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New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Merabet
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Ms. Benn
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Mr. Ponikvar
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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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: 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 Mr. Daniel Kovalik, peace activist.

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

I give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, launched in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, continues to inflict a terrible toll on the people of Ukraine. The escalation of hostilities and the intensified Russian military offensive in Kharkiv and in other parts of the country have resulted in high numbers of civilian casualties and massive destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure, severely disrupting energy supplies, affecting vital services and impacting access to health and education. The use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles continues to cause civilian deaths and injuries, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure. There have also been reports of an increasing number of strikes using missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles inside the Russian Federation, also resulting in civilian casualties and 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.

The continued and intensified attacks affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure are deeply concerning. All parties to any armed conflict have an obligation to protect civilians in armed conflict and to ensure compliance with applicable international law, particularly international humanitarian law. Deliberate and direct attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and indiscriminate attacks, including disproportionate attacks, are prohibited under international humanitarian law, and they must cease immediately. I urge all concerned to act responsibly and

refrain from any actions that could endanger civilians, wherever they may be, or that would further escalate tensions and the risk of spillover. That includes avoiding the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as such use is highly likely to have a devastating impact on civilians and civilian objects, and ultimately taking combat out of urban areas altogether.

The provision of military assistance and transfers of arms and ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces have continued. Information from Governments regarding their transfers is accessible 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 that those weapons have been used in Ukraine. I reiterate that any transfer of weapons and ammunition must take place consistent with the applicable international legal framework, including, of course, relevant Security Council resolutions.

Reports related to the use of cluster munitions and widespread contamination with mines and explosive remnants of war in Ukraine are worrisome. Mines and explosive ordnance directly threaten people caught up in armed conflicts around the world, including in Ukraine. Even after the fighting ends, those deadly devices can contaminate communities for decades to come, posing a daily and deadly danger to women, men and children and hampering reconstruction efforts. Universal participation in, and the full implementation of, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons must therefore remain a priority.

Emanating from the transfer of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict is the inherent risk of diversion of the equipment to unauthorized end-users, which raises serious concerns about the potential escalation of violence. Addressing the risk of the diversion of weapons and ammunition is essential for preventing further instability and insecurity in Ukraine, the region and beyond. That requires supply-chain transparency and cooperation and information exchange between

importing, transit and exporting States. Concrete counter-diversion measures include the enhancement of marking, record-keeping and tracing practices; comprehensive pre-transfer diversion risk assessments; end-user certificates, including non-transfer clauses; post-shipment verifications; and diversion monitoring and analysis. Effective physical security and stockpile management of arms and ammunition, as well as customs and border control measures, are also key.

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 are some of the arms control instruments established by States to prevent the diversion of conventional arms and regulate the international arms trade.

Since 24 February 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that the ongoing war in Ukraine has killed 11,126 civilians and injured 21,863. The actual figures are likely to be considerably higher. It is deeply concerning that the number of civilian casualties in May documented by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine was the highest since June 2023. Such human suffering cannot continue.

States must avoid taking any actions that could lead to further escalation and possible miscalculation. As I have repeatedly stated, we need a just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Kovalik.

Mr. Kovalik: I am addressing the Council today as a member of the Executive Committee of the United States Peace Council.

We are very alarmed by what appears to be a creep towards a third world war, emanating from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. As a historical precedent, the world was probably closest to a nuclear conflagration and a third world war in 1962, with the Cuban missile crisis. As President John F. Kennedy articulated, the problem

arose when Soviet missiles were brought to Cuba. Kennedy's position was that any missiles fired upon any country in the Americas, including the United States, from Cuba would be considered an attack directly from the Soviet Union on the United States, and that the United States would retaliate against the Soviet Union. Why is that an important precedent? Because we now have President Biden presenting Russia with what is known as the reverse Cuban missile crisis, stating that Ukraine can feel free to use Western arms, munitions and missiles to attack Russia deep within its territory. Ukraine has already used Western drones to attack early-warning radar systems deep within Russia — as far as 1,100 km within Russia. Those radar stations, by the way, were designed under the Soviet Union to warn the Soviet Union against intercontinental ballistic missiles fired from the United States.

Therefore, that of course raises the question for Russia: what is it doing attacking those particular radar sites? Is it planning a first strike? All of that adds up to another Cuban-type missile crisis but this time, I believe, with the West — with NATO and the United States — using Ukraine in the same way that the Soviet Union was accused of using Cuba. What makes this particular crisis even more dangerous is that we do not have President Kennedy at the helm. While he was making very bellicose remarks like the one I mentioned, he was also negotiating behind the scenes with Premier Khrushchev to end the crisis, which they did within 13 days by negotiating a solution. By the way, one of those solutions was to remove United States nuclear armaments that were pointed at the Soviet Union from Türkiye. Today, the United States has nuclear weapons in Türkiye, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany and Belgium.

All of those things are forgotten when we talk about the conflict between the West and Russia. I could only imagine what would have happened if Cuba had fired some sort of missile against early-warning radar systems in the United States. It would have inevitably led to a third world war — we were certainly told that by John F. Kennedy. Russia is being presented with an analogous situation now, which I think the Security Council has to deal with in order to maintain international peace and security and avert a global conflagration.

The next thing I want to talk about — and I was shocked that I would have to talk about it — is that ironically, very shortly after the West celebrated the anniversary of D-Day — the invasion of Normandy that

took place, of course, in 1944 to overturn Nazism — the Biden Administration announced that it would start arming the Azov Battalion in Ukraine, which is a neo-Nazi organization. In fact, the great former President of Uruguay, José Mujica, said frankly that the Azov Battalion can trace its roots back to even before the Second World War. They cannot even be called neo-Nazis, they are just straight-up Nazis. Yet right after the celebration of D-Day, the United States said that it was going to start arming Nazis in Ukraine. At least it is going to do so openly — it is pretty clear that it has probably been doing it covertly for a long time.

Again, how that has been allowed to happen and how this is not raising concern in the Security Council, I do not know. I hope it does raise concern, because the Azov Battalion is not a purely domestic Ukrainian organization. Like its predecessors in Ukraine and Germany, the Nazis, it has aspirations of spreading its Nazi and racist ideology throughout the world. In fact, according to *The Kyiv Independent*, a mainstream newspaper in Ukraine,

“The Azov Battalion is emerging as a critical node in the transnational right-wing violent extremist network. This group maintains its own ‘Western outreach office’ to help recruit and attract foreign fighters that travel to train and connect with people from like-minded violent organizations from across the globe. Operatives from the outreach office travel around Europe to promote the organization and proselytize its mission of white supremacy.”

Again, after celebrating the defeat of the Nazis, Biden has said he is going to openly support that organization. How is Russia to view that, as the legal successor of the Soviet Union, which suffered at least 27 million casualties at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War? How can that support for Nazis in Europe stand today? How can the West — and the United States in particular — talk about democracy and human rights when it is arming Nazis in Ukraine?

Once again, I urge Council members, in the interest of maintaining international peace and security, to address this issue and to halt the support for modern-day Nazis in Europe.

The President: I thank Mr. Kovalik for his 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*): We convened today’s meeting because the situation regarding Ukraine is developing into an increasingly dangerous scenario. Western countries are aiming for another round of escalation, which is fraught with catastrophic consequences. To give some context, I would like to start with several quotes from Western political figures.

Boris Pistorius, German Defence Minister, said when addressing the Bundestag on 5 June that,

“we must not believe that Putin will stop at Ukraine’s borders when he gets that far... We must be ready for war [with Russia] by 2029... We need... young women and men who can defend this country”.

French President Emmanuel Macron has said that,

“we believe that we should allow [the Ukrainians] to neutralize military facilities from which missiles are being fired”.

The NATO Secretary General recently asserted that “the right to self-defence includes strikes on legitimate targets outside of Ukraine, and that is not an escalation”. He also stated that,

“the United Kingdom has provided Ukraine with Storm Shadow cruise missiles for a long time without any restrictions”.

It is certainly not news to us that the Western countries, which have been pumping arms into the Kyiv regime for two years now and have banned it from even talking about peace negotiations with Russia, are directly involved in the Ukrainian crisis and are using all means available to keep it in an acute phase. Some among the American elites occasionally let slip that the proxy war fought by Ukrainian soldiers on Ukrainian territory is the cheapest way for the West to exert pressure on Russia. The United States is giving billion-dollar loans to Ukraine’s military industry as part of the so-called aid to the country, helping it to maintain super profits. Washington guides its European vassals from across the ocean, inciting them to a direct confrontation with Russia. And Europe, which has lost every modicum of geopolitical independence, is blindly following the course dictated by Washington.

It is no secret either that, since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, so-called Western instructors and mercenaries have been taking part in it. They regularly suffer losses, but the Western media prefers not to talk

about that. We are also well aware that the Western military control the Kyiv regime's use of modern high-tech, high-precision and long-range weapons systems, whether it be the British Storm Shadow, American army tactical missile systems (ATACMS) or French missiles, basically steering through this process in a manual mode. We know that Ukrainian soldiers on the ground lack the technological capability to operate those missiles, which is why suppliers of those systems assign flight missions and upload them to the system. As everyone learned from the leaked negotiations of Bundeswehr servicemen discussing the planned attack on the Crimean bridge, they also determine the final targets of the strikes. In other words, the fact that NATO countries are involved in the military actions in Ukraine and are complicit in the Kyiv regime's war crimes is a well-established fact. We will duly respond to all those aggressive actions, and all those involved in those crimes will be punished.

Recently, however, a new and dangerous trend has emerged. In their anti-Russian frenzy, European leaders appear to be getting increasingly out of touch with reality and are seriously starting to dream of defeating Russia on the battlefield. Apparently, France and Germany have not learned the lessons of history. Their seething revanchism could be attributed to their total dependence on the United States in the military, political, technological, ideological and informational spheres and to their acute internal political problems, as the ruling European politicians and representatives of the European bureaucracy are rapidly losing the trust of their own citizens. All of that seems understandable, but there is one thing — it either points to their complete lack of understanding of the scale of the threat that they themselves pose or to their obsessive belief in their own impunity and exceptionalism.

I would like to ask my Western colleagues if they realize that their leadership is actually pushing Europe to the brink of another large-scale war. It is that desire, and not peace-loving plans, that stands behind all of the West's pseudo-peaceful initiatives, including the upcoming conference in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, in which they are trying to ensure, by any means, the participation of as many countries as possible as a makeweight. NATO's real plans are epitomized by Emmanuel Macron in Berlin, waving a map of the Russian-Ukrainian border area and showing which areas in Russia he thinks may be targeted. I would like

to remind members that the same Emmanuel Macron said in January that Russia must not win.

I would also like to address my colleagues from the countries of the global South and, in general, all States whose leadership continues to chart a sensible course. Do not believe the deceitful appeals of the organizers of the Bürgenstock meeting, which is nothing but a primitive attempt at giving Russia an ultimatum, with everyone who shows up at the event accepting that ultimatum. The blatant hypocrisy of the whole thing is obvious. What kind of peace can we talk about if the organizers convene pseudo-peace conferences on the one hand, while increasing the supply of weapons to the Kyiv regime and even openly giving the green light for their use on Russian territory on the other? Meanwhile, Zelenskyy, whose legitimacy is being questioned even within Ukraine, has directly declared that Kyiv alone should determine the conditions of peace. Let me remind members that back in October 2022, he signed a decree banning negotiations with the Russian leadership.

We call on Member States and the Secretariat to refrain from getting involved in the provocative and totally useless meeting in Bürgenstock and from playing bit parts in the West's clumsy anti-Russian intrigues. African countries, the League of Arab States and Brazil have all put forward ideas that could serve as the beginning of a negotiation process. China has consistently shown a deep understanding of the root causes of the crisis. Unfortunately, Kyiv and its sponsors are defiantly ignoring all those efforts for peace and categorically refuse to discuss them, hoping that they will at last have their historic chance to defeat Russia. That, of course, will never happen. The special military operation continues, and its goals and objectives are being consistently met. Having suffered failures on the battlefield, the Ukrainian armed forces are hunting civilians in a cowardly manner and destroying residential buildings, kindergartens, schools and hospitals. Western countries, having momentarily forgotten about international humanitarian law, are facilitating that in every possible way. For example, the spokesperson for the United States Department of State, Mr. Matthew Miller, went so low as to state that allegedly "there are only military targets and no civilians in Belgorod, there are practically no civilians left there".

On 7 June, Ukrainian armed forces launched an attack with ATACMS, which caused part of a residential

building in Luhansk to collapse, killing six people and injuring 60. On the same day, Ukrainian militants struck a store in the village of Sadove in the Kherson region when many visitors and staff were gathered there. First, they used a guided bomb and then high-mobility artillery rocket system missiles, killing 22 people. Just a few days ago, Valery Kozhin, a Russian journalist and cameraman for the NTV television channel, was killed in Horlivka and his colleagues were wounded. That was a targeted strike. We are disappointed that the Secretariat did not have the courage to name the guilty party or to condemn the terrorist act.

It is also important to mention the decision of the United States to lift the ban on arms supplies to the Ukrainian nationalist Azov Battalion. In Russia, the Azov Battalion is a designated terrorist organization. The United States has also previously openly stated that the Azov Battalion fighters hold racist, xenophobic and ultra-nationalist views. They have not abandoned their monstrous inhumane ideology even now. Nevertheless, Washington has recently stopped observing any human rights violations in the actions of Azov Battalion fighters.

The Kyiv regime is not only committing crimes against Russian citizens, but is also decimating its own population. In the face of serious setbacks and losses on the battlefield, the Ukrainian armed forces are literally trying to plug holes with men who were conscripted under duress. Confident in their impunity, military draft officers have started to hunt for them, pulling them out of cars and public transportation. Healthy or not, they are all deemed fit to go to the front. People's desire to hide in order to avoid the fate of fighting for Zelenskyy's regime is completely understandable. Those who cannot bribe the draft officers are forced into hiding. Some manage to cross the border and escape, some do not.

Ukrainian men are being gradually massacred. Ukraine's industrial and agricultural assets are being sold off to foreign investors for next to nothing. There is no money to pay off Ukraine's multimillion-dollar debts to international organizations. All that is thanks to the Western sponsors of the Kyiv puppet regime. Having squeezed all the juice out of Ukraine, they will throw it into the dustbin of history and will go on to impose democracy elsewhere, in any country gullible enough to believe deceitful Western promises.

We have repeatedly said that we are ready to discuss ways to establish lasting peace in Ukraine and Europe based on the realities on the ground and with due account taken of our security interests. We have consistently demonstrated that in the Minsk package and the Istanbul agreements, which failed through the fault of the West. From the very first days, Russia has put forward options for a diplomatic solution to the crisis, aimed not at freezing the conflict but at actually resolving it. But all our initiatives were ultimately rejected — the West and Kyiv decided to try to defeat Russia. Those attempts, however, have failed.

Today, the President of the Russian Federation put forward another concrete peace proposal. It is based on our principled position, which requires a neutral non-aligned and non-nuclear status for Ukraine; its demilitarization and denazification; the full safeguarding of the rights, freedoms and interests of Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine; and recognition of the new territorial realities and status of Crimea, Sevastopol, the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics and the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions as constituent entities of the Russian Federation. In the future, all those basic and principle-based provisions should be established in the form of fundamental international agreements. Naturally, that also implies the lifting of all Western sanctions against Russia.

We recognize our responsibility for stability in the world and reaffirm our readiness for dialogue with all countries, but that should not mean an imitation peace process to serve someone's vested interests, as in Bürgenstock, but a serious, detailed conversation on the entire range of global security issues. If the West and Kyiv turn down that peace proposal, they will bear the political and moral responsibility for the continuation of the bloodshed. It is obvious that the realities on the ground, on the line of contact, will continue to change, and not in favour of the Kyiv regime. And then the conditions for the start of negotiations will be very different.

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

Our Russian colleague has asked for this debate in order to obscure a simple truth. The situation we face today has one sole cause — President Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion. The problem is the presence of Russian weapons in Ukraine, not the reverse.

President Putin's illegal war has caused misery to millions of Ukrainian citizens. In the last few months, he has intensified his campaign still further. He has increased Russia's use of glide bombs against major cities — 3,500 in May alone — a step change in the threat to civilians. He has opened a new front against Kharkiv, which is still recovering from the 2022 invasion. And he is seeking to destroy Ukraine's power sector, depriving families of heat, light and electricity, in the hope of coercing Ukrainians into giving up.

We heard last week from Assistant Secretary-General Msuya (see S/PV.9647) that civilian casualties in Ukraine last month were the highest for a year. Much of the campaign is planned and delivered from Russian territory. Glide bombs hitting Ukrainian cities and missiles hitting power stations are launched from aircraft inside Russian airspace. Russia is mustering, equipping and commanding forces for the Kharkiv offensive from inside its borders.

Ukraine has every right to defend itself from those attacks, in line with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Ukraine striking military targets that are actively threatening its territory, infrastructure and civilian population is not escalatory, as Russia has claimed, but a reasonable step to protect itself. Every country in a similar situation would do the same.

We remain resolute in our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, and we will continue to provide support for its self-defence. Tomorrow, dozens of world leaders will gather in Switzerland to express support for a lasting peace, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Russia is straining every sinew to stop them from going. But they know that the Charter of the United Nations is the basis for global peace and security and that we must uphold it in Ukraine.

If President Putin truly wants to protect his people, that is in his own hands. He could end the war tomorrow if he stopped his aggression and withdrew his forces from Ukraine's territory. Again, we urge him to do so.

Ms. Benn (Guyana): I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for the briefing and note the contributions of Mr. Kovalik. Guyana also welcomes the participation of the representative of Ukraine in today's meeting.

We have now reached nearly 28 months since the start of the war — 28 months of near-daily bombardment of

cities and towns resulting in the killing of at least 11,000 civilians and injury to more than 21,000 others across Ukraine, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The scale of the humanitarian crisis created by the war is deeply alarming, with more than 14.6 million Ukrainians — approximately 40 per cent of the population — requiring some form of humanitarian assistance.

The world is witnessing a proliferation of armed conflicts across multiple continents. Governments are investing unprecedented levels of revenue in soaring military budgets. Where there are legitimate concerns, military spending is prioritized as Governments seek to appease their populations, saying that they can defend themselves against existing threats. In other cases, such spending is by the perpetrators of such threats to advance their expansionist and other interests. In both cases, development is adversely affected.

Global military expenditure for 2023 reached \$2.4 trillion, representing a 6.8 per cent increase in real terms from 2022, and was reportedly the steepest year-on-year increase since 2009. Meanwhile, the Ukraine humanitarian response plan remains only 27.5 per cent funded.

Legitimate defence concerns notwithstanding, there are many direct and indirect links between military expenditure and the reduction in available resources for social and economic development. Indeed, the ongoing conflicts have compromised the livelihoods of millions of people and taken us even further away from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Guyana therefore calls for the peaceful resolution of disputes and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations. Guyana further maintains that the only effective means of preventing further escalation or instability in Ukraine and the broader region is to end this war. We therefore call upon the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. We reiterate the urgent need to find a just and lasting peace through a political and diplomatic process, with the commitment of all parties. Guyana stands ready to contribute to those efforts.

Mr. De Rivièrè (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

This is the sixteenth time that Russia has requested a meeting on Western arms deliveries to Ukraine. In the face of the disaster it has triggered, Russia's only response is a new attempt to shift its own responsibility back to others. Western weapons are not the cause of this war. It was Russia's decision, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, to launch the large-scale invasion of a State that did not threaten it. Nor is it Western weapons that are prolonging this conflict. It is Russia's relentless pursuit of its war of aggression, in defiance of the many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, of international law and of the order issued by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022.

Neither are Western arms deliveries to blame for undermining the international non-proliferation regime and our collective security. Rather, it is Russia's decision to buy arms and ammunition from North Korea, in violation of Council resolutions and at the cost of giving a blank check to North Korea's proliferation programmes. Russia has chosen to acquire armed drones from Iran, even though such transfers are prohibited by resolution 2231 (2015). Incidentally, France expresses its concern about the possible transfer of ballistic missiles from Iran to Russia. That would constitute an escalation that cannot go unanswered.

As Russian strikes against Ukrainian territory, civilians, civilian buildings and energy infrastructure intensify, France will continue to provide Ukraine with the military support that it needs to protect its airspace and territory, in accordance with the Charter. France will continue to transfer equipment in order to make a difference on the ground. Russia is now attacking Ukraine in the Kharkiv region from military sites behind the Russian border, not only from the occupied territories as before. The Ukrainians need to be able to adapt in order to strike the military sites on Russian territory from which Russia is carrying out its aggression. That is Ukraine's exercise of its full right to legitimate self-defence.

Russia accuses Ukraine's supporters of contributing to the escalation. But what are we talking about? Training mobilized soldiers on Ukrainian territory would in no way constitute an escalation. It would amount to recognizing Ukraine's sovereignty over its own territory and, once again, to giving it the means to exercise its right to legitimate self-defence.

Helping Ukraine to defend itself means creating the conditions for a just and lasting peace, because peace

cannot mean the surrender of the victim. Together with its partners, France will continue to support Ukraine for as long as necessary. The summit that begins tomorrow in Switzerland constitutes an important step towards building that just and lasting peace. It will provide an opportunity to reach agreements on key issues, namely, the nuclear question, the security of civilian populations and infrastructure, and food security. France will participate at the highest level.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing. I also thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her insightful briefing. We note the contribution of Mr. Daniel Kovalik. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in this meeting.

As we deliberate on arms supply relating to the conflict in Ukraine, Sierra Leone reiterates its principled position that all transfers of weapons in conflict situations should occur within the applicable international legal framework and the relevant Security Council resolutions, and that such transfers should include pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition. On the basis of that premise, we take note of the differing 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 to breaches of neutrality.

We are concerned about recent developments in the Belgorod and Kharkiv region, which have the potential to further escalate the conflict and worsen the already dire humanitarian situation. Sierra Leone is further concerned about missile and drone attacks on the Russian city of Belgorod and the use of highly destructive glide bombs, dropped from planes on the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv and its surroundings. In connection with those developments, we are deeply concerned with the seeming authorization given by some countries, encouraging Ukraine to use weapons supplied by third parties to strike targets inside Russia.

Those recent developments involving the use of certain weapons to target locations across borders and statements alluding to the provision of certain capabilities to various actors are worrisome, as they raise concerns about the potential for further destabilization, an escalation of the conflict, an increase in civilian

harm and a serious hindering of the prospects for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. While recognizing the right of nations to self-defence, it is imperative for all parties to exercise restraint and prioritize dialogue and peaceful means of conflict resolution in order to avoid any actions that may jeopardize peace and security in the region in the long term.

It is important that we also continue to remind all parties of the devastating effects of this conflict on civilians and civilian infrastructure. Reports from the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNICEF indicate that, to date, documented civilian casualties have increased to 32,231, including more than 10,000 deaths, while noting that the real figures are likely to be considerably higher. UNICEF confirmed on 13 May that nearly 2,000 children have been killed or injured in Ukraine since the start of the conflict in February 2022, highlighting that the number of child fatalities this year has increased by almost 40 per cent, compared to 2023. 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 war.

Those 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 further escalation and from pursuit of the option of winning the war on the battlefield. Dialogue and diplomacy should be the primary tools employed to de-escalate tensions and pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The international community, including the Council, must remain steadfast in its commitment to supporting the pursuit of a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine. In that regard, while we note that the summit on peace in Ukraine will take place over the coming weekend, we are of the view that the Russian Federation, as a key stakeholder in any peace process, should have been invited to attend it.

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 encouraging the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In conclusion, we call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and

territorial integrity and genuine diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all the parties involved.

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

It comes as no surprise that Russia called for today's meeting the day before representatives of dozens of countries travel to Switzerland for the summit on peace in Ukraine. Today's meeting is a transparent attempt by Russia to distract the world and blame anyone but itself for what is happening in Ukraine. But it is fooling no one. Russia is once again peddling the absurd proposition that it is not its own relentless attacks on another United Nations Member State and its people and cities that are prolonging the war. Russia is asking us to believe that it is Ukraine's efforts to defend itself that are the real obstacle to peace.

More than two years after the start of its full-scale invasion, the number of countries sitting around this table is now larger than those that have stood beside Russia in its illegal war of aggression. In contrast, more than 140 countries have repeatedly called on Russia to end its war against Ukraine and fully withdraw from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory. It is no surprise that Russia has sought to strengthen ties with the few countries willing to support its blatant disregard for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has unlawfully transferred dozens of ballistic missiles and more than 11,000 containers of munitions to aid Russia's war against Ukraine, prolonging the suffering of the Ukrainian people. The transfer by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and procurement by Russia of those ballistic missiles and other arms and related materiel are clear violations of Security Council resolutions. On 29 May, the United States published analytical material showing a visual comparison of images from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's State media and images of missile debris from Kharkiv, confirming that Russia had used such missiles against Ukraine.

Russia has deepened its military relationship with Iran, including through its acquisition of Iranian uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs), which credible reporting suggests are being used to target Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. Reports indicate

that Russia is also seeking to procure ballistic missiles from Iran. As we have said before, that would represent a significant escalation in Iran's support for Russia's war of aggression.

I want to make it clear that the People's Republic of China is also playing a significant role in supporting Russia's war efforts. China is providing Russia with substantial quantities of machine tools, microelectronics and optics, as well as UAV and cruise-missile technology. Those materials are filling critical gaps in Russia's defence production cycle. Since 2023 Russia has rapidly expanded its capacity to make key munitions, including artillery rounds, in large part due to the provision of nitrocellulose by companies from the People's Republic of China. In the last quarter of 2023 alone, more than 70 per cent of Russia's nearly \$900 million in machine-tool imports came from China. Russia has likely been using those machine tools to help increase ballistic-missile production. The People's Republic of China has also been providing Russia with UAV engines and turbojet engines for cruise missiles. What is even more worrying is that Chinese and Russian entities have been working to jointly produce UAVs inside Russia. We urge all countries to cease military cooperation with Russia, which supports Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The United States remains committed to providing Ukraine with what it needs to defend itself in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. The international community's participation in the upcoming summit on peace in Ukraine, hosted by Switzerland, will be crucial to supporting our shared objective, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. We call on all countries to support Ukraine's pursuit of a just and lasting peace, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter. The United States will stand by Ukraine as it seeks a just and lasting peace consistent with the Charter. We will continue to call for justice for the victims of this war of aggression and to work for accountability for those responsible.

Mr. Merabet (Algeria): I thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her insightful briefing, and I listened carefully to Mr. Kovalik's remarks.

Since the start of our term on the Security Council, Algeria has always insisted on the need to abandon the logic of confrontation that has prevailed in the conflict in Ukraine. We have repeatedly warned the

Council about the problems created by confrontation and polarization, which lead only to greater loss of life, the prolonged suffering of populations and further obstacles to finding effective solutions. We have urged the parties to prioritize the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. We have also called on them to favour dialogue and genuine negotiation, taking into consideration the parties' legitimate security concerns inclusively and constructively. Unfortunately, those calls have gone unanswered and the situation on the ground is not evolving towards a peaceful settlement. We are rather witnessing a further escalation of tensions that will only worsen the situation and make positive prospects ever more distant.

Against that backdrop, Algeria once again expresses its deep concern about the influx and use of increasingly lethal and destructive weapons and ammunition in conflict zones. And we are equally concerned about the risk of those weapons falling into the hands and control of criminal or terrorist groups — a situation that could result in widespread threats to peace and security. The parties should also be consistently guided by their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. No effort should be spared to relieve people's suffering.

Finally, we believe it is critical to enhance international and inclusive diplomatic efforts to achieve peace and create an environment and conditions conducive to that. Our focus should be on reaching a peaceful settlement that can obtain a consensus among the parties involved in the conflict. Only genuine and inclusive negotiations can bring us closer to ending the conflict and building sustainable peace. Algeria remains ready to support any efforts aimed at achieving peace and security through a genuine and inclusive dialogue between the parties.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I too thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

It has been 28 months since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The security situation in the Kharkiv region, along with other parts of Ukraine, continues to deteriorate, and Russia's daily attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure show no sign of abating. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 174 civilians were killed and 690 were injured in May — the highest number of civilian

casualties in a single month since June of last year. That should be at the centre of our considerations. Instead, the Russian Federation is once again trying to present a narrative according to which Ukraine is not entitled to defend itself or to receive any assistance from its allies to do so. However, if Ukraine is to continue to exist, it has no alternative but to defend itself. That right is enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Russia's most recent campaign against Ukraine's power grid, which started in late March, has caused destruction and devastation. And as Ukraine's summer has started with blackouts, unease about winter has also begun to set in. Russian forces had already damaged most of Ukraine's thermal and hydroelectric power plants, and the recent power outages have raised concerns about what will happen when the cold weather arrives. We must consider the fact that the energy system in Ukraine is down by more than 50 per cent of its pre-war generative capacity. The attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure must stop immediately, and the perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable. All the parties have an obligation to protect civilians and ensure compliance with international law, including international humanitarian law. We also want to highlight the principles of proportionality and distinction, as well as the special protections afforded to children, with a view to reducing the significant risk of harm to civilians.

We are deeply concerned about the mounting evidence of Russia's procurement and use of missiles from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea against Ukraine. It is a flagrant violation of Security Council resolutions and of the sanctions regime. In that connection, we deeply regret Russia's decision to veto the mandate renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see S/PV.9591). Those actions undermine the global non-proliferation regime and the Charter itself.

In conclusion, the summit on peace in Ukraine to be held this weekend in Switzerland will be a stepping-stone towards creating a framework for prospective negotiations that can guide all the parties towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on the Charter and international law. Until that day comes, Malta will continue to support Ukraine, and we will continue to urge Russia to unconditionally, completely and immediately withdraw all its forces,

proxies and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. A world in which might is right is a proposition that Malta can never accept.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Daniel Kovalik for their insights, and I recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at this meeting.

Since this conflict broke out, we have regularly held meetings to address the immense threats that it poses to international peace and security, most recently on 20 May (see S/PV.9629). Regrettably, despite repeated calls from the United Nations and the global community for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the situation in Ukraine has only deteriorated. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the death, danger and destruction brought about by blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and the rules of war. The conflict's human toll is heartbreaking and catastrophic. It is evident that a path of escalatory military force cannot lead to a just and sustainable resolution to the crisis. Such behaviour has inevitably led to a gradual increase in arms supplies to the conflict zone and is fuelling a global arms race, confirming the escalatory trajectory of a conflict that is anchored solely and firmly in a belief in a military solution. That reality is captured in the *Global Peace Index 2024* report from the Institute for Economics and Peace, which shows the devastating human cost and the complexity of modern warfare resulting from regional conflicts such as those between Russia and Ukraine and in Gaza. They are examples of forever wars, in which prolonged violence continues seemingly endlessly without a clear resolution, exacerbated by external military support, asymmetric warfare and geopolitical rivalries.

Mozambique fully recognizes the legitimate right of each and every country to defend itself and adopt necessary measures to that effect. However, that legitimate right must always be exercised responsibly and transparently within the existing international legal framework. That approach is fundamental to promoting the non-proliferation regimes and preventing arms from being diverted into the hands of unauthorized actors. Furthermore, the protection of civilians remains our highest priority. Ensuring the safety and welfare of innocent civilians should be a non-negotiable principle.

Upholding the international legal framework for arms control and the responsible transfer of arms is crucial. In our humble opinion, the solution lies in a political and negotiated approach as the most viable way to end this conflict and lay a foundation for a lasting and sustainable peace between the two neighbouring countries. We reiterate our calls to the parties to immediately cease hostilities, resume direct negotiations without preconditions and engage in a constructive and meaningful dialogue.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Nakamitsu, for her briefing. I have also taken note of Mr. Kovalik's remarks.

In these times of heightened tension, it is essential that we return to the fundamental principles that unite us. As Member States, we are bound by the common principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We are all bound by the primary and essential purpose of that document, which is the maintenance of international peace and security. That entails the duty to respect the sovereign equality of all States, settle international disputes peacefully and refrain from the threat or use of force. Those principles cannot be compromised.

Yet Russia's military aggression against Ukraine is a flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter. With a view to achieving 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 commits us all to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We also want to remind everyone that Ukraine has a right to ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty. As the devastating attacks on Ukraine persist, the numbers of civilian casualties continue to rise. We urge all the parties to unconditionally respect international humanitarian law and human rights. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected. Where arms transfers are concerned, we reaffirm the need to comply with the relevant multilateral conventions and instruments. That includes the relevant Security Council resolutions in that area.

At the Ukraine recovery conference held in Berlin this week, Switzerland pointed out that we had dared to speak of rebuilding just a few months after the start of the military aggression in 2022. Today we must act and have the courage to build peace. As we speak, the final

preparations are under way for the first summit on peace in Ukraine, to be held in Switzerland over the next two days. Almost 100 delegations will attend the summit with the aim of developing a common understanding of a possible path towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the Charter. We sincerely hope that the meeting will inspire a framework for a future peace process and enable us to move forward on a path towards ending this terrible war. Switzerland's convening of the summit is part of our ongoing commitment to contributing to a just and lasting peace in Ukraine by preparing a framework for possible future peace talks between the two parties. I believe we all agree that the dangers that have been outlined can be avoided only through dialogue. We therefore welcome all efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting peace based on the principles of the Charter. We must combine our strengths, ideas and world views to that end. Ultimately, what unites us is our duty to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The crisis in Ukraine is still dragging on. The constant flow of arms and ammunition to the battlefield will only exacerbate the crisis, result in more casualties and increase the risk of the diversion or proliferation of arms. Complex issues can never be remedied with simple solutions. Weapons may help to end the war but will not bring about lasting peace. China calls on the parties to the conflict to demonstrate political will, meet each other halfway and launch peace talks as soon as possible, with a view to ending the fighting. We call on the international community to prioritize peace and the humanitarian situation, speed up the efforts to promote peace in order to prevent the confrontation from escalating, unite to address the negative spillover effects of the crisis and work together to build the conditions needed for a political settlement. China's position on the Ukraine question has been consistent and categorical. We are committed to objectivity and impartiality. We will maintain close communication with all the parties, push for peace negotiations, work tirelessly and play a constructive role in the effort to achieve a political settlement to the crisis in Ukraine as soon as possible.

When the Council considered the question of Ukraine on 20 May (see S/PV.9629), the United States representative indicated that China was helping Russia

to rebuild its defence industry, and I responded to those claims at the time. Today the United States representative has once again made false assertions that China has supported Russia in its war effort. That is unacceptable. I want to reiterate that China is neither the creator of the crisis in Ukraine nor a party to it. China has consistently advocated for a political settlement and peace talks. We have never provided lethal weapons to any party to the conflict and have always maintained strict control of dual-use items.

The economic and trade cooperation between China and Russia complies with World Trade Organization rules and market rules. It does not target any third parties or violate international law. It is worth pointing out that trade between the United States and Russia has actually never stopped since the war broke out. The United States has made frequent accusations about the normal trade relations between China and Russia. That is nothing but hype, an attempt to focus people's attention on the conflict and manufacture differences. We urge the United States to stop using the Ukraine issue as an excuse to smear China and use unreasonable coercion to impose unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies. We also urge the United States to make real and positive efforts to end the war and restore peace.

Mr. Ponikvar (Slovenia): I would like to thank the briefers for their presentations and make a couple of points on behalf of my delegation.

First, Slovenia supports Ukraine in its fight against aggression and will continue to do so until Russia withdraws its troops. Our aid to Ukraine is delivered in order to support a country defending itself in line with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is worth pointing out that while our support to Ukraine is in line with applicable international and national legal frameworks, there is ample evidence to suggest that Russia is procuring arms illegally from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That has far-reaching consequences and a potential destabilizing effect around the globe.

Secondly, as we have once again been hearing about the rising profits of Western defence companies, I want to underline that aid to Ukraine is not a matter of money, economy or profits but of principle and solidarity. But if we do want to pursue the economic discourse, we cannot help being reminded of the double standards employed in this debate. Russia has shifted into a full wartime economy itself and is spending an estimated

30 per cent of its budget on building up arms — arms used for attacks on a sovereign neighbouring country. That cycle is not helping anyone, and it should stop.

Thirdly, hearing the Russian delegation speak about prospects for peace fills us with hope. However, we submit that every discussion about lasting peace should start and end with respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. In that connection we look forward to the peace summit that starts tomorrow in Switzerland.

In order to secure the future of Ukraine, and in fact of other nations as well, the Council needs to step in and start building trust. We are ready to do our part.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu and the other briefer for their briefings.

As we all know, it is malicious, shameful and hypocritical that an aggressor and a permanent member of the Security Council is criticizing a victim, resulting in the Council being unable to adequately address this issue, which is a major threat to international peace and security. We want to repeat with 100 per cent clarity that it is Russia that initiated this war of aggression, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. No matter what excuses it may make, Russia will never be able to justify any of its illegal actions against Ukraine or undermine Ukraine's legitimate right to defend itself. For the majority of the international community, it is only natural to be providing continued and legitimate support to Ukraine as it fights for its survival, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We were appalled to hear Russia's rationale for calling today's meeting, as it is Russia that has itself been procuring and using North Korean artillery, including ballistic missiles, in Ukraine, in blatant violation of Security Council resolutions and taking a tremendous toll on Ukrainian civilians. It is also deeply regrettable that Russia's veto blocking the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see S/PV.9591) makes it easier for Russia and North Korea to evade United Nations sanctions.

Russia has demonstrated diplomatic creativity in attempting to obscure the undeniable fact of its aggression. However, it cannot excuse itself. Russia has been strongly condemned not only by a majority of Council members but by the international community at large, as has been repeatedly reflected in General

Assembly resolutions. In that regard, we once again strongly urge Russia to stop squandering the Council's precious time and resources by automatically requesting one Council meeting to counter another, as well as using such meetings as a forum for propaganda and disinformation. Such misuse of the Council only devalues the Council itself, which benefits nobody, including the Russian Federation.

The necessary elements for peace in Ukraine have been clear from the beginning and remain so. The violation of the Charter of the United Nations must be rectified immediately. We are proudly committed to the peace formula and strongly support the summit on peace in Ukraine, which begins tomorrow and at which Japan will be represented by its Prime Minister.

There can be no just and lasting peace without Ukraine. Pursuing neutrality between the aggressor and the victim, while treating both as if they were on equal footing, should not be the goal. Such an approach, even in goodwill, only benefits the aggressor, Russia.

Let me conclude my statement by reiterating the words of the General Assembly resolution adopted on 2 March 2022 by an overwhelming majority vote:

“Deplores in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of Article 2 (4) of the Charter” (*General Assembly resolution ES-11/1, para. 2*)

and

“Also demands that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders” (*ibid., para. 4*).

Today, we are honoured to reaffirm Japan's position, which aligns with the overwhelming majority of the international community and which is moral, principled and just.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Nakamitsu for her informative briefing. I take note of Mr. Kovalik's comments. I also acknowledge the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in the Chamber.

The war situation in Ukraine remains unresolved, 841 days after the invasion began. The serious consequences for the civilian population persist, and

the risks to regional and global peace grow. Ecuador joins the widespread international call for the parties to refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas and to move the fighting away from urban areas and nuclear facilities. International humanitarian law is clear in its prohibition of attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and it must be respected. That has been meticulously elaborated by High Commissioner Nakamitsu.

The right to self-defence is stipulated by the Charter and must be framed within its context. The transfer of arms and ammunition must comply with the applicable international legal framework, and States must prevent diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse in the import, transit, production and export of arms and ammunition. The possibility of a geographical expansion of the conflict or of events that trigger greater tensions must be avoided at all costs, and Ecuador calls for efforts aimed at halting the escalation of the conflict to be redoubled.

Historically, Ecuador has rejected all violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and has favoured the peaceful resolution of disputes, an immutable principle in this and other conflicts. My country appreciates all mediation and dialogue efforts promoted by the international community in support of a sustainable peace that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, Ecuador recognizes that peace requires the active participation of the parties, and every effort to achieve that goal must be valued. Direct and constructive dialogue between the parties to bring about the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of peace cannot wait.

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

I join others in thanking High Representative Nakamitsu for the briefing and take note of Mr. Kovalik's remarks. I also welcome the participation of the delegation of Ukraine in today's meeting.

With the passage of 840 days since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, we are now witnessing the increased suffering of the Ukrainian people. Particularly in May, Russia has targeted the Kharkiv region and has once again intensified its indiscriminate attacks on the eastern regions of Ukraine, such as Donetsk and Zaporizhzhya, of late. As a result, the civilian death toll in Ukraine last month rose sharply to 174, the

highest such toll in a year. In that sense, it is inevitable for Ukraine to take the path of exercising its inherent right to self-defence, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, with the international community's assistance. Who the aggressor is and who the defenders are is crystal clear to all.

In the meantime, what makes this dynamic of war even more complicated and devastating is the ongoing arms trade between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which constitutes a blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. Therefore, the topic of the meeting of this body should be the illegal military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, not assistance to Ukraine.

Reportedly, the two leaders of Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are slated to meet imminently, during an upcoming high-level visit. That is all the more appalling as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is ignoring and even mocking the Council by repeatedly violating its resolutions, while Russia is derelict in its duty as a permanent member of the Council upon whom the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security has been conferred, as it aggressively engages in the use of force against a neighbouring country. We once again urge Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abide by the related Security Council resolutions.

Russia's continued invasion will only lead to a strengthening of the international community's will to defend the Charter of the United Nations and stand in solidarity with Ukraine, and that has been — and will be — clearly demonstrated at two international conferences this week.

Just days ago, the Ukraine Recovery Conference was held in Germany, where more than 60 like-minded countries reaffirmed their unwavering support for Ukraine and their shared commitment to strengthen the resilience of Ukraine for as long as needed. And this weekend, leaders from various parts of the world will gather again at the summit on peace in Ukraine, to be held in Switzerland, to lay out the steps to end the war, consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

Korea is no exception and is proudly participating in the international community's united efforts aimed at peace and reconstruction in Ukraine. Korea will continue to stand with the Ukrainian people until they

achieve a just and lasting peace in their lands. We will also remain firmly on the side of justice and the Charter of the United Nations.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I express my appreciation for Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu's briefing. Mindful of the cost of Security Council meetings, I will certainly not comment on Mr. Kovalik's nonsense. It would be a further waste of taxpayers' money. I also recognize the continued occupation of the seat of the Soviet Union by the dictator's envoy.

We reiterate our deep regret that that delegation continues to undermine the Security Council's mandate by regularly attempting to use this organ as a platform for disseminating Russian propaganda. It is one of the many negative impacts of a profound, decades-long Russian crisis.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to kill Ukrainians. Just two days ago, nine civilians were killed in the city of Kryvyi Rih in the Dnipropetrovsk region after a Russian Iskander-M ballistic missile hit a multistorey residential building. That attack also wounded 29 people, including five children. Earlier that same day, Russia also attempted to kill Kyiv residents by targeting the Ukrainian capital with six cruise and ballistic missiles and 24 Shahed drones. Thanks to the Ukrainian air defence forces, all of the drones and five missiles were intercepted. The remaining missile, however, hit a civilian infrastructure facility. Last night, another barrage of 14 missiles and 17 drones was launched on Ukrainian cities.

Our people experienced similar horrors during the Second World War. The entire territory of Ukraine was occupied by Nazi Germany, and my country suffered two waves of disastrous destruction. In 1941, critical infrastructure was blown up by the retreating Soviet troops, and in 1943, the Nazis did the same while retreating from Ukraine. Millions of Ukrainians perished in the war, either killed by Nazis or dying in concentration camps. Many also lost their lives in Soviet "meat assaults", when Stalin's generals ordered the taking of cities to coincide with Soviet public holidays. That was the case with the 1943 battle of Kyiv. The order was to liberate the city at all costs by the day of the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. The Soviet troops lost more than 100,000 soldiers in the battle of

Kyiv — 10 times more than the Nazis. A significant number of the fallen were Ukrainians mobilized from nearby regions and rushed to the battlefield, poorly equipped and untrained.

However, even the meat grinder tactic would not have helped Stalin to defeat the Nazis without the assistance of the States that gathered in Washington on 1 January 1942 to sign the declaration by United Nations. The United States alone provided the Soviet Union with 400,000 vehicles, 14,000 airplanes, 13,000 tanks, 2.7 million tons of petrol products, 4.5 million tons of food and many other items. At the Tehran conference in 1943, Stalin admitted that himself. On 30 November, Winston Churchill's birthday, Stalin proposed a toast in his honour and praised both the United States and the United Kingdom:

“I want to tell you what, from the Soviet point of view, the President and the United States have done to win the war. The most important things in this war are machines. The United States is a country of machines... Without these machines... we would have lost this war”.

Today, on the eve of the peace summit, we call on the entire United Nations to unite, just as it did in January 1942, against the evil that has once again brought war to Europe. Today Putin's grin and the gnashing of his worn fangs, which come from the same lair in which Stalin was hiding behind the Kremlin walls, cannot frighten the world. As was the case then, Member States' support must put an end to the Russian crisis, the war of aggression and the imminent threat to the entire United Nations.

We also appreciate that the twelfth Special Forces Azov Brigade of the National Guard of Ukraine recently passed Leahy vetting carried out by the United States Government. No evidence of violations by the Azov Brigade that may prevent United States military assistance from going to that unit has been found. We welcome that conclusion, which debunks the Russian smear campaign that has continued since 2014. Soldiers of the Azov Brigade were among the courageous defenders of Mariupol in 2022 and remained to the very end in the besieged city, protecting its residents, whom Russia was killing on an industrial scale. Russia's hatred of Mariupol's defenders led to their ill-treatment in Russian captivity and to the Olenivka massacre in July 2022. Currently, more than 900 soldiers of the Azov Brigade are being held incommunicado

in Russian prisons. As reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, some of them were beaten to death, and others were given long-term or life sentences simply for being members of the Azov Brigade. We reiterate our call to stop their torture, grant unimpeded and regular access to them for the International Committee of the Red Cross and human rights defenders and include them in prisoner exchanges.

While spreading the nonsense that the possession of arms by the defending party makes peace elusive, Russia itself continues to receive weapons from rogue States such as Iran and North Korea. Pyongyang has already reportedly sent to Russia more than 10,000 shipping containers that could hold nearly 5 million artillery shells. Moreover, Russia resorts to press-ganging foreign nationals into its occupation forces in Ukraine by threatening those already in Russia or deceiving those they recruit from abroad. As reported by international media, the Russian authorities have been threatening not to extend the visas of African students and workers unless they agree to join the military. Moscow detains foreigners with work visas and forces them to choose between deportation or enlistment into the army.

Russia has also launched a global recruitment drive, luring foreign nationals with promises of lucrative work before forcing them to train and be deployed to the front line. Among the most recent cases is the escape of 22 Sri Lankans, who managed to desert from the Russian army and return home. As the spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence of Sri Lanka described that appalling situation on 11 June, “they were duped”. One of those 22 individuals, a man named Anil Madusanka, told reporters that he had received a job offer to be a driver in Russia. Upon arrival, however, he was handed an assault rifle and sent to the front line. After being wounded, he was able to flee to his country's embassy in Moscow, which arranged for his repatriation. We urge all Member States to trace the Russian recruiters in their countries and take measures to prevent a devastating impact of the Russian crisis on the safety of their citizens. Let us be clear: Russia is looking for cannon fodder.

Tomorrow, the inaugural peace summit will start in Switzerland. We are not surprised that Moscow is using every opportunity to discredit that global peace initiative and launch another series of manipulative statements against the backdrop of the worsening

Russian crisis. It is absurd that Putin, who, together with his accomplices, planned, prepared and executed the largest armed aggression in Europe since the Second World War, has presented himself in his statement today as a peacemaker. It is predictable, however, that to end the war he has once again put forward options that undermine the foundations of the international legal order and the Charter of the United Nations. Putin's ultimatums have been voiced by Moscow many times before, and there is nothing new in these latest statements. Nevertheless, the timing of their announcement is telling.

On the eve of the inaugural global peace summit in Switzerland, Putin pursues only one goal: to prevent leaders and countries from participating in the summit. Russia is afraid of a just and sustainable peace based on the underlying principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Once again, we hear from the Kremlin lair the gnashing of the worn fangs of the old dictator, as we heard on 23 February 2023 when the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations voted for those principles. Those who voted against them are against a just peace — some keep promoting a freezing of the conflict.

The powerful voice of the nations united around the principles of the Charter of the United Nations at the global peace summit in Switzerland will be decisive for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. That voice is critical to make Russia accept those principles, abandon ultimatums and move to good-faith negotiations to end the war, rather than to continue a propaganda campaign amplified by horrific daily missile strikes on Ukraine.

Eight decades ago, the allies that signed the declaration by the United Nations, by providing massive help with weapons, munitions and food to the victims of aggression, stopped the war in Europe. They are able to stop it this time. What is required now, as then, is unity and dedication to the principles of the United Nations. And the peace summit in Switzerland is the place to say it loud and clear — we the peoples of the United Nations are determined to stop the war that has brought untold sorrow to millions of women and men. Make sure your voice is heard.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.