the subject of their appointment no later than one month from the date of termination or abolition of martial law or state of emergency, and if the law does not require a separate decision on the appointment for holding the elections, the Central Election Commission shall announce the start of the election process no later than one month from the date of termination or abolition of martial law or state of emergency.

In November 2023, representatives of groups and factions of the Ukrainian Parliament — from both the ruling coalition and the opposition — met within the framework of the Jean Monnet Dialogue for Peace and Democracy and signed conclusions on reaching an agreement for elections to be held after the end of the war and the abolition of martial law. They also agreed to elaborate a special law regulating the specifics of the first post-war elections. That is plain and simple. If Putin's envoy is genuinely concerned about Ukrainian elections, he should, instead of requesting Security Council meetings, recommend that his master in the Kremlin stop the aggression and withdraw the troops from the territory of Ukraine. As members know, on 7 May, Russia held a ceremony to install Vladimir Putin in office. The Russian authorities are thereby attempting to give the entire world and its own citizens the illusion of legality for the nearly lifelong stay in power of the person who has turned the Russian Federation into an aggressor State and the ruling regime into a dictatorship.

During the so-called March elections, the Russian Federation violated numerous international documents that serve as the foundation for the modern system of international relations, in particular, the Charter of the United Nations, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations

and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and dozens of General Assembly resolutions. The illegal organization of another so-called electoral process in the sovereign territories of Ukraine that are temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation — parts of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol — in addition to threats against and the blackmailing and coercion of the millions of Ukrainian citizens who live in the temporarily occupied territories or were forcibly relocated to the territory of the Russian Federation constituted a brutal violation of the generally recognized norms and principles of international law.

Despite warnings from authoritative international institutions, the Russian Federation's actions once again demonstrate that its leadership does not recognize its responsibility and is unwilling to end the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine, which has lasted for more than two years and has resulted in significant human casualties and destruction. The Kremlin regime, through propaganda and manipulation, uses voter participation and voting results to justify its military invasion of Ukraine and aggressive policies towards other countries. Based on the foregoing and the International Criminal Court's active arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin, it is a fact that there is no legal basis for recognizing him as the democratically elected and legitimate President of the Russian Federation. Recent resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe dated 17 April and of the European Parliament dated 25 April confirm the ineligibility of holding so-called elections in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories and their undemocratic nature in Russia itself and, in fact, refute the legitimacy of their results.

We call on foreign countries, international organizations and the public to follow suit by not recognizing the results of those pseudo-elections, or Russian dictator Vladimir Putin as a legitimate President, to resist the demolition of the system of the rule of law and universally recognized democratic values and to continue effectively supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression, which poses a threat to European and world peace, security and stability.

Until such steps are taken, strong international solidarity remains the most effective response to both Russian aggression and propaganda. Solidarity with Ukraine saves the lives of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians. It also undermines the aggressor's potential for spreading violence to other countries. Finally, solidarity with Ukraine will bolster our efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I do not want to prolong our discussion, but I do want to point to the reliability of the information just cited by the representative of the Kyiv regime. According to recent surveys of the Ukrainian population, only 17 per cent of the people of Ukraine believe in the legitimacy of their President. In particular, the Government of Ukraine has not taken this issue to the Constitutional Court, out of fear that the outcome might not be as anticipated. But let me make it clear again that, irrespective of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of Mr. Zelenskyy, it has no impact or influence on the course and goals of our special military operation.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.