



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

**9682**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 9 July 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Nebenzia . . . . . (Russian Federation)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Yahiaoui
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. De La Gasca
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Japan . . . . .	Mrs. Shino
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Kumanga
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Hwang
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

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

In view of the fact that, by assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, the Russian Federation took on the obligation to act in a transparent and impartial manner, I would like to openly explain the situation with regard to the participation of Ukraine in today's meeting.

Yesterday the Secretariat received a letter from the representative of that country requesting the right to speak at today's meeting. Unlike all other such requests, including those of the European Union (EU) and Poland, the letter is in violation of standard practice and is not addressed to the President of the Security Council, nor does it even include the basic protocol language of diplomatic communication. The only sentence in the letter was a request to allow Ukraine to participate in the meeting. Here is that letter. It is not clear who the letter is addressed to. Here are the letters from Poland and the EU. They contain all the necessary elements of an address to the President of the Security Council and were drafted in accordance with the protocol. We informed the Council about the request from Ukraine. I would like to stress that we see no problem in allowing Ukraine to participate in the meeting, as it is a country whose interests are affected by the item on the Security Council's agenda. That is in accordance with the rules of procedure. We immediately conveyed the message that, as soon as the presidency receives a letter in due form, with the agreement of the members of the Security Council, Ukraine's participation in the meeting will be accepted.

However, the Ukrainian delegation did not send in the proper request. I believe that it is fundamentally important for it to show that it is above the rules of the Security Council and, unlike other delegations requesting participation in accordance with rule 37, including those of the European States, it has the right to dictate its own rules. We, as the presidency, cannot accept that. The rules are the same for everyone; and they

have ensured the functioning of the Security Council for almost 80 years. The Ukrainian delegation's approach is nothing but an attempt to undermine the authority of the Security Council, because the presidency is not a country but rather an institution. I hope that all our colleagues on the Security Council realize that.

Nevertheless, if there are no objections from other members of the Council, we agree to let Ukraine participate in today's meeting but only in view of the fact that it was requested by a member of the Security Council — the United States. We intend to abide by the request of the United States, in accordance with the Council's rules of procedure. We regret that Ukraine is unable to act independently, even on such a purely procedural matter as participation in a Security Council meeting. Even on that matter it must be led by its sponsor.

I request the Secretariat to 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 Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Mr. Volodymyr Zhovnur, cardiac surgeon, anaesthesiologist and activist, to participate in this meeting.

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

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

I give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

**Ms. Msuya:** Since I briefed the Council last month (see S/PV.9647), there has been no respite for civilians in Ukraine amid continuing waves of attacks across the entire country.

I was particularly shocked by yesterday's deadly missile strikes on Kyiv, Kryvyi Rih, Pokrovsk and Dnipro and other urban centres. Those attacks struck key energy infrastructure, as well as two of the country's main specialist hospitals for children and women.

In Kyiv, the intensive care, surgical and oncology wards of Ukraine's largest children's hospital — Okhmatdyt — were severely damaged.

Its toxicology department — where children receive dialysis — was completely destroyed. First responders attending the scene immediately after the attack found children receiving treatment for cancer in hospital beds set up in parks and on the street, where medical workers had quickly established triage areas among the chaos, dust and debris.

Reportedly, 27 civilians, including 4 children, were killed and 117, including 7 children, were injured. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is verifying figures while rescue workers, hospital staff and volunteers continue to clear rubble in search for people trapped under debris.

Health officials report that what remains of the children's hospital is without electricity, preventing the use of ventilators and other urgent care. Our health partners have therefore helped to move child patients to other facilities and have been providing psychosocial support and assisting with other urgent needs. United Nations human rights staff also witnessed a massive outpouring of solidarity from local residents, who rushed to the scene to help remove rubble and provide blankets, water and food for patients and medical staff.

I also regret that, in Kyiv, at least seven civilians were killed at the ISIDA medical centre — one of Ukraine's largest women's health and family planning centres — when debris from an intercepted missile hit the facility.

I echo the Secretary-General's, United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner's and others' strong condemnations of those deplorable attacks. My heart goes out to all those affected.

Let me remind the Council that hospitals have special protection under international humanitarian law. Intentionally directing attacks against a protected hospital is a war crime, and perpetrators must be held to account.

Those incidents are part of a deeply concerning pattern of systematic attacks harming health-care and other civilian infrastructure across Ukraine. Attacks have intensified since the spring of 2024. As of 30 June, OHCHR had verified that conflict-related violence in Ukraine had claimed the lives of 11,284 civilians and left 22,594 others injured — a total of 33,878 civilian casualties since February 2022. That does not include figures from yesterday's attacks. The World Health Organization has now verified 1,878 attacks affecting

health-care facilities, personnel, transport, supplies and patients since February 2022. Attacks have also significantly impacted homes, education facilities, office buildings and public transport. And they have disrupted electricity, gas and water supplies for millions of households. Energy production capacity across the country is significantly reduced.

The consequences for the humanitarian situation in Ukraine are, of course, severe. More than 14.6 million people — approximately 40 per cent of Ukraine's population — require some form of humanitarian assistance. Of those people, 56 per cent are women and girls. Access to medical care for women and girls, including maternal and reproductive health care, is severely restricted. Thousands of children continue to have daily lessons in bunkers, 20 feet below the ground. And for everyone, the constant fear caused by the war is having a serious impact on mental health. More than 10 million people urgently need support to cope with the stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges associated with the conflict.

In that context, it is deeply troubling that aid operations are also being impacted by the attacks. Just last week a strike destroyed an apartment block immediately in front of the United Nations offices in Dnipro city — Ukraine's fourth largest city, home to thousands of people fleeing hostilities and a base for a significant number of aid organizations. The attack killed and injured civilians, including aid workers, and destroyed homes. A second attack in Dnipro on the same day also damaged hospitals, schools and a collective site hosting more than 120 displaced people. It bears repeating: throughout all military operations, constant care must be taken to spare civilians and civilian objects from harm.

As we have mentioned in previous Council briefings, humanitarian operations in some areas also lack access to people in need. We remain deeply concerned about the 1.5 million people who we are unable to reach in parts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya regions occupied by the Russian Federation. Like all others living close to the front line in Ukraine, they undoubtedly require urgent access to health care and medicine, food and clean drinking water. In accordance with international humanitarian law, it is imperative that impartial humanitarian relief can be facilitated for all civilians in need.

Despite the challenges, in the first four months of 2024, the United Nations and its partners — many of them local organizations — still managed to provide life-saving assistance to 4.4 million people across Ukraine. We are grateful to the donors who have so far provided the \$887 million in funding that has allowed us to do so. But the reality is that six months into the year, that amounts to only 28 per cent of the \$3.1 billion required. To sustain operations in an increasingly complex and dangerous environment, we urgently need donors to accelerate funding for the humanitarian response. That is all the more so as another winter approaches amid no sign of an easing of hostilities or their impact on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

To facilitate early procurement and pre-positioning of winter supplies, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners are launching the winter preparedness plan for 2024-2025, supported by an allocation of \$55 million from the Ukraine humanitarian fund. But alone, that will not be enough to get Ukrainians through another winter of war. More is urgently needed.

For more than two years now, people across all of Ukraine have shown remarkable fortitude and resilience in unbelievably challenging circumstances. However, yesterday's attacks and their impacts are a reminder of the deplorable human toll of the war, particularly on the most vulnerable members of society — tragedies we will see again and again as long as the conflict continues and the rules of war are defied. I therefore once again call on the Council and all Member States to support all efforts to ensure respect for international law and bring an end to the suffering and destruction.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. Msuya for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zhovnir.

**Mr. Zhovnir**: I thank Council members for the opportunity to speak at this meeting today. I am Volodymyr Zhovnir. I am a doctor and have been the Director of Okhmatdyt since January 2021.

“Okhmatdyt” means mother-and-child care, and it is Ukraine's largest children's medical centre. The hospital treats children with cancer and blood diseases from all over our country. Each year, approximately 18,000 children receive treatment, approximately 20,000 receive emergency care, and we perform approximately 13,000 surgeries. The hospital also offers treatments to patients from other countries.

Yesterday, at 9.52 a.m., an air-raid siren sounded. The hospital staff began evacuating patients to the bomb shelter. That is challenging with children in intensive care. During the past two and a half years of the Russian war against Ukraine, our staff have done everything possible during each attack to save lives and minimize deaths.

At that time yesterday, more than 600 patients and approximately the same number of hospital workers were in the hospital: children were on drips, on dialysis and in intensive care. On top of that, at the time of the attack, three heart surgeries were in progress in the operating rooms. Pausing them would have put the patients' lives at risk.

At 10.42 a.m., we felt a powerful explosion. The ground shook, and the walls trembled. Both children and adults screamed and cried from fear, and the wounded from pain. It was a real hell. We went out into the yard and saw that a Russian missile had struck the intensive care unit and a therapy department for chronic toxicity. That part of the building was completely destroyed. The floors collapsed, and we could hear people crying out for help from beneath the rubble. As a result of the attack, more than 300 people were injured, including eight children. Two adults died, one of them was a young doctor.

The primary goal was to evacuate patients who relied on life-support systems. We evacuated more than 600 patients, and more than 100 were transferred to other hospitals. The evacuation is continuing.

Our medical staff have also been taken to other hospitals to provide medical aid to those children. The hospital's toxicology building and traumatology department were completely destroyed. A part of the country's only oncology laboratory was destroyed. In total, 24 departments are damaged, including 10 surgical departments, five oncology departments, three intensive care units, two operating units, two somatic departments, the radiology department, prenatal care department and the radiation therapy department. We had to suspend medical services in the departments of toxicology and emergency care. Operations at the trauma unit have been halted. We are continuing to evaluate the full extent of the damage caused by the direct Russian attack on the children's hospital.

The strike will have long-lasting effects. Patients will face a shortage of medical care, and our specialized services with high-tech equipment will

not be restored soon. There will be serious long-term impacts on Ukrainian children needing medical care. The psychological trauma on children from the attack is severe. It will last a long time and could affect them for their whole lives.

To conclude, striking a children's hospital, where children are treated for cancer and other serious diseases, is not just a war crime; it is far beyond the limits of humanity. Our doctors and employees have been saving children's lives as long as possible, even under missiles and fire. We will not surrender.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Zhovnir for his briefing.

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

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Msuya and Mr. Zhovnir for their briefings.

On Monday, 8 July, Russia carried out massive strikes against a number of civilian targets in Ukraine. Russian missiles hit the Okhmatdyt children's hospital, where children are treated for serious diseases, including cancer. Another strike, a few hours later, hit a medical centre in Kyiv. According to preliminary estimates, those barbaric attacks killed at least 37 people. Once again, Russia deliberately targeted residential areas and health-care facilities. France condemns those flagrant violations of international law, which are just another addition to the long list of war crimes for which Russia must be held accountable.

As it has been doing for almost two years with massive strikes against the country's energy infrastructure, Russia is targeting civilian targets and seeking to undermine the resilience of the Ukrainian people. France reiterates its support for the work undertaken by the United Nations and other organizations to document those violations and ensure accountability. Those acts are in addition to the forced transfer of Ukrainian children. All those serious violations committed against children have this year once again justified Russia's inclusion on the infamous list of the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384, annex II). Those facts have just confirmed once again that our support for Ukraine must continue and increase. As the European Council recalled on 27 June, Russia cannot and must not win this war. France will therefore continue to provide

Ukraine with the support it needs for its legitimate defence, for as long as necessary.

It will continue to provide humanitarian support to Ukraine. France mobilized €300 million in 2022 and 2023. In 2024, France will mobilize more than €100 million in the health-care, education, mine clearance, energy and water sectors.

We once again call on Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, as requested by the International Court of Justice on 16 March 2022. We will remain engaged to ensure respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and will relentlessly condemn their violation.

**Mr. De La Gasca** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, for her briefing. I listened carefully to Mr. Zhovnir's statement. I acknowledge the presence in the Chamber of the representatives of Ukraine, Poland and the European Union.

Ecuador notes with deep concern the recent intensification of hostilities in Ukraine, which has caused numerous deaths and wounded, affecting residential and commercial buildings in several cities.

What is particularly intolerable is the destruction of the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, which, as we have heard, has left a toll of innocent civilian victims, including children and women. Health-care facilities, such as hospitals and other infrastructure created for medical care purposes, must be respected and protected in all circumstances and by all parties to the conflict. We hope that this event will be duly investigated so that it does not go unpunished.

The shocking images detailing the suffering caused by those attacks, as well as those from a few weeks ago showing the panic among civilians peacefully enjoying themselves on a beach in occupied Crimea, are evidence of the human tragedy unfolding before our eyes as a result of the conflict.

Ecuador reiterates its call to all parties to respect international humanitarian law, especially observing the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, since it is imperative to protect the lives of civilians and safeguard civilian infrastructure. I would like to recall that the Secretary-General, echoing what I consider to be a general call by the international community, has consistently urged the parties to refrain

from using explosive weapons in populated areas, as their use can cause direct, indiscriminate and long-term damage. For that reason, combat must be kept far away from urban areas.

The conflict is a tragedy for the peoples of Russia and Ukraine, and therefore must end. It is disheartening that, despite the efforts and initiatives to seek peace, hostilities are escalating, and it is civilians who continue to pay the highest price. We must move from a logic of domination and force to a logic of diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Ecuador firmly believes in a peaceful solution to the conflict, through negotiation and diplomatic channels, based on respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and within the framework of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

I join the call for the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the occupied territory, as well as the clamour of the international community for this war not to last another day.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Joyce Msuya, and Mr. Zhovnir for their statements. I also welcome the participation of the representatives of the European Union, Poland and Ukraine.

We are shocked that a children's hospital, where many suffer from serious illnesses and are in extremely vulnerable conditions, has been hit by a Russian strike. We heard that missile strikes across Ukraine have killed and injured civilians, hitting civilian infrastructure in Kyiv, Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih, Pokrovsk, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk. Those strikes reportedly killed dozens of civilians and hit Kyiv's largest children's hospital, as well as another medical facility in the capital. I would like to express our deepest condolences to all the families of the victims and of the wounded, the doctors and everyone affected by those terrible strikes. Children have once again become the victims of the Russian military aggression which has been going on for two years and five months.

We strongly condemn those attacks. The civilian population and civilian infrastructure must not be targeted. International law, in particular human rights and humanitarian law, must be strictly respected by all parties in all circumstances. We call on Russia to comply and protect the civilian population and infrastructure.

Under international humanitarian law, hospitals enjoy special protection.

The horror faced by children and their families since the start of the war in Ukraine shows no sign of abating. In 2023, the United Nations attributed 249 attacks on schools and hospitals, including against protected persons, to Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups. In the past two years, nearly 2,000 children are thought to have been killed or injured. Instead of going to school, children in towns on Ukraine's front lines have been forced to spend between 3,000 and 5,000 hours sheltering in basements and subway stations, that is between four and seven months. As Ukraine fights for its peaceful future, those who will build it, in particular children, must be guaranteed protection: international humanitarian law provides special protection for children.

In addition, a health worker was also reportedly killed in yesterday's strike. There too, international humanitarian law is clear: protecting humanitarian personnel, including medical staff, is an obligation. Those who risk their lives to help others must be protected.

No child should grow up under the threat of missile fire. No child should die in the rubble of a hospital, which is supposed to be a safe place for healing and recovery. Every child should have the opportunity to lead a safe and serene life and return to a normal existence. For that to be possible, Russia must end its military aggression against Ukraine, cease all hostilities and withdraw its troops from all Ukrainian territory. The Charter of the United Nations commits us all to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

Switzerland remains determined to do everything in its power to contribute to a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the same Charter of the United Nations and the fundamental principles of international law. It is in that spirit that, on 15 and 16 June, representatives of more than 100 countries from around the world and international organizations met in Switzerland to discuss a framework for a possible peace process based on international law and in particular the Charter of the United Nations, with the aim of inspiring concrete measures in favour of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. We will continue to deliver on that commitment.

**Mr. Žbogar** (Slovenia): I would like to thank both briefers — Ms. Msuya and Mr. Zhovnir — for their contributions. And I welcome the participation of the representatives of the European Union, Poland and Ukraine in this meeting.

We are appalled by the most recent air strikes on Ukraine by the country that you, Mr. President, are representing. While we fail to understand the reason for this war, we are convinced that there is absolutely nothing that can justify the brutal attacks on critical civilian infrastructure. Nothing justifies systemic attacks on medical facilities.

Yesterday another low in this war of aggression was reached with a direct missile strike at the Okhmatdyt hospital — one of Europe's largest children's hospitals. As if that were not enough, the follow-up strike wrecked a maternity hospital in the vicinity. We are again seeing the full spectrum of horror this war has brought — this time with children and their parents at the centre. It is indeed beyond the limits of humanity, as Mr. Zhovnir expressed just now.

In response to Russia's claims that air-defence systems bear responsibility for this devastation, we would like to clarify that independent sources are disproving those claims. We deplore Russian missile strikes and we reject the lack of responsibility that Russia is showing in relation to them.

The Council should not lose sight of the full picture of the destruction that this war has brought. Yesterday's horrid missile attack is just the tip of the iceberg. The World Health Organization has verified that from April to May, more than one third of attacks against health-care facilities happened in Ukraine.

In parallel, health-care needs have been increasing. Civilian casualties have been continuously on the rise in 2024, with a growing monthly death toll. And recently, in May, the new offensive around the city of Kharkiv caused the largest displacement in Ukraine since 2023.

Attacks on hospitals and the killing and maiming of children are grave violations against children in armed conflict. The deliberate targeting of critical civilian infrastructure is prohibited by international humanitarian law. Rejecting responsibility is the same as endorsing impunity. The Council is entrusted by the Charter of the United Nations to address and prevent all of the above.

Too many fathers and mothers have been killed, too many children have been deprived of a future, too many homes and schools have been reduced to rubble, and too many hospitals have stopped providing life-saving services. We have seen enough death and destruction for a lifetime. No amount of support from us, whether physical and psychosocial rehabilitation or assistance to the health and emergency services, can alleviate all of this suffering. Please stop this war. It has been going on for too long.

**Mr. Hwang** (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her briefing and Mr. Zhovnir for their timely and informative briefings.

We have gathered in the Chamber to discuss the war in Ukraine on many previous occasions, but today's meeting feels different. Where to begin after seeing the unimaginably horrific scenes of children and infants being attacked in their hospital beds? How did we get here?

While we are well aware that civilian casualties are a tragic, but inevitable consequence of war, we would still like to believe that there are certain lines that people will not cross. From the outset, the Russian Federation has tried to justify its invasion into Ukraine's sovereign territory as a defensive action, but few believe that. Its repeated, deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure throughout the conflict are indefensible.

This latest offensive by Russia against civilian targets across Ukraine was especially brazen, causing scores of casualties and serious damage to civilian infrastructure, most notably the missile strike against the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, where the President of Korea, Mr. Yoon Suk Yeol, and the First Lady visited in July 2023 in order to comfort the children receiving treatment and their families. This is a new low. An attack against the most vulnerable among us betrays a basic lack of humanity.

Russia's ongoing indiscriminate attacks against civilian objects across Ukraine are flagrant violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, and those responsible for such heinous acts must be held accountable. At the same time, our hearts go out to all the victims.

We once again reiterate that Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine and its annexation of Ukrainian

territories through the use of force are serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and run counter to the core values underpinning the international system. In that respect, I would like to remind the Council that only a handful of countries, including North Korea, have recognized the unlawful annexation of Ukrainian land by Russia. The overwhelming majority of Member States still strongly believe that those regions are an integral part of a sovereign Ukrainian State.

The longer this war continues, the more people will suffer miserably and the greater likelihood for regional instability. The only way forward, therefore, is to work diligently towards an early end to the war. In that regard, my delegation once again stresses that all of the devastating events and human suffering transpiring in Ukraine are a result of Russia's illegal invasion. That must end now, without preconditions.

The Republic of Korea will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine and provide vital assistance in the areas of security, humanitarian aid and reconstruction until they achieve just and lasting peace in their land.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing, and I listened carefully to Mr. Zhovnr's statement.

Since the full escalation of the crisis in Ukraine in February 2022, the ongoing conflict has led to a large number of innocent civilian casualties and has damaged and destroyed a great deal of infrastructure, triggering a serious humanitarian crisis with huge spillover effects, which is a source of deep concern for China.

Recently, the fighting has intensified instead of stopping, and vicious attacks on occasion have resulted in serious casualties. China is deeply concerned. We once again call on the conflicting parties to exercise rationality and restraint, effectively comply with international humanitarian law and do their utmost to avoid attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

There are no winners in conflict and confrontation, and military means will not bring lasting peace. During his recent meeting with a foreign leader visiting China, President Xi Jinping stressed that an early ceasefire and a political settlement are in the interests of all parties, adding that the priority is to de-escalate the situation as soon as possible by observing three principles: no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation of fighting

and no provocation by any party. He called on the international community to provide support for, and create conditions conducive to, the resumption of direct dialogue and negotiations between the two parties, stating that a ceasefire can emerge only if all major countries inject positive rather than negative energy.

On the Ukraine issue, China has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be adhered to, the legitimate security concerns of all States should be taken seriously, and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported.

We call on the parties to the conflict to show political will, meet each other halfway and start peace talks at an early date. We call on the international community, based on an objective and impartial position, to create conditions conducive to putting an end to the fighting as soon as possible and to play an active role in that regard. We call upon all parties concerned to work together; uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable concept of security; and promote the establishment of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture. China will continue to actively promote peace talks in its own way and make unremitting efforts and play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the Ukraine issue.

**Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone): I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Ms. Joyce Msuya for her briefing, and I take note of the sobering information provided by Mr. Volodymyr Zhovnr. I welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine and Poland and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union.

Sierra Leone notes with deep concern the recent reported missile strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine. It is reported that, during a daytime attack, missiles struck multiple Ukrainian cities, killing at least 31 people, injuring approximately 125 others and seriously damaging a major children's hospital. Based on reports, those killed in the multiple missiles strikes include doctors, patients, women and children — the very best of society and also the most vulnerable in times of armed conflicts.

Sierra Leone expresses its deepest condolences to the victims and the families of the victims affected by the missile strikes.



Sierra Leone deplores attacks on civilians, civilian and protected objects, and vital infrastructure. The reports of the missile strike on Kyiv's main children's hospital, resulting in the loss of innocent lives and extensive damage to a critical health-care facility, are truly heartbreaking and distressing. We call on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international law and take immediate steps towards de-escalation.

We have previously reiterated in the Council that the deliberate targeting of residential or civilian areas, civilian infrastructure and essential services, such as hospitals, schools, water and energy facilities, is unacceptable and prohibited under international law. It poses a significant threat to the safety and well-being of the most vulnerable and protected populations, violating the basic tenets of humanity and the principles of international humanitarian law.

The devastating impact of those strikes on civilians, including women and children, is a stark reminder of the urgent need for the violence to end and for a renewed commitment to protecting civilian lives and infrastructure in conflict zones. It also urgently calls for independent investigations to ensure accountability. We call on all parties involved to exercise restraint and take all necessary measures to avoid further civilian casualties and damage to critical infrastructure. The protection of civilians must be paramount in any conflict, including the conflict in Ukraine. Ensuring that the parties to the conflict maintain the safety of civilians must be the utmost collective priority of the Security Council.

Let me therefore conclude by urging all parties to prioritize the protection of civilians and critical infrastructure, including hospitals, to ensure essential services for the well-being and stability of civilians. The parties involved must choose and prioritize peace. Peace is made not between friends but between parties in a state of disagreement. Peace can also not be left to chance.

Sierra Leone therefore reiterates its call for meaningful steps to be taken towards the immediate cessation of the hostilities and for constructive and inclusive diplomatic efforts to achieve a just and lasting resolution of the conflict. In taking those important steps, we call for Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized

borders to be fully respected and for the legitimate concerns of all parties to be taken into account.

**Mr. Yahiaoui** (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Joyce Msuya, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator, for her briefing. We also listened to the briefing by Mr. Volodymyr Zhovnir.

Algeria once again expresses its deep concern about the ongoing escalation of tension caused by military operations in Russia and Ukraine. Unfortunately, it is the civilians who bear the brunt of that ongoing escalation. Furthermore, the dire humanitarian situation is also a source of deep concern and requires a clear commitment from both sides to address it. As we meet again to discuss that alarming situation on the ground, we still, unfortunately, see no signs of de-escalation.

Against that backdrop, we would like to note the following.

First, it is essential to give due priority to diplomatic efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine in a comprehensive manner. That can be achieved only through a clear commitment by all parties to de-escalate and uphold the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law.

Secondly, the logic of confrontation has never yielded a solution to disputes. Instead, restraint, dialogue and negotiations must be upheld, based on the principles of inclusiveness and a peaceful settlement of disputes. The use of weapons will only lead to more lives lost, including among civilians and especially children. That will bring more suffering to the population and the destruction of infrastructure and will impede the resolution of the conflict. Algeria reiterates its commitment to support all efforts aimed at realizing peace and laying the foundation for a sustainable and peaceful solution to the crisis.

Thirdly, the polarization resulting from that crisis is a source of concern for Algeria. It contributes to further escalation with disastrous consequences for international peace and security, including food security and energy security. Algeria remains convinced that multilateral endeavours and intensified international diplomatic efforts are the best way to achieve concrete results in that crisis. Such efforts will allow diplomatic frameworks to be preserved and a peaceful settlement

to be reached in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate security concerns of all parties.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): I would like to thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya and Mr. Zhovnir for their briefings.

As has been the case during previous meetings, large-scale Russian aerial attacks continue across Ukraine, with a sustained targeting of essential infrastructure causing more death, destruction and trauma. Yesterday the Russian Federation launched another wave of deadly strikes across several regions in Ukraine. At least 40 long-range missiles were fired at targets across the country, killing dozens and wounding more than 150.

The Okhmatdyt children's hospital, Ukraine's largest children's hospital and the main treatment centre in the country for children with cancer, was also hit during those attacks. Twelve departments were damaged and a section of Ukraine's only oncology and haematology laboratory was completely destroyed. Power, oxygen and water supplies were lost and people were trapped under the rubble — the exact number of victims is still unknown. The ISIDA maternity hospital, located in Ukraine's capital, was also severely damaged by falling debris.

The Okhmatdyt hospital houses 27 sources of ionizing radiation and is a beneficiary of the technical cooperation programme of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). That missile attack not only endangers lives but also constitutes a violation of the IAEA's core principles and values.

We express our condolences to the families who are enduring the unbearable loss of their loved ones and wish a speedy recovery to those injured owing to the ruthless attacks across Ukraine.

Health and educational facilities must always be protected to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of health and education services to all people in Ukraine. Attacks on civilians and civilian objects must stop. That should be at the centre of our efforts. International humanitarian and human rights law must be respected at all times.

Malta condemns those attacks in the strongest possible terms. We reiterate our call to immediately cease all attacks against hospitals, residential buildings and critical infrastructure in Ukraine and for all parties

to adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law.

Yesterday's events took place against the backdrop of Russia's launch of its new military offensive in the Kharkiv region. According to the World Health Organization, there have been reports of 18 deaths and 81 injuries from more than 175 attacks on health-care infrastructure in Ukraine in the first half of 2024. Those attacks have similarly endangered the lives of thousands of children, health-care workers and civilians, including the already vulnerable population, not least the elderly, children and persons with disabilities.

Malta reiterates that the perpetrators of those actions must be held accountable for the damage done. We express our full support for the mandate of the International Criminal Court, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as well as the work on the establishment of a future compensation mechanism.

In conclusion, Malta reiterates that the only path to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace and an end to the suffering being inflicted on innocent Ukrainians is for Russia to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

**Mr. Kumanga** (Mozambique): We extend our gratitude to Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Acting Emergency Relief Coordinator Joyce Msuya for her information. We took note of the briefing by Mr. Volodymyr Zhovnir. We recognize the presence of the representatives of Ukraine and Poland and the delegation of the European Union in this meeting.

In view of the reported attack resulting in civilian casualties, injuries and the destruction of critical civilian sites and infrastructure in Ukraine, my delegation wishes to emphasize the following points.

First, civilian deaths, both intentional and incidental, and instances in which conflicting parties put civilians in harm's way by positioning them near military targets must not be condoned. We urge the warring parties to exercise maximum restraint and avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the leading cause of civilian casualties in Ukraine.

Our position on the humanitarian dimension of this and other conflicts remains consistent and unchanged and is worth reiterating. First, the respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which has the protection of civilians as its cornerstone, must be upheld under all circumstances. Secondly, the principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality must be rigorously adhered to and upheld by all parties. Warring parties must assess whether civilian harm is likely to be excessive compared to the anticipated concrete military advantage. All parties must facilitate full, safe, rapid and unhindered access for humanitarian personnel and relief to civilians in need.

Ultimately, ending this conflict is the most crucial step required to address its human-made humanitarian consequences. In order to achieve that, we urge the parties to immediately cease hostilities, resume direct negotiations without preconditions and engage in dialogue in good faith.

Let us seize the opportunity to recommit to the United Nations as the ideal platform to start a genuine dialogue towards a negotiated settlement aimed at resolving this conflict and establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that addresses its root causes and upholds the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett** (Guyana): We thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Joyce Msuya and Dr. Volodymyr Zhovnir for their briefings. We welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Poland and the European Union in today's meeting. We also extend our condolences to the people and the Government of Ukraine, including the families and loved ones of those who were killed yesterday, and we wish those injured a speedy and full recovery.

Guyana is extremely alarmed by the continued attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure since the start of this war. The attacks have claimed the lives of more than 11,000 civilians, including women and children, and they continue to destroy objects indispensable to their survival. We have repeatedly warned of the devastating consequences of prolonging this war, especially in view of the attacks against hospitals, electricity transmission systems, food ports, gas and water supplies and the high number of civilian casualties.

Yesterday's missile strikes were particularly shocking. It was reportedly the largest assault in

months, killing more than 30 people, including children, and causing extensive damage to the Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv. The air strike against the hospital turned a large part of what was once a place of sanctuary and healing for so many children into rubble, destroying its toxicology and oncology wards and many other units. We condemn those attacks in the strongest possible terms, stressing that the most vulnerable of civilians — children — were among the hapless victims. What military or other advantage is there to gain from the unconscionable attack against a children's hospital?

The devastating accounts of unrelenting violence, death and destruction must compel us to take urgent action to end this war. Lives, including those of innocent children, cannot continue to be sacrificed on the altar of political brinkmanship. We commend the efforts of those seeking to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict and urge the parties to commit to a serious political and diplomatic process towards ending the conflict. We also urge them to engage in good faith and to bring an end to the suffering of the millions of men, women and children who have already paid too high a price in this war.

Guyana demands that the parties to the conflict take all necessary measures to protect civilians and critical infrastructure and to comply fully with their obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights law. We stress the need for accountability for the ongoing violations as a critical element on the path to peace. We further call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine.

We echo the Acting Under-Secretary-General's grave concern, and indeed that of the wider international community, about the increasingly dire humanitarian situation in the country. It is difficult to comprehend the continued denial of access to people in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. We call upon the Russian Federation to grant humanitarian access to all populations in need in the occupied territories. We commend the ongoing response of humanitarian agencies and call on the international community to further support their efforts, including by contributing to the humanitarian needs and response fund.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the urgency of resolving this conflict through peaceful means. Guyana

will continue to support all efforts of the Secretary-General and other partners who have been working diligently to achieve a peaceful and sustainable end to this war.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya for her informative briefing. I also thank Director General Zhovnir for his briefing, for his courage and for continuing to show up for his patients even in the direst circumstances. I welcome the participation of the representatives of Poland, the European Union and particularly Ukraine in this meeting.

I will cut to the chase. We are here today because Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, the current rotational President of the Security Council, attacked a children's hospital. Even uttering that phrase sends a chill down my spine. Russia attacked a children's hospital in broad daylight, killing and injuring children — chilling.

On Monday morning, Russian missiles smashed into civilian targets, including Okhmatdyt children's hospital, the largest paediatric facility in Ukraine and a lifeline for the country's most vulnerable. In the hours since, we have seen images of children, bloodied and injured, escaping the damage; of cancer patients just a few years old, hooked up to intravenous drips, huddled outside the hospital's bombed out cancer wing. We have heard the courageous stories of doctors and nurses scrambling to evacuate sick children, many of whom were intubated and on ventilators, to safety and of members of the community heroically sifting through the rubble in the hope of finding survivors and of not adding another number to the rising death toll.

Director General Zhovnir has just enhanced our understanding of the impact of that on the 600 patients and staff in the hospital, including those who were in surgery. Our hearts are with all of those who have lost loved ones; who wonder how their children can get the medicine and the care that they need; and who wake up this morning worried that their home, their business or their family will be the next one destroyed by a Russian strike.

Because let us be clear, that brutal attack is hardly a stand-alone incident. In March 2022, Russian air strikes damaged a maternity and children's hospital in Mariupol. In December 2023, a Russian missile plunged into a medical facility in Dnipro. I could go on but the fact is that, across the country, hundreds of children

have been killed, thousands have been wounded and millions have been displaced from their homes as Russia continues its campaign of terror in Ukraine. And then there are the children Russia has deported or forcibly transferred, robbing Ukrainian youth of not only their futures but also their very identities.

When Putin announced his so-called peace plan last month, I called it what it was: an outrageous attempt to force Ukraine to accept an unjust peace while facing the barrel of a gun (see S/PV.9660). As if there was any doubt that this was the case, yesterday's attack makes abundantly clear that Putin is not interested in peace. He is committed to wreaking death and destruction in pursuit of his war of aggression.

And of course, Putin has not just attacked hospitals. Russia has upped its coordinated attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, taking out over half of the country's power generation. Power plants in Kharkiv are operating at severely reduced capacity owing to near-daily attacks. Tens of thousands have had to evacuate. That is a deliberate and cruel effort to leave millions of Ukrainians without heat this winter.

I have said it before, and I will say it again: Russia started this war, and Russia can end it at any time. As my colleague from France stated, Russia cannot win this war. It could choose to withdraw its forces from Ukraine and end the assault on hospitals and power plants. It could halt its campaign of torture and deportation and its pattern of violating international law. It could heed the will of over 140 countries that have repeatedly called for the madness to stop.

Until that day and until the victims of those atrocities have the accountability and justice that they deserve, the United States will stand with Ukraine. We will stand with Ukraine in its efforts to defend its borders, and we will stand with Ukraine here in the Council. As laid out in last month's Ukraine peace summit in Switzerland, we will support Ukraine's right to self-defence and invest in the country's recovery, reconstruction, reform and modernization; and we will uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including respect for sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. We encourage every member of the Council and every corner of the international community to do exactly the same.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Dr. Zhovnir for their briefings,

and I welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Poland and the European Union in our meeting today.

I offer the United Kingdom Government's deepest condolences to Dr. Zhovnir and the victims of Russia's most recent appalling air strikes across Ukraine and to their families and their loved ones.

Since 23 February 2022, in repeated attacks on Ukraine, Russia has killed Ukrainian children; Russia has maimed and injured Ukrainian children; Russia has abducted Ukrainian children; and yesterday, Russia came back for wounded and sick children in Okhmatdyt hospital. That is cowardly depravity. And that must stop.

I visited Okhmatdyt hospital last December. It has become a refuge for children injured in attacks across Ukraine. I saw for myself the dedication of Dr. Zhovnir and his staff and the care they provided. I met two young girls among many who were resolutely learning to walk again with prosthetics. One had been injured in Russia's attack on Kharkiv, the other in Russia's attack against Kramatorsk railway station.

Intentionally directing attacks against civilians and civilian objects constitutes war crimes. The International Criminal Court has already issued arrest warrants for the Russian President, the former Defence Minister, the Chief of the General Staff and the Commissioner for Children's Rights for suspected war crimes. Since 23 February 2022, Russia has violated the Charter of the United Nations and repeatedly breached international humanitarian law. Its conduct is a disgrace to the Security Council and especially to the President's seat. We must join together to condemn Russia's actions and stand four-square behind the Charter of the United Nations and its guarantees of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and behind international law and international humanitarian law.

For our part, together with our partners, the United Kingdom will continue to ensure that Ukraine is able to defend itself from these barbaric acts of violence, as confirmed by my Defence Secretary this weekend in Odesa, where he announced new military aid for Ukraine's defence. At the NATO Summit this week, we will demonstrate our resolve to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. We will also work to ensure accountability and justice for the Ukrainian people. And we will support Ukraine's efforts to secure a just and lasting peace, in line with the United Nations Charter.

I want to commend the exceptional resilience of the Ukrainian people and, in particular, to pay tribute to the Ukrainian emergency services, especially over the past 48 hours. I also express my admiration for the doctors and other hospital workers at Okhmatdyt hospital, and for their patients.

In conclusion, I call on Russia, again, to end its aggression against Ukraine and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and stop killing Ukrainian children.

**Mrs. Shino** (Japan): I thank Ms. Msuya and Mr. Zhovnir for their detailed briefings. Today we have come together once again to confront the grim reality caused by the escalating attacks by Russia across Ukraine.

According to reports, a barrage of Russian missiles across Ukraine caused serious damage and many casualties, including at a paediatric hospital in Kyiv where many young, innocent children are hospitalized. Japan condemns Russia's attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine in the strongest terms. We express our deepest condolences to those who lost their loved ones and hope for the speedy recovery of the injured. In particular, we sincerely wish that the children who should be receiving treatment will get prompt and appropriate care.

We are deeply frustrated that we must once again be updated on the numerous and increasing civilian casualties resulting from the clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council. Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has led to the deaths and injuries of countless innocents, continuing to worsen the humanitarian crisis on the ground.

Since the beginning of Russia's aggression, so many children, who should be the future of Ukraine and the future of the world, have been mercilessly killed or maimed. According to the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384), in 2023 alone, the United Nations verified the killing of 80 children and the maiming of more than 330 children. It is also recorded that over 200 schools and 90 hospitals were attacked. It is unfathomable that those figures do not represent the whole scale of impact on children. We must also not forget child abductions by Russia. Those children should be returned home and be united with their loved ones immediately.

My delegation is absolutely enraged by Russia's continuous disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law. Targeted attacks on civilians and civilian objects are clearly prohibited by international humanitarian law. The international community will not tolerate impunity for those responsible, and the perpetrators of violations of international humanitarian law and all other heinous acts must be identified and held accountable.

Once again, we reiterate our clear position to urge Russia to cease its aggression and immediately and unconditionally withdraw from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. Japan continues to stand with the people of Ukraine.

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

I would like to begin by thanking France and Ecuador for convening this meeting.

As is clear from the statements made by our Western colleagues, which are very minimalist, the topic of the alleged Russian strike on the children's hospital, which we are convened to discuss today, is not a very gratifying topic for them. They probably saw numerous photos and videos of what happened, from which it is evident that it was a Ukrainian air defence missile that hit the hospital. As a result, the Western members of the Security Council are performing the magic of verbal gymnastics in their attempt to protect the Kyiv regime by any means.

For us, this meeting is an excellent opportunity to tell the truth about what actually happened. However, the truth, as we all know, does not interest our Western colleagues, and in the best traditions of the Bucha provocation or the Mariupol hospital mentioned today, they tried to engage in wishful thinking by condemning the allegedly intentional strike by the Russian Air Force against the children's medical facility.

The dishonesty of such tactics is clear to the naked eye, and the Ukrainians themselves immediately noticed it, as videos of the strike swiftly appeared on the Internet and negated all the efforts made by Kyiv and Western propagandists. Here are the references to the most complete publications, which can be accessed with this quick-response code. And here is what was immediately published by Ukrainian telegram channels,

which remain the only source of information for Ukrainians uncensored by the Ukrainian authorities,

“The Office of the President instructed everybody to publish and disseminate only the information related to the children's clinic Okhmatdyt in order to: a) divert attention from other very interesting objects that were also hit, as people could ask the Government why military facilities are located so close to residential areas and hospitals; b) try to boost the morale of the army and the people by fuelling hatred towards the enemy, saying that the enemy intentionally targeted children, even though everyone knows that the hospital was hit by fragments of a shot-down missile; c) distract the masses from the daily lawlessness of Government, corruption, tariff increases, price hikes, growing disillusionment, and the like; d) divert attention from the constant retreat of the Ukrainian armed forces; e) provide another reason for justifying the constant conscription in the name of Zelenskyy; and f) create a media hype in the Western press just before the NATO summit.”

Or here is another testimony,

“Everything is clear about the strike on the Okhmatdyt hospital — it was a Ukrainian National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System air defence missile that went off course and hit the building near the children's hospital.”

Western air defence systems also frequently miss their targets. Most likely, the missile lost the target in the air and captured the heat signal from the hospital, messing up the targets. That was also the case when Ukraine's air defence hit a tractor in Poland, killing Poles. Had the building been hit by a X-101 missile, the damage inflicted would have been much higher.

We constantly write that Ukrainian air defence missiles frequently go off target. We have already witnessed many such tragedies before, and Office of the President constantly lies to people that it is the Russians who are intentionally hitting residential buildings. The Office of the President has to constantly fuel hatred among Ukrainians and justify the continuation of the war by such artificial tragedies. And those in the military themselves admitted that a large number of such tragedies occurred owing to the “operation of [their] air defence system”. Those are the words of Ukrainian public sources, not my words.

I hope that members now realize that no matter how much the Kyiv regime and its Western sponsors try to portray the tragedy as if it were an intentional Russian strike, even in the eyes of ordinary Ukrainians that version does not hold water. We regret that the Security Council has been drawn into the dirty propaganda campaign of Kyiv and its abettors.

In that connection, we would like to ask Mr. Zhovnir a question — how did he — when he went outside — know that the hospital had been hit by Russia? Who provided him with that information, which is clearly not the truth and runs counter to common sense? Does he not realize that, if it had been a Russian missile, there would have been nothing left of the building, and the children and most of the adults would have been killed rather than injured? However, judging by the fact that the screen is now blank, we are unlikely to hear an answer from Mr. Zhovnir.

We have repeatedly stated that Russia does not strike civilian targets in Ukraine. Speaking of strikes by the Russian aerospace forces against Ukraine's military industry facilities and air bases of the Ukrainian armed forces, we can clarify that one of the targets in Kyiv was the Artem factory, one of the largest in the Ukrainian Defense Industry concern. That target, a major manufacturer of aircraft-launched missiles, weapons and ammunition, was hit, as confirmed by data based on an objective evaluation and the testimony of Kyiv residents themselves.

The factory is located about two kilometres from the affected Okhmatdyt children's hospital. Therefore, there is every reason to believe that the hospital was hit by a Ukrainian air defence missile that was meant to intercept Russian missiles targeting the factory. Such tragedies could have been prevented if the Kyiv regime had not deployed air defence systems and heavy weapons in residential areas, which in fact violates international humanitarian law. However, its Western sponsors prefer to turn a blind eye to that important fact.

We must also mention that Ukrainians themselves noted a very interesting trend on social media — the tragedy of an air defence missile hitting a children's hospital occurred exactly on the eve of the NATO summit. That was the third NATO summit since the beginning of the special military operation, and similar events occurred before each one. That was the case on 27 June 2022, when Ukrainian media reported an explosion at a shopping mall in Kremenchuk, in the

Poltava region, at a time when there were allegedly hundreds of people inside. However, the mall was actually closed and the fire was caused by exploding ammunition, provided by the United States and Europe, which was stored in a neighbouring building. That was also the case on the night of 6 July 2023, when the Russian aerospace forces struck the temporary deployment positions of Ukrainian soldiers and foreign mercenaries in Lviv. It is noteworthy that Lviv's Mayor, Mr. Sadovyi, acknowledged that it was fragments of an air defence missile that damaged residential buildings. All those cases were grossly exploited by the head of the Kyiv clique to scrounge new weapons for Ukraine. That trend is really interesting, and it is quite telling that the Ukrainian media have also noticed it.

Incidentally, it begs another question, in relation to what the Permanent Representative of Slovenia said regarding the allegedly confirmed evidence of a Russian missile strike on the Okhmatdyt hospital. Videos posted by Ukrainian Internet users show five Russian missiles hitting the Artem factory, one after the other, which were neither intercepted nor damaged. Similarly, on the videos one can see a lone Ukrainian air defence missile in the area of the children's hospital. Again, there was no interception or damage. It cannot be mistaken for anything else — it is clearly identifiable by its characteristic fins and other features. How can the Ukrainian air defence not stop all five strikes against the factory but hit the children's hospital? Can the representative of the Kyiv regime answer that question?

We are also waiting for a response from the Norwegian authorities, who seem to have supplied Zelenskyy's clique with their country's national advanced surface-to-air missile system. Did they authorize Kyiv to use the system to hit a children's hospital and place it in residential areas in contravention of the norms of international humanitarian law?

In that context and in line with the propaganda playbook, Mr. Yermak, the head of Zelenskyy's office, has already made a statement to the effect that negotiating with Russia is impossible. There is no doubt that the Ukrainian leadership will use today's situation as a pretext for continuing to ignore the long-overdue demand in Ukrainian society — and the entire world — for a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis. That is understandable, because a solution would remove the need to extend martial law and would require holding elections. That is what the Kyiv clique, which has lost its legitimacy, fears more than anything

else, because it knows that the population views the regime in an extremely negative light. That is why the Ukrainian leadership prefers to sacrifice tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of its fellow citizens, sending them into a senseless meat grinder.

We, on the other hand, have repeatedly spoken in favour of beginning negotiations and ending hostilities. However, there has to be a genuine cessation of hostilities, rather than a suspension aimed at providing Kyiv with the opportunity to lick its wounds and rearm. In addition, the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis must be addressed or there will be no sustainable and lasting peace. Our conditions for ending the conflict were clearly stated by President Vladimir Putin on 14 June at a meeting with the leadership of our Foreign Ministry.

We appreciate initiatives by all States aimed at establishing a genuine ceasefire and addressing our legitimate concerns, rather than promoting propaganda, as was clearly the case at the pseudo-peace conference in Switzerland, which proved meaningless. As long as Kyiv and its sponsors remain deaf to appeals for diplomacy, we will have to use our military force to compel Ukraine to make peace and address the root causes of the current crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I would like to thank members of the Security Council for their words of support and expressions of sympathy following yesterday's barbaric attacks against Ukrainian civilians, including children. I would also like to thank Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Mr. Zhovnir for their comprehensive briefings, revealing the dreadful outcomes of the Russian missile strike.

I am sorry to have to recognize the representative of the regime of the terrorist Putin in the President's chair. It has become a tradition for Russia to mark its presidency of the Council with heinous war crimes and genocidal endeavours. This time is no exception, and the President's chair is already soaked in blood. Yesterday Russia deliberately targeted perhaps the most vulnerable and defenceless group in any society — children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.

Even in times of peace, those children face enormous challenges and require specific support and care. Donating to and helping such children in

order to ensure that they receive medical treatment, as well as creating joyful moments to alleviate their sufferings — such acts have always been recognized as some of the most touching manifestations of humanity and empathy.

The Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv — the largest medical centre treating young patients with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses — has served that purpose and helped thousands of children from across Ukraine and abroad. The Director General of the Okhmatdyt hospital has just briefed the Council on the unique position of that hospital within the system of paediatric care.

Yesterday Russia again showed its repugnant version of empathy towards children by attacking the Okhmatdyt hospital with a Kh-101 cruise missile. Slide 1 shows an analysis of objective monitoring data on the flight trajectory of the cruise missile on 8 July from 9.40 a.m. to 10.40 a.m. The photo shows the trajectory of the missile from the moment it entered the airspace of Ukraine to the moment it struck the hospital building. The video footage clearly attests that the Okhmatdyt hospital was deliberately targeted. The footage captured the moment that the Kh-101 missile dived towards the hospital building. Later, the Security Service of Ukraine made public the pictures of that missile's remnants, which were found on the spot.

Turning to slide 2, during the inspection of the scene, the investigators of the Security Service of Ukraine and the national police found and examined fragments and parts of the air missile that struck the hospital. According to the preliminary assessment of military specialists, the specified objects belong to the parts and components of the Kh-101 strategic air-to-ground cruise missile, which is in service with the Russian army and is used by Russian long-range aviation units. The photo on the right below shows the identified fragment of the casing of the Kh-101 cruise missile, with part of the serial number displayed.

Slide 3 shows fragments of the Kh-101 missile under the rubble of the hospital building, part of the missile body. Slide 4 illustrates characteristic elements of the Kh-101 missile that have been identified and examined. The photo on the left shows a fragment of the wing opening mechanism of the Kh-101 cruise missile. The photo on the right shows a fragment of the Kh-101 cruise missile engine.



As a result of the strike, the toxicology ward, where young patients received dialysis, was completely destroyed. Other facilities at the Okhmatdyt hospital, including surgical departments, medical diagnostics buildings and trauma units, as well as haematology and oncology departments, were damaged. Additionally, the Russian missile damaged the nearby Centre for Paediatric Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, where three heart surgeries were under way at the moment of the strike.

We just heard a professional assessment of the long-term consequences for the treatment of hundreds of seriously ill children. Those consequences include both physical harm and the stress endured by the patients, as well as the destruction of the medical provision necessary to treat them. Alongside the immediate casualties among the medical personnel and children following the strike, those long-lasting outcomes also constitute a war crime. Even more abhorrent is the fact that the Okhmatdyt hospital was just one of many targets in Russia's heavy missile strike, which hit the cities of Kyiv, Kryvyi Rih, Dnipro, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk yesterday.

According to information from the defence forces of Ukraine, the Russian Federation launched 38 missiles, including Kinzhal air-ballistic missiles; Iskander-M ballistic missiles; Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles; Kh-101, Kh-22 and Kalibr cruise missiles, in addition to Kh-59/Kh-69 guided aerial missiles. Almost 100 civilian sites were savagely attacked, including medical and educational facilities, residential buildings and business centres. In Kryvyi Rih, 11 people were killed following the attack on the administrative building of a local industrial facility. In Kyiv, along with the Okhmatdyt hospital, the list of targets includes a maternity hospital, where nine people were killed, and a residential building, where the Russians killed seven residents, including four children.

Let us not forget that the pains Russia takes to harm Ukrainian children has been a central aspect of their aggression from the very beginning. The children whom Russia cannot abduct and brainwash, Russia kills. Let us not forget that Russia is being kept on the list of shame for the crimes its armed forces have committed against children. Let us not forget that the person sitting today at the head of the table represents a wanted criminal suspected of crimes against children and subject to arrest under the International Criminal

Court warrant. At least 47 people were killed and more than 190 were wounded following yesterday's strike.

Putin's envoy employed his usual tactics of denying reality and blaming Ukrainian air defence. I recall clear footage of the Russian missile approaching the hospital, the scale of the destruction and the eyewitness accounts. His comments about the possibility of destroying it entirely if Russia supposedly hit it are just monstrous. Other Russian propagandists, particularly the so-called Z-bloggers, have been more open. Z-bloggers are administrators of Russian propaganda channels on social media with hundreds of thousands of followers. Given the particularities of their audiences, they — unlike their colleagues from the Russian diplomatic corps — openly explain the rationale behind the Kremlin's bloody actions. One of them, a certain Roman Saponkov, openly stated that the strike on the children's hospital in Kyiv would benefit Russia, saying that,

“Such attacks might even be beneficial because an average Westerner might finally think, ‘Damn, the same could happen to us.’ and ‘The children's centre in Kyiv looks very much like a hospital in Warsaw.’... Incidents like these might work in our favour.”

They do not even hide the fact that they are deliberately attacking hospitals. That is exactly what Russians regularly did in Syria, starting in 2015. In April 2016, for instance, they attacked the main health-care facility for children in the city of Aleppo, killing two dozen civilians. It is also telling that, in 2020, Russia withdrew from a voluntary United Nations arrangement aimed at protecting hospitals and humanitarian aid deliveries in Syria. Now they are seeking to kill Ukrainian children and also to intimidate the countries that demand that Russia comply with the Charter of the United Nations.

The attack on a children's hospital is also an indication of Russia's current unwillingness to engage in a peace process. It is not surprising that Russia persists in rabidly tearing apart the concept of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations — a concept, I underline, that is at the core of both Ukraine's peace formula and General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, of 23 February 2023. Russia has abdicated its responsibility to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and is, in fact, demanding that

the international community acknowledge its right to violate international law.

However, the attack on the children's hospital is also a manifestation of Russia's deepest contempt for any peace initiatives, regardless of their origin. The Kremlin's morality and leadership have degraded to such an extent that the Kremlin does not hesitate to commit crimes that undermine the vision for peace of those countries on which it now entirely depends.

Russia is like cancer, only worse. It will stop killing and inflicting violence only when it is incapable of doing so. It is imperative to shoot down Russian missiles. It is imperative to destroy Russian combat aircraft in their bases. Bold steps must be taken to eliminate any security deficit.

Currently, States Members of the United Nations are actively preparing for the Summit of the Future. We are engaged in active negotiations on the final document of which the Declaration on Future Generations forms an integral part. The question is, however, what kind of future are we talking about if the murderer feels comfortable sitting here, knee-deep in children's blood, in the President's chair. As I said in this Chamber in 2022, this war criminal will end up in hell, bypassing purgatory (see S/PV.8974), and will remain there eternally. What matters, however, is how to put him in the dock before then. I cannot stomach the thought of how one can shake his hand and accept a lunch with him, paid for with blood money. It is sickening to think that, in approximately a week, his depraved boss, Mr. Lavrov, will preside over all Council members in this Chamber and lecture them on multilateralism.

How many more Russian crimes will it take for the issue of the dictatorial Kremlin regime's presence in this Soviet permanent seat to be addressed? What atrocities must be committed to ensure that the aggressor's veto is disregarded and the Security Council is able to respond to Russia's aggression and war crimes?

The international community has the necessary capacities to provide the aggressor with proper answers — answers in the only language that any aggressor understands: strong, resolute and united actions to defend the Charter of the United Nations, stop its violations and ensure accountability for all crimes, including those committed yesterday.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

**Mr. Lambrinidis:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Liechtenstein, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

As we heard from Acting Under-Secretary-General Msuya and Dr. Zhovnir, yesterday several waves of large-scale Russian missile attacks on Ukrainian cities caused at least 40 civilian deaths, including children, and more than 150 injuries. The numbers are increasing by the hour. In Kyiv, the Okhmatdyt children's hospital was directly hit by a missile — a children's hospital. The images of the aftermath of that attack are devastating: panicked parents holding their children on the street and doctors and nurses scrambling to provide first aid against the backdrop of destruction. The attacks were immediately and roundly condemned by both Secretary-General Guterres and President of the General Assembly Francis and countless leaders and voices around the world. They are a stark reminder of why the Russian armed forces are listed by the United Nations as a perpetrator of grave violations against children in armed conflict. By targeting Okhmatdyt, a symbol of Ukraine's paediatric medicine, Russia once again demonstrates its cruelty and its utter insincerity with regard to peace talks. One can only imagine the further horrors that were averted by the courageous interventions of Ukraine's air defences.

We are confronted with a striking paradox: the Member State currently holding the presidency of the Security Council, the body responsible for maintaining peace and security, is, as we speak, intensifying attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, including that country's hospitals and power plants. Such systematic air strikes against Ukraine's civilians and critical civilian infrastructure violate international humanitarian law and must stop immediately and unconditionally.

In a report issued last week, the Office of the United Nations High-Commissioner for Human Rights extensively documented Russia's targeting of energy infrastructure and its use of so-called double-tap strikes, whereby it uses high-precision weapons to strike the same location twice within a short interval, causing additional casualties among civilians and first responders. Those are the facts. Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging

a war of aggression, committing other serious crimes under international law and for the massive damage caused by its war.

Later this week, the General Assembly will vote on a draft resolution regarding the threats posed to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency in ensuring nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. It is the first time in history that a nuclear power plant — the largest in Europe — has been illegally seized by a foreign aggressor. History matters here. History, including the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, has taught all of us about the existential importance of nuclear safety and security. Russia's irresponsible actions place all of us at risk. That is why we hope and expect that all States Members of the United Nations will strongly support the draft resolution and initiative for nuclear safety.

In conclusion, I cannot but reaffirm, especially in the aftermath of those inhumane bombings, the EU's unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The EU will continue to support both Ukraine and respect for the Charter of the United Nations in response to Russia's illegal aggression, for as long as it takes.

**The President** (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

**Mr. Szczerski** (Poland): Let me start by thanking today's briefers for their remarks and testimony.

Just over three weeks ago, at Bürgenstock in Switzerland, countries gathered to look for a path to a just peace in Ukraine. The final document of the conference, signed by 90 countries and international organizations, opens with the following sentence,

“The ongoing war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine continues to cause large-scale human suffering and destruction, and to create risks and crises with global repercussions”.

Only 24 hours ago, the aggressor sent us the latest chilling reminder of how acutely precise those words are. Russia's unprovoked war continues with unprovoked, indiscriminate attacks against the innocent and the most vulnerable.

Since the launch of its full-scale military invasion in February 2022, Russian forces have targeted the largest Ukrainian nuclear power plant, in Zaporizhzhya, the

largest Ukrainian water dam, in Kakhovka, and now, brazenly enough, they took aim at the largest Ukrainian children's hospital in Kyiv, where hundreds of young patients seek relief and comfort.

The attack was immediately condemned by numerous world leaders, including my country's highest authorities, which were hosting President Zelenskyy in Warsaw on that very day.

It is very important that we have also gathered today in the Chamber to once again deplore Russia's atrocities, especially during the month when it holds the Security Council presidency, and to loudly redeclare that, under international humanitarian law, hospitals have special protection. It is important for the world to hear the truth about Russia deliberately creating a humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine through its attacks and using them as a tool of disinformation campaigns, as we have also heard today.

Poland duly notes that the 2023 Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict (S/2024/384), for the second consecutive year, correctly identifies “Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups” as “parties that commit grave violations”.

In Ukraine, Russia not only commits such atrocious attacks as the one on the children's hospital in Kyiv, but it also continues its disgraceful practice of forcible displacement of Ukrainian children. Such actions violate international law, including the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it constitutes a war crime for which Russia must be held accountable.

Children who remain in Ukraine face the risk of death or loss of health and have very limited opportunities for development and education. Let me be clear that this is the case for children not only Ukraine, but in every conflict where children are targeted victims.

According to some media experts' estimates, Russia spent as much as \$250 million on yesterday's missile barrage against targets in several Ukrainian cities.

Instead of spending money on treating its own children, Russia prefers to spend hundreds of millions on killing children in Ukraine. And it is not about Ukraine alone. The sum of money spent on this one-day attack would be sufficient to build several hospitals in

developing countries. Russia's war costs everybody dearly, both in lost lives and material damage.

Imagine the cost of a nuclear disaster. That is why the General Assembly will soon vote on a draft resolution condemning the Russian aggression against Ukraine and urging Moscow to refrain from its nuclear gamble of illegally occupying the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which puts us all at such a great risk.

We truly hope that the proposal will garner the broadest possible support, which would underscore our commitment to restoring peace in Ukraine in accordance with the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Charter of the United Nations and would be in line with the declaration of the latest peace summit in Switzerland. Let us save the children from the scourge of war.

*The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.*