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the meeting

Wednesday, 26 March 2025, 10 a.m.

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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Lassen.	(Denmark)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Koudri
	China.	Mr. Fu Cong
	France	Mr. Bonnafont
	Greece	Mr. Stamatekos
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Pakistan.	Mr. Ahmad
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia.	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Osman
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.	Ms. Shea

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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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 peace and security of Ukraine

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Paul Beresford-Hill, Permanent Observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Msuya.

Ms. Msuya: As we hope for a full cessation of hostilities and, ultimately, peace in Ukraine, the situation for civilians has continued to worsen since we last briefed the Security Council (see S/PV.9720). This and the severe global funding cuts for humanitarian operations, including for Ukraine, are further reducing our capacity to provide life-saving aid.

Since 1 March, not a day has passed without an attack harming civilians. We are particularly appalled by the strikes countrywide on 7 March that killed 21 civilians and injured many more, making it one of the deadliest days this year. Violence continued last week, claiming the lives of dozens of civilians and injuring hundreds more across northern, central, eastern and southern Ukraine. The regions of Sumy, Odesa, Dnipro, Donetsk and Kharkiv were hit especially hard, with widespread damage to homes, shops, warehouses and vehicles. On 21 March, a family of three — a mother, father and daughter — were killed in a drone attack in Zaporizhzhya city. On 24 March, local authorities reported nearly 100 civilians, including more than 20 children, were injured during a massive attack in Sumy city.

We welcome the announcements of an energy infrastructure ceasefire and negotiations to ensure safe navigation in the Black Sea. However, as the cold weather persists, the impact of past attacks on energy infrastructure continue to affect civilians' access to electricity, gas, heating and water, threatening the lives and well-being of the most vulnerable, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities. In frontline communities, civilians are confronted with relentless shelling and face impossible choices: flee under dangerous conditions, leaving behind everything they own, or stay and risk injury, death and limited access to essential services. The United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine has verified that, since 24 February 2022, at least 12,881 Ukrainian civilians, including 681 children, have been killed. Almost 30,500 have been injured. The actual numbers are likely much higher. The World Health Organization has now verified more than 2,300 attacks affecting healthcare facilities, personnel, transport, supplies and patients in Ukraine since February 2022.

We are deeply concerned by the human cost of continued fighting, not only across Ukraine, including in occupied areas, but also in parts of the Russian Federation.

Media reports indicate civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure in the Kursk, Belgorod and Bryansk regions of the Russian Federation.

I must remind all parties to take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects, as international humanitarian law demands. Infrastructure indispensable for civilians' survival, wherever they are, must be protected. Indiscriminate attacks are strictly prohibited.

Across Ukraine, almost 13 million people need humanitarian assistance. More than 10 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes, including 3.7 million who are internally displaced. This displacement is disproportionately affecting women and girls, heightening their exposure to gender-based violence and hindering their access to support services. Funding cuts are expected to further affect an estimated 640,000 women and girls in Ukraine, as vital gender-based violence services, psychosocial support and safe spaces will no longer be continued, according to the United Nations Population Fund. In many areas, response efforts are led by the Government of Ukraine, regional authorities and Ukrainian first responders.

The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continue to do their best, focusing on front-line communities, people forced to evacuate their homes owing to increased violence, those most immediately impacted by attacks and newly displaced people. Thus far in 2025, we have reached 1.7 million people with water and sanitation services, healthcare, food assistance and shelter items. We have also delivered critical supplies to nearly 20,000 war-affected civilians in front-line communities through 14 inter-agency convoys. Some 660 humanitarian organizations — led by local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — work amid tremendous insecurity to provide civilians with the services and supplies they need to sustain their lives. Sadly, they have not been spared in this conflict. Already this year, seven humanitarian workers have been injured in the line of duty. Attacks also damaged humanitarian assets and facilities in the Kharkiv, Odesa, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolayiv and Sloviansk regions, further hampering the response. Humanitarians, their facilities and assets must be protected, and humanitarian relief operations facilitated.

We are grateful to the donors who have thus far provided 17 per cent of the \$2.6 billion needed for the 2025 Ukraine humanitarian needs and response plan. This has enabled us to address the most immediate impacts of the conflict and provide life-saving assistance. Recent funding cuts have led to a reprioritization of Ukraine response efforts that will be announced in the coming weeks. Continued financial support will be essential to maintain operations.

We are extremely concerned about the estimated 1.5 million civilians requiring assistance in parts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya regions under occupation by the Russian Federation. We remain unable to reach those people at any adequate scale. As we have said before, international humanitarian law requires all parties to allow and facilitate the swift and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian relief to civilians in need and ensure that humanitarian personnel have the necessary freedom of movement to perform their duties. We welcome further engagement with the parties to allow us to deliver aid safely to those in need, wherever they are.

Here is what we need from the international community: first, insistence on compliance with international humanitarian law, to protect civilians and civilian objects, including humanitarians, and ensure unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need; secondly, funding to save as many lives as we can and sustain humanitarian operations in this complex and dangerous environment; and thirdly, an end to this war and, until then, sustained efforts to ensure that humanitarian needs are a central part of discussions on a pause in fighting or longer-term agreement.

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

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

Mr. Bonnafont (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her briefing, which confirms that Russia continues to carry out military operations against Ukraine in defiance of international humanitarian law.

The presentation she has just given us bears witness to the humanitarian disaster caused by the war of aggression unleashed more than three years ago by Russia in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia's indiscriminate attacks have claimed many victims among the Ukrainian civilian population. As the Assistant Secretary-General said, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 3.7 million people have been displaced within the country. Almost 7 million have sought refuge in Europe and elsewhere. Ukrainian children are paying a high price. Many have been deported to Russia, where they are subjected to forced re-education practices. The elderly and disabled, as well as women, are also disproportionately affected by Russian aggression. Russia has destroyed two thirds of the Ukrainian energy network's production capacity.

The suffering of the Ukrainian people has intensified in recent days, as Ms. Msuya stated. Russia has carried out strikes against energy infrastructure and civilian property, including hospitals, schools and homes, including in Kyiv and Odesa. These indiscriminate strikes illustrate the gap between words and deeds on the part of Russia, which a few days ago said it was ready for a partial ceasefire on energy infrastructure. The deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects is a violation of international humanitarian law. It must cease immediately, regardless of any ceasefire of any scope, and we condemn it.

Russia must prove its commitment to peace. It cannot claim to be willing to conclude a partial truce while continuing its relentless bombardment of Ukraine's civilian population. Ukraine has accepted the proposal for an immediate, complete and unconditional ceasefire made by the United States at the Jeddah meeting on 11 March. France welcomes this step forward, just as it supports all efforts that can contribute to progress towards a just and lasting peace.

However, far from proving that it really wants peace, Russia continues, day after day, to strike Ukrainian territory, including civilian targets, claiming more victims in recent days. The announcement of a moratorium on strikes against energy infrastructure and an agreement on a ceasefire in the Black Sea are a step in the right direction but are not sufficient to establish a lasting peace and must be followed by action.

It is to build this just and lasting peace that France, with its partners, in particular the European Union, continues to stand by Ukraine. Since 24 February 2022, we have chosen to provide Ukraine with political support, and humanitarian aid amounting to almost €500 million as of 1 January 2025, in support of United Nations agencies, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. We have also provided Ukraine with military support, to help it to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence, enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter. This military support is intended to lend force to the law in order to put an end to an illegal war, as observed by the International Court of Justice, which on 16 March 2022 called on Russia to immediately suspend its military operations on Ukrainian territory. Ukraine must be able to defend itself, so that it can engage in negotiations leading to a just settlement of the conflict. The European Council meeting of 20 March reaffirmed the European Union's determination to continue providing Ukraine and its people with comprehensive support.

As a sovereign nation, Ukraine must be able to participate in the negotiations that determine its destiny. Nothing concerning Ukraine must be decided without

Ukraine. Nothing that puts European security on the line will be decided without a European presence at the table. Robust security guarantees that deter any future aggression must be provided to Ukraine.

The President of the Republic has said time and again that France is committed to a just and lasting peace rooted in the principles of the Charter. Those principles, which include the sovereign equality of States and respect for their territorial integrity, were upheld by the General Assembly in two resolutions adopted on 24 February (General Assembly resolutions ES-11/7 and ES-11/8). Those essential principles must continue to guide our efforts towards a just and lasting peace. Until then, it is incumbent upon the international community to continue providing to Ukraine the humanitarian aid that it needs.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama thanks the presidency for convening this meeting to discuss the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. We are also grateful for the valuable information shared by Ms. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator.

We also acknowledge the presence of the representatives of the delegations of Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland and the European Union, who are honouring us with their presence this morning.

Panama notes with concern that, in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, as in others, attacks against the civilian population and critical infrastructure are continuing. Just a few days ago, various cities in Ukraine were attacked by thousands of drones, with fatalities reported, including among children. The most recent attack occurred on 24 March on the city of Sumy, in which 88 people, including 17 children, were injured and civilian infrastructure was affected. Panama underscores that international humanitarian law clearly prohibits attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, which must always be protected at all times, in all places and in all conflicts. In that regard, it is appropriate to highlight the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published on 21 March 2025, which highlights the devastating effects of the conflict and its tragic consequences for millions of children. Panama values the crucial work being performed by the humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and other organizations, which are providing the requisite humanitarian assistance, and reminds all parties of their obligation to guarantee full access so that that aid directly reaches those affected.

It is imperative for the hostilities to end completely, with immediate measures to restore peace in Ukraine. In that connection and given that Panama regards maritime security as a fundamental pillar, we view with some optimism the steps taken towards a maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea, which would afford safety of navigation there. All efforts must now be focused on achieving that urgent objective through agreements that allow for a definitive cessation of hostilities, attention to urgent humanitarian needs and lasting peace. Accordingly, Panama reiterates its support for the talks that are taking place in Riyadh with a view to brokering a settlement of the conflict that is aimed at securing a just and lasting peace in accordance with the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for the important updates provided and welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Finland, the European Union and the Sovereign Order of Malta in today's meeting.

We take positive note of the intensification of efforts to bring about a permanent and sustainable ceasefire in Ukraine and the announcement yesterday that an agreement had been reached on navigation in the Black Sea. Guyana has long emphasized the importance of dialogue and diplomacy in the international response

to the war in Ukraine and commends the architects of those and other peace initiatives for their foresight and dedication.

Even as we celebrate the modest breakthroughs, we continue to be reminded of the urgent need to bring the war to an immediate and permanent end. The recent drone attacks against energy and civilian infrastructure and the rising death toll over the past few weeks serve as a stark reminder that the shadow of destruction continues to loom large and can serve only to diminish the prospects for peace.

This is a critical time in which the slightest misstep could doom millions of Ukrainian and Russian citizens to even more bombardment and displacement — a time when we, the international community, must rise to the occasion and deliver on the promise of peace. With that in mind and against the backdrop of widening humanitarian needs on the ground, Guyana calls upon the parties to engage in good faith in the ceasefire negotiations, uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law and put the interests of their populations first. We also continue to underscore that lasting and sustainable peace cannot be achieved at the expense of international law. The parties therefore must commit themselves to achieving a lasting peace on the basis of international law and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

It has been said many times in the Chamber that peace achieved through the use of force is not sustainable. Guyana supports those who work for peace and apply the tools of dialogue and diplomacy to bring about a peaceful and lasting settlement to the war. We call on all Member States to support those efforts, including by implementing the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing.

The death and destruction caused by this war are tremendous. We heard from Assistant Secretary-General Msuya about numbers — 12,000 civilians killed, 30,000 civilians injured. The total estimated cost of reconstruction is assessed at almost €500 billion. The vast majority of attacks that caused that represent a direct violation of international humanitarian law and they need to stop immediately.

After three long years of Russia's war of aggression, the fighting does not seem to be diminishing. Every week, hundreds of glide bombs and drones are deployed over Ukrainian cities. This year alone, Ukraine has been the target of more than 4,000 air and drone strikes. Just this February, civilian casualties increased by 35 per cent as compared to February last year. Humanitarian workers continue to face serious difficulties in accessing people in need owing to ongoing protection risks and movement restrictions.

Meanwhile, Russia's missiles keep hitting civilian targets. Two weeks ago, for instance, a cluster munitions missile hit a civilian cargo ship in Odesa while it was loading wheat destined for Algeria. What is more, just a few days ago, a Russian missile attack hit a densely populated district in the border town of Sumy, damaging a children's hospital and two schools and causing dozens of casualties, many of them children. Simultaneously, Russia attacked Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Slovenia is gravely concerned about the drone strike on the protective shield over the Chornobyl nuclear power plant, once more taking us inches away from a nuclear accident. Such an event would have catastrophic consequences for Ukraine and the wider region. The Council should make every effort to prevent that from happening.

Those attacks must stop. The killing needs to stop. Ukraine needs peace, and the whole of Europe needs peace. We have only one ask in relation to that: peace must be in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Slovenia welcomes the efforts of the United States to launch peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia

and the proposal for a ceasefire and moratorium on attacks in the Black Sea. We remain hopeful that that is the first step towards a verifiable and lasting cessation of hostilities that will lead to enduring peace in Ukraine. We obviously still have some way to go, and we hope that, in the Chamber too, we will soon hear the language of peace and diplomacy. There has never been any other option for Slovenia but to advocate for peace — a path to peace. We will continue working in the Council and elsewhere towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Ukraine and Russia. Slovenia wants peace and a sense of security to return to Europe.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Joyce Msuya for her valuable briefing.

More than three years have passed since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war, the repercussions of which continue to weigh on both parties, the region and the international community as a whole. Unfortunately, we continue to witness heavy loss of life among innocent, unarmed civilians and the continuous deterioration of the humanitarian situation, not to mention the destruction of civilian infrastructure, leaving many civilians with no choice but to migrate in search of safe shelter for their loved ones or to seek refuge in foreign countries for help and security. The conflict has not only affected the peoples of the region, but its repercussions have also been felt in many regions of the world, especially developing countries, which are now facing unprecedented energy and food crises.

Despite that situation, which remains a source of grave concern to us, we note with satisfaction the new dynamic that we have witnessed in the past few days, aimed at launching a political dialogue to end the war. It is our conviction that continued escalation is futile and will not bring peace to either of the parties. The logic of polarization will only exacerbate tensions and steer us away from any prospect of achieving sustainable peace in the region. For that reason, we would like to emphasize the following points.

First, the continued loss of innocent human life requires us to reiterate the urgent need for a ceasefire. We therefore call on the parties to prioritize the protection and safety of civilians and to continue efforts to achieve a lasting ceasefire as soon as possible. In that regard, we welcome the encouraging, albeit ad hoc and limited, ceasefire agreements, and we urge the parties to continue to work in that direction towards a definitive and comprehensive end to hostilities.

Secondly, we encourage the parties to take advantage of the current dynamic to engage in serious and constructive dialogue aimed at finding a peaceful, just and lasting solution to the dispute — a solution based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and one that takes into account the legitimate security concerns of both parties.

Thirdly, we call on the international community to intensify diplomatic efforts aimed at supporting the existing dialogue, contributing to de-escalation and bringing the views of the parties concerned closer, with a view to ending the crisis.

In that regard, Algeria renews its commitment, at the bilateral and international levels, to support any efforts that might bring an end to the suffering of the peoples of the region and lead to a peaceful and sustainable end to the war.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her important briefing.

The Security Council is convening today, more than three years since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, at a moment when cautious hope has begun to emerge on the horizon. Sierra Leone has consistently maintained that continued dialogue and good-faith negotiations are the only viable path to a sustainable peace in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. We continue to urge the parties to remain

committed to diplomacy and to refrain from any actions that could jeopardize the current momentum towards peace.

In that regard, we welcome the recent commencement of peace negotiations in Riyadh. That development marks an important step forward after many months of deadlock. Sierra Leone acknowledges the efforts of the United States in facilitating the negotiations. We hope that those talks will lay the groundwork for a broader peace process and ultimately lead to direct negotiations between the principal parties to the conflict. It is imperative that all sides engage in the talks sincerely and constructively, with a genuine commitment to achieving a just and lasting resolution.

We also note with appreciation the announcement of a Black Sea ceasefire agreement resulting from recent diplomatic engagements. That agreement, reportedly aimed at halting hostilities in and around the Black Sea to ensure safe navigation, is a welcome development that can reduce violence and improve maritime security, including the continued flow of essential goods. While we acknowledge that progress, further clarity on the agreement's terms and robust confidence-building measures are needed. Such steps will help to guarantee that all parties uphold their commitments and will foster the trust necessary to make the ceasefire durable. We hope that the confidence gained can pave the way for broader de-escalation beyond the Black Sea region.

Notwithstanding those diplomatic developments, Sierra Leone remains deeply concerned about the continued attacks—including on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, in particular missile and drone strikes—targeting power plants, electricity grids and other critical facilities across Ukraine. Those assaults have devastated Ukraine's energy capacity, with reports indicating that more than 60 per cent of the country's power-generating infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed, leaving millions of civilians in the cold and dark. The resulting widespread outages cut off heating, water supplies, telecommunications and healthcare for countless families. Deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international humanitarian law, and we call for a halt to such strikes and for full compliance with obligations to protect civilian life.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is growing more dire with each passing day of conflict. The toll on the civilian population is staggering. As noted in the briefing, and according to United Nations reports, more than 12,000 civilians have been killed and nearly 30,000 injured since the war began in February 2022. In addition to that horrific loss of life, nearly one third of Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes, with more than 6 million people having fled as refugees to neighbouring countries and millions more internally displaced within Ukraine. Many civilians now endure severe hardship, especially after a bitter winter that has only compounded their suffering. In communities devastated by fighting and power shortages, families lack consistent access to electricity, heat, clean water and medical care. Vulnerable groups—children, the elderly and persons with disabilities—are particularly at risk in such conditions, facing the harshest impacts of the cold and the disruption of essential services.

The impact of the conflict on children has been particularly troubling. Trauma affecting children, who are subjected to constant shelling and bombing, is compounded by grief from the loss of loved ones; separation from family, friends and familiar routines; and prolonged displacement and abduction from their homes. Tragically, data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) indicates that at least 669 children were killed and 1,833 were injured in Ukraine between 24 February 2022 and 31 December 2024 and that 27 children were killed and 137 were injured in the Russian Federation over the same period. Just three months into 2025, casualty rates for children have risen significantly, with

reports that more children have been killed or injured over the past five days in Ukraine than during the entire month of January. OHCHR has concluded that

“Children have been particularly affected by violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including summary executions, arbitrary detention, conflict-related sexual violence, torture and ill-treatment.”

The magnitude of this crisis demands a coordinated and urgent humanitarian response. Sierra Leone calls on the international community, donors and humanitarian organizations to work together closely to alleviate the suffering of the Ukrainian people. We welcome the continued efforts of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations on the ground. We emphasize the need to fully fund and implement the United Nations humanitarian response plan for Ukraine. That plan aims to assist roughly 14 million people with food, shelter, medical services and other essential aid, yet it still faces significant funding gaps. We echo the urgent appeal of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for increased support to close those gaps so that life-saving assistance can reach all those in need.

Looking towards the prospects of peace and recovery, Sierra Leone underscores that the process must be inclusive and people-centred. All relevant stakeholders should have a voice in shaping Ukraine's future, including the relevant regional actors. In particular, we stress the importance of the meaningful participation of women and youth in all peace efforts and post-conflict recovery initiatives.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The Security Council has a vital role to play in upholding those principles, in protecting civilians and in promoting a peaceful resolution of this conflict. In supporting ceasefires and peace agreements, the Council should ensure that they are guided by the principles of the Charter and by the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. As we urge the parties to put the needs of their citizens first and seek practical compromises that balance their immediate and long-term national interests and priorities, Sierra Leone will continue to support efforts aimed at alleviating human suffering and achieving a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Stamatekos (Greece): At the outset, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing.

The war following Russia's invasion of Ukraine is now in its fourth year. Russia has not heeded repeated calls by the international community, consolidated in multiple General Assembly resolutions, to end its military operations, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and withdraw its forces from that country's internationally recognized borders. As a direct consequence, the Ukrainian people continue to suffer, while this war has far-reaching repercussions affecting regional and global security. The window for a peaceful settlement has been opened in recent weeks, but more needs to be done to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

The human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine has confirmed 690 civilian casualties in February alone, while Russian aggression has caused hundreds of casualties during the month of March, with persistent attacks against residential areas, parks, hotels and children's medical facilities. Massive attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure in several regions have also taken place, by using ballistic missiles, Shahed uncrewed aerial vehicles and other combat drones, while attacks against commercial vessels in the Black Sea exacerbate food insecurity. Of particular note is the wide use of short-range drones, including first-person view drones, which account for the highest number of casualties, exceeding the impact of any other weapon.

Casualties among children have now exceeded 2,550, with the number of child casualties in 2024 rising by more than 50 per cent as compared to the previous year. Children who survive bear scars for life, and many of them face mental health challenges, owing to the disruption of their everyday lives, the countless days spent in shelters and the missed opportunities to socialize and learn. More than 1,700 education facilities and 800 medical facilities have been damaged or destroyed since the beginning of the war.

Greece condemns in the strongest possible terms attacks against civilians and civilian objects and joins calls for the immediate cessation of all attacks against residential areas and critical infrastructure in Ukraine. All parties must adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. We also deplore the violations of human rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, and we call on Russia to ensure unfettered humanitarian access to prisoners of war and civilian detainees and to cooperate fully with all international monitoring and investigative bodies.

It is also of paramount importance that we ensure accountability, and we support international efforts in that regard, as a further guarantee for any peace arrangement. We firmly believe that violations of international humanitarian law and war crimes should be thoroughly investigated by the relevant international institutions and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice.

Turning to the peace track, Greece takes note of the advancements achieved in recent weeks, the joint statement by Ukraine and the United States in Jeddah and the fact that Ukraine is back at the negotiating table. We also express our satisfaction with the 30-day immediate ceasefire on all energy and infrastructure agreed between the United States and Russia, although we regret that Russia has not accepted a full 30-day ceasefire. We also echo the Secretary-General's comment that reaching an agreement on safe and free navigation in the Black Sea, with security commitments and in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, would be a crucial contribution to global food security and supply chains.

What is needed now is not only a cessation of hostilities, but also a just, comprehensive peace, through inclusive diplomacy, based on the Charter and international law, in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A ceasefire seems not to be enough. We need to establish a solid framework for peace, security and prosperity. That peace will be possible only with credible and robust security guarantees, which will deter and prevent the recurrence of war in the future. A sustainable peace can be achieved only through strength and resilience, with the active engagement of the United States, Ukraine and Europe, as the security of Ukraine is inextricably intertwined with global security and stability.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing, which provided an overview of the humanitarian situation resulting from this conflict. We also take note of her call for a cessation of hostilities and an end to this conflict. We also welcome the participation of Ukraine and other European Members in this meeting.

Pakistan is deeply concerned by this conflict, which has caused immense human suffering and massive damage to infrastructure, the economy and society. It has had vast consequences for the global economy and, in particular, for developing countries. Pakistan's position on this and other conflicts is based on adherence to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the self-determination of peoples, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the non-acquisition of territory by the threat or use of force. Consistent with the United Nations Charter, States must also implement international agreements, abide by their respective obligations and respond to the legitimate security interests of all States.

In the context of today's meeting, I would like to make the following points.

First, the conflict in Ukraine, which has now entered its fourth year, has taken a heavy toll on the civilian population. That is highly regrettable. Every human life matters and is not merely a number.

Secondly, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is an obligation under international law and international humanitarian law and must be fully and consistently respected by all parties.

Thirdly, for a humanitarian response to be effective and responsive to the needs of the affected population, it is vital that access for and the protection of humanitarian workers be ensured. The parties are under an obligation to ensure conditions that allow unimpeded access for humanitarian workers while ensuring their protection.

Fourthly, the Third Geneva Convention, related to the treatment of prisoners of war, is binding on all parties to the conflict. Strict adherence to those obligations must be ensured.

The Council is meeting to discuss developments related to Ukraine for the first time since the adoption of resolution 2774 (2025) in February. That resolution mourned the tragic loss of life throughout this conflict and reiterated that the principal purpose of the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, was to maintain international peace and security and to peacefully settle disputes. It also called for a swift end to the conflict and a lasting peace.

That resolution and the ensuing diplomatic efforts have imparted a new impetus to the prospects for an early end to the fighting. In that context, we welcome the limited ceasefire agreement reached, banning the targeting of energy-related infrastructure and, more recently, ensuring the safety of navigation in the Black Sea. We appreciate the active engagement of the United States and its leadership, also involving the Russian and Ukrainian leadership, in bringing that to fruition. We remain optimistic that this new dynamic and the momentum generated by these initial steps will eventually lead to a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire. We hope that the parties earnestly abide by their commitments. We also commend the role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its leadership in facilitating dialogue to promote peace.

While Pakistan's position on the Ukraine conflict has been consistent, Pakistan enjoys friendly relations with both Russia and Ukraine. From the outset, we have advocated dialogue and diplomacy, the immediate succession of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of this conflict. We believe that the security concerns that remain at the centre of this conflict can be addressed only through an inclusive approach that, in turn, would ensure the sustainability and durability of peace in the wider region.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Pakistan's support for diplomatic initiatives to ensure the cessation of hostilities and to help to bridge differences and lead the parties towards a peaceful, just and durable settlement of this tragic conflict, through a constructive and inclusive process that fully respects the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant multilateral agreements, and that, at the same time, is responsive to the legitimate national security interests of all sides.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I would like to extend my gratitude to Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her briefing. We also welcome the representative of Ukraine and other European representatives in today's meeting.

It has now been one month since the adoption of resolution 2774 (2025), which reflected the international community's strong desire for a swift end to the war in Ukraine. Yet the attacks and hostilities continue, as Assistant Secretary-General

Msuya just said in her briefing, and the humanitarian situation in Ukraine has not improved at all. We are deeply concerned about the ongoing enormous suffering and casualties among the Ukrainian civilian population.

While the Republic of Korea continues to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, we strongly urge an immediate end to attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and high-rises, in accordance with international humanitarian law. Those attacks also directly undermine the concurrent diplomatic efforts supported by the Council aimed at an early resolution to the conflict.

We note with appreciation the ongoing ceasefire negotiations, including the recent round in Riyadh, to advance efforts towards an energy-facilities ceasefire and safe and free navigation in the Black Sea. The Republic of Korea is of the view that this is a highly significant step. We echo the Secretary-General's assessment that such progress can lead to important confidence-building measures towards the de-escalation of the war. In addition, the exchange of 175 prisoners of war by each side this past week is a welcome development.

However, we have witnessed continued attacks on innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, even during the negotiations this week. We emphasize once again that international humanitarian law should be observed under any circumstances. This senseless war must come to an end without further delay. The Republic of Korea sincerely hopes that the ongoing diplomatic efforts will pave the way for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, one that fully respects the principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

In addition to the war's conclusion and the restoration of peace in Ukraine, we also take a deep interest in the process and the conditions for ending the war, as they will have far-reaching implications not only for the future of European security but also for the global security landscape.

This war has inflicted serious suffering, not only on the Ukrainian people and Russian soldiers and their families but also on those of North Korea. Indeed, interviews with captured North Korean soldiers in Kursk have revealed how those young men were deceived by their leadership and were told they were sent to Russia for training, not to fight in a war. Reportedly, their families remain unaware that their sons have been sent abroad to engage in another country's deadly conflict until the authorities issue a certificate of death in battle. Pyongyang even compelled bereaved families to sign non-disclosure agreements regarding the loss of life.

As rightly stressed by Ms. Elizabeth Salmón, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in her report in February (A/HRC/58/65), the conditions in which North Korean soldiers perform military service can constitute serious human rights violations. Pyongyang must stop sacrificing its own people to sustain the regime in exchange for military, political and economic support from Moscow. According to North Korea's State media, when Kim Jong Un met Russia's top security officer, Mr. Shoigu, in Pyongyang last Friday, he emphasized his unwavering support for Russia's so-called special military operation. The two countries also reaffirmed their intention to fully implement the treaty on a comprehensive strategic partnership, signed in 2024. That implies that this illegal military cooperation will continue in violation of the Security Council resolutions. This also undoubtedly flies in the face of international efforts for an end to the war in Ukraine. We urge Russia and North Korea to immediately halt their illegal military cooperation.

In conclusion, The Republic of Korea will continue to cooperate with the international community for the restoration of peace and post-war construction in Ukraine.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her briefing.

The Ukraine crisis has been dragging on with constant new civilian casualties. It is heartbreaking. One more day of the war means one more day of harm and destruction and one more day of turmoil and instability. Under no circumstances should civilians be the target of attacks. Their safety should be protected.

The political resolution of the Ukraine crisis is approaching a critical moment, and a window of peace is opening. China welcomes all efforts towards a ceasefire, a necessary step towards peace. China welcomes the agreement reached between the United States and Russia on dialogue and peace talks and welcomes the recent negotiations between Russia and the United States and between Ukraine and the United States in Riyadh, where positive progress was made on navigational safety in the Black Sea, a ceasefire on energy infrastructure and Russian agricultural and fertilizer exports, among others. China supports the conclusion of a just, lasting and binding peace agreement that is acceptable to all parties, with the participation of all parties and stakeholders. Since the fighting is taking place on European soil, Europe ought to play its part for peace in order to jointly address the root causes of the crisis and to find a balanced, effective and sustainable security framework, so as to achieve long-term security and stability on the European continent.

In September, China partnered with Brazil and other countries from the global South to launch the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis. The Group has been consistently guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in its efforts to rally positive forces in support of a political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. Last Thursday, the Group met again at the ambassadorial level and spoke to the press, reiterating the call for an immediate and complete ceasefire and urging all parties and stakeholders to embrace the opportunity and engage constructively in peace talks. The Group believes that the shared goal must be to find a just and lasting solution that addresses the concerns of all parties to the conflict and leads to a peace agreement acceptable to them. The United Nations can play a role in fostering such diplomatic efforts and in the implementation of a peace agreement. The Group members are worried about risks and crises arising from this conflict, which has affected many countries, including those in the global South. The Group is of the view that issues such as food and energy security, as well as humanitarian assistance, should be integral to the peace process. The voices of the global South in support of peace in the region should be heard and heeded. Amid the rapid evolution of the situation, members of the Group are committed to maintaining close contact with one another and with all relevant parties. The Group members will strive to deepen the understanding of diverse perspectives, foster common ground and play a constructive role in supporting all efforts towards peace. Together, the Group members stand ready to contribute to a peaceful resolution of the conflict and a better future for all.

China has always maintained an objective and impartial position on the Ukraine issue. Guided by the four “shoulds” proposed by President Xi Jinping, we have actively engaged with all relevant parties to work for peace and push for talks. We will continue to work with the international community to raise the voice of reason for peace talks, create conditions and momentum for a ceasefire and peace talks and play a positive and constructive role in achieving a political solution to the Ukraine crisis.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for the briefing today.

Last month marked three years since President Putin launched his illegal and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The invasion displaced more

than 10 million people. Today 12.7 million people remain in need of urgent humanitarian support.

The suffering caused by Russian forces is well known to the Council: war crimes, torture of civilians and prisoners of war, mass killings, the forced deportation of thousands of children, the forced cleansing and Russification of areas under their illegal control. It is a shocking record for any State, let alone a permanent member of the Security Council.

In recent weeks, Russian drone and missile attacks have intensified nationwide, with daily reports of damage to residential areas and civilian infrastructure across multiple oblasts. According to the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, in one attack, which took place on 7 March, two ballistic missiles hit a residential area in Donetsk oblast killing 11 people and destroying homes. Emergency responders who arrived to treat the wounded were then targeted by further strikes.

This has to stop. The United Kingdom is clear that we want to see an end to the fighting and to the killing. We must have enduring peace in Ukraine. Putin could bring about peace tomorrow by withdrawing his forces and ending his illegal invasion.

We welcome United States efforts towards a just and lasting peace, and we welcome President Zelenskyy's clear commitment to peace and readiness to move quickly towards a comprehensive and lasting settlement. By agreeing to a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire, Ukraine has shown that it is the party of peace. Russia must now agree to this without further delay.

Ukraine's humanitarian needs are immense, and the United Kingdom will continue to do what we can in support. To date we have committed £477 million in humanitarian support to Ukraine, providing its people with food, water, shelter and medical care, alongside support to safeguard the rights, dignity and well-being of civilians.

We repeat our call on Russia to end its brutal war and withdraw from Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders. Until that day comes, the United Kingdom will continue to work with Ukraine and our international partners to achieve a just and lasting peace that ensures Ukraine's future security and upholds the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her briefing, which powerfully reinforces that this war must end now.

Just over one month ago, on the third anniversary of the escalation of the Russia-Ukraine war, the Council adopted resolution 2774 (2025), imploring a swift end to the war. As we noted in that landmark resolution — the first in the Council since the war began — and as we have sadly heard again today, there has been a tragic loss of life throughout this conflict.

In the weeks since the adoption of that resolution, continued fighting has injured or killed more soldiers and civilians on both sides. The war continues to have a devastating impact, particularly on children. The United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine reported last week that children living in occupied territories have suffered summary executions, arbitrary detention and torture. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified that 669 children were killed and 1,833 were injured in Ukraine between February 2022 and the end of 2024. Russian forces destroyed homes, schools and medical facilities and forcibly transferred thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia, as President Trump discussed with President Zelenskyy last week.

The war must end. We must all continue to agree on that. The United States commends Ukraine and the Russian Federation for taking the first steps towards

a ceasefire, including participating in technical-level talks this week. We welcome the proposed partial ceasefires on strikes against energy infrastructure and in the Black Sea, to which the leaders of both sides have agreed in principle. If fully implemented, those agreements will be an important first step on the path to peace. They will protect lives and improve livelihoods, but the first step alone is not enough. We call on both sides to abide by those agreements and expand on them to reach a comprehensive ceasefire.

The United States is committed to achieving a lasting peace, not just a temporary pause, and is pursuing that goal through direct dialogue with both Ukraine and Russia. Last week, President Trump spoke with the Presidents of both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. On 18 March, President Putin agreed that the conflict needs to end with a lasting peace and, on 19 March, President Zelenskyy agreed that lasting peace can be achieved. For the first time since February 2022 and perhaps the first time since February 2014, we are seeing the common ground between Russia and Ukraine expanding, rather than shrinking. That in itself is grounds for optimism.

We call on all Security Council members and all United Nations Member States to lend their support to our efforts to achieve a swift, durable peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before I begin my statement, I would like to express our fundamental disagreement with the way the presidency proceeded in inviting delegations under rule 37. In a departure from established practice, the Danish presidency unilaterally decided to give the floor to four European Union (EU) and NATO States, and to a representative of the EU itself. We have already stated on numerous occasions that inviting such a large number of participants, in particular those that follow bloc discipline, brings no added value to our discussions. The presidency's actions, which run counter to the working methods that it itself circulated to us, will instead drag our discussion on, turning it, in essence, into a debate for which Denmark did not obtain Council members' consent.

That, in our view, reflects unscrupulousness on the part of the presidency, but also an attempt to exert pressure on Council members. There is not, and neither can there be, any other reasonable explanation for turning a Security Council meeting into a NATO get-together. It is regrettable that, as its presidency is drawing to a close, Copenhagen has decided to display open contempt for the practices and procedures of the Council, placing its national position and NATO's interests above the duties of the President of the Council, which entail serving as guardian of the rules of procedure and taking a balanced and impartial line.

We all saw how the European sponsors of the Kyiv regime dithered over whether to request another meeting on Ukraine this month. On the one hand, they really wanted to tick the box in March, but on the other, it was important for them to not show their hand and not give the impression that the EU and the United Kingdom are trying to thwart United States and Russian efforts to end the Ukrainian crisis. Ultimately, only at the eleventh hour, when the month of March was almost over, did London and Brussels finally decide to make such a move, using the letters that the Ukrainian Permanent Mission has regularly sent to the Council as a pretext to level unfounded accusations that Russia's strikes were carried out on civilian objects in Ukraine.

As we have reiterated on numerous occasions, the Russian air force targets only objects connected to the Kyiv regime's military capabilities. Civilians in Ukraine are usually affected either by the debris of downed missiles and drones — given that Ukraine's air defences are deployed in residential areas of Ukrainian cities, in violation of the rules of international humanitarian law — or by anti-aircraft missiles falling on them, which the Ukrainians then try to portray as the result of Russian strikes. But the Kyiv regime is not very convincing, because Ukrainians themselves

are recording and posting information about what is happening, despite a strict ban on doing so imposed by the punitive bodies of the Zelenskyy regime and thereby refuting all the propagandistic fabrications by their authorities. Such posts helped to debunk the fabrication regarding the 24 March school bombing in Sumy, which had been portrayed as a deliberate strike by the Russian air force against civilian infrastructure. The footage, widely disseminated on social media, shows that, after a small fire broke out in the middle of a residential area and resembled the result of downing a drone, there was suddenly a large-scale detonation of ammunition stored in one of the nearby buildings. The involvement in that incident by the Kyiv regime, which stores ammunition in residential neighbourhoods, was so blatant that even the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Andriy Yermak, had to rectify his post on social media about the alleged Russian strike causing the explosion.

However, the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations, which cited that episode in its letter of 24 March, calling it a Russian missile strike, did not have the time to rectify anything, thereby throwing its European mentors under the bus, given that they today also actively referred to the incident. That is a telling example of how the Council is being manipulated and its members are being fed false information. And there are dozens, if not hundreds, of such examples.

Nevertheless, those in Europe who champion Ukraine will not notice the crimes that the Kyiv regime is directly perpetrating against civilians in Russia. As Council members know, Ms. Kallas, the European Commissioner who briefed us recently in the Chamber (see S/PV.9876), shamelessly asserted that there were no such casualties whatsoever. Let us leave this matter to her conscience, although, apparently, she does not have one. I will instead cite some statistics covering only the most recent period.

In just one week — from March 17 to March 23 — there were 150 civilian casualties, primarily in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, as well as in the Belgorod, Kursk and Kherson regions. Sixteen people died and 134 were injured, including four minors. And two days ago, on 24 March, in the Luhansk People's Republic of the Russian Federation, three Russian media workers were killed as a result of targeted shelling of a civilian vehicle by the Ukrainian armed forces — Alexander Fedorchak, a war correspondent for Russia's Izvestia news agency, Andrey Panov, a cameraman for Zvezda Television and Alexander Sirkeli, a driver for the film crew. A further two correspondents were badly wounded. Today we also learned that, in the Belgorod region, in the area where Ukrainian sabotage groups are active, Channel One correspondent Anna Prokofieva was killed and her cameraman, Dmitry Volkov, was seriously wounded. Where is the condemnation of all those crimes on the part of Western public opinion and the United Nations? Or are killings of journalists, if they are Russian, not regarded as deserving a response?

However, we have already accustomed to the fact that the deaths of Russian people are not considered a crime in Europe, which is in the grip of atavistic Russophobia. We all remember that, since the 2014 unconstitutional coup in Kyiv, when nationalists and neo-Nazis came to power, Europe and the West as a whole remained silent as Russians were burned alive in the Trade Union House in Odesa and throughout the eight years in which the Kyiv regime waged war against the peaceful Russian-speaking people of Donbas. Their unscrupulousness and selective deafness therefore come as no surprise to us. That is why we took the situation into our own hands and launched our special military operation over three years ago in order to end the war being waged on our compatriots by the Kyiv regime.

Now, with a new Republican team in the White House, led by President Donald Trump, there is hope of the Ukrainian crisis finally being resolved through a sustainable and lasting peace. All that was needed was a sensible assessment of the situation and political will. The embodiment of that change was the Council's

adoption of resolution 2774 (2024) on 24 February, with much gnashing of teeth on the part of our European colleagues.

Of course, this is just the beginning. For now, Russia and the United States are simply looking for understanding that will benefit the entire world. Our leaders, Ministers and expert teams have resumed talks and have already achieved some remarkable results. Yesterday, following the expert talks held in Riyadh, Russia and the United States agreed on starting to implement the Black Sea Initiative, which involves ensuring the safety of navigation in the Black Sea and refraining from using force and commercial vessels for military purposes. As we all recall, it was precisely owing to the Kyiv regime resorting to such action that the previous similar attempt failed. To avoid further incidents of that kind, we intend to introduce proper control measures, namely, the inspection of such vessels.

Moreover, the United States pledged to help to restore access for Russian exports of agricultural products and fertilizers to the world market, lower the cost of shipping insurance and expand access to ports and payment systems to carry out such transactions. It is important to understand that, under the agreement, the initiative will be resumed only after a number of measures are adopted, namely, lifting sanctions restrictions on the Russian Agricultural Bank and other Russian financial institutions involved in international trade in food and fertilizers, including connecting those institutions to the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication system. The lifting of several other restrictions on Russia is also envisaged.

Furthermore, Russia and the United States arranged to develop measures to implement the agreement reached by the Presidents of the two countries regarding the prohibition of strikes on energy facilities of Russia and Ukraine for a period of 30 days, starting on 18 March, with the possibility of extending that period and withdrawing from the agreement in case of non-compliance with the terms by one of the parties.

As members know, Russia has been upholding that agreement for more than a week now, which cannot be said of the Zelenskyy regime. The regime seemed to pay lip service to it but, just three hours after the decision was announced, the Kyiv regime launched three drones at an energy facility located near the village of Kavkazskaya, on the Kuban River, which pumps crude oil into the pipeline system of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. In the early hours of 21 March, there was an explosion at the Sudzha gas metering station in the Kursk oblast, through which gas was pumped to Europe. At the time, the station was under the control of Ukrainian forces. On 23 March, the Ukrainian armed forces launched a massive artillery strike on an electric substation in the Zaporizhzhya region, leaving 11,000 people without electricity.

In the early hours of 24 March, the Kyiv regime attacked the Kropotkinskaya oil pumping station, which also belonged to the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. That same afternoon, the Kuban branch of the Rosseti power company was hit, leading to the shutdown of the power supply line connecting the Rostov nuclear power plant with the city of Tikhoretsk. In Luhansk, there was an attack on the Svatovo gas distribution station, and in Crimea, a drone that was supposed to target the Glebovskoye underground gas storage facility was intercepted. By the way, the Kyiv regime tried to attack that same facility again this morning. On top of that, the Ukrainian forces used drones today to attack other energy facilities in the Bryansk and Kursk regions.

In other words, having agreed to the energy ceasefire in word, Kyiv continues to plan and carry out strikes against Russia's energy infrastructure, thereby trying to hoodwink both us and the United States. It is clear that, in doing so, it is trying

to thwart any peace agreements, which clearly demonstrates that it is impossible to negotiate with Kyiv. Russia reserves the right to respond should the Kyiv regime proceed with its destructive course.

Derailing the settlement process launched by Russia and the United States and dragging its European allies into a confrontation with Russia are the last hopes for the leader of the Kyiv regime to keep himself and his utterly corrupt posse in power. As members know, Zelenskyy's Kursk misadventure essentially ended ingloriously in March. We have so far liberated more than 90 per cent of the Kursk oblast, which was invaded by the Ukrainian Nazis in August 2024. The cost, as many warned, was catastrophic for Ukraine — more than 70,000 people died, and hundreds, if not thousands, of units of Western-supplied heavy weaponry were lost. As a result, the combat capability of the Ukrainian army has been undermined, and the country is losing more and more territory in the east, where the front has basically collapsed since all the reserves are being sent to Kursk. Despite the utterly barbaric and unconstitutional methods that Ukraine is using, forced mobilization has stalled there. Ukrainian men snatched on the streets and forcibly sent to the front line tend to refuse to fight, and they surrender at the earliest opportunity.

The prospect of elections and retribution for all the crimes committed against his country and his people now looms over the Kiev princeling. He will also have to answer to the West for stealing billions of dollars allocated to supporting Ukraine. That is Zelenskyy's worst nightmare, and he will go to any lengths to ensure that it does not happen. He is not troubled by further Ukrainian victims or the danger of provoking a conflict between nuclear Powers. That is why he is desperately manoeuvring, lying, deceiving and contradicting himself, while clutching at straws to extend the agony of his regime, which has turned Ukraine into a concentration camp and a private military company fighting for illusory Western geopolitical interests.

However, his efforts are doomed, and a long-term solution to the Ukrainian crisis will be found. Today, thanks to the efforts of the Presidents of Russia and the United States, there is a real chance that the solution will be diplomatic in nature and that dozens — if not hundreds — of thousands of ordinary Ukrainians' lives will be saved. There of course remains a military scenario, and we are also ready to implement that, but we prefer peace and diplomacy, as we have consistently stated over the past three years in every single statement that we have delivered in the Chamber.

And what do members prefer? Are they going to continue to fuel the “private military company Ukraine” with weapons and try to foil the settlement of the conflict? Or will they join the ranks of Russia and the United States in the search for a long-term solution that will address the root causes of the Ukrainian crisis and strengthen security in Europe and the world over? The choice is theirs. They should bear that in mind when the warmongering forces that are on the rampage in certain European countries try to disrupt the efforts of Moscow and Washington while egging on the expired Ukrainian President to engage in new — and potentially deadly for Ukraine — misadventures.

The President: The presidency does not have anything to add to this discussion. As mentioned already, the practice of this meeting is well within the already-established practice of the Security Council.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): Let me begin by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her comprehensive and sobering briefing to the Council today. I also want to welcome the representatives of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to participate in our discussions today.

A recent breakthrough was made in Riyadh, where the United States successfully facilitated agreement between the parties and built upon resolution 2774 (2025), creating tangible momentum towards de-escalation. The agreement to ensure

safe navigation in the Black Sea, particularly for commercial vessels, represents a practical step towards reducing tensions and protecting vital economic infrastructure. However, we must acknowledge the continuing humanitarian challenges. As Assistant Secretary-General Msuya's briefing made clear, the humanitarian situation remains dire, particularly in the front-line areas, in which civilian infrastructure and essential services have been severely affected. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure remains paramount, particularly in front-line regions, in which access to basic services has been severely affected.

In the light of those developments and continuing challenges, the Council should focus on three priorities.

The first priority is to support the implementation and monitoring of the recently agreed maritime safety measures and the infrastructure protection arrangements.

The second priority is to expand humanitarian access to affected populations, particularly in areas in which the delivery of essential services has been compromised.

The third priority is to build on that momentum in order to encourage broader dialogue towards a comprehensive ceasefire and a sustainable political solution. While challenges remain, those steps towards de-escalation provide a foundation for further diplomatic initiatives. As we move forward, the Council must remain actively engaged in supporting those positive developments while also addressing ongoing humanitarian needs.

In conclusion, there is no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The only sustainable solution is to work together towards strengthening diplomatic engagements and creating conditions conducive to a just and lasting peace. The path to peace begins with a ceasefire, continues through respect for international law and ends with justice. We remain committed to those principles and to our most determined efforts to restore peace to Ukraine and its people and to the region as a whole.

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

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her sobering briefing, which once again confirmed that, since we in the Security Council last discussed the aggression against Ukraine (see S/PV.9867), we have seen the Russian Federation continue its air strikes, which have killed civilians and damaged civilian infrastructure. In the past month, we have seen multiple attacks on hospitals, apartment blocks, administrative buildings, supermarkets and commercial vessels. Attacks continue unabated.

As Assistant Secretary-General Msuya mentioned, a particularly deadly attack was launched on 7 March against a city centre in the Donetsk oblast. The attack resulted in 11 civilian deaths, and more than 50 civilians were injured, including seven children. A double-tap strike then deliberately targeted the rescue services attempting to free survivors trapped under the rubble. The same thing happened on 12 March: a hotel was targeted in central Ukraine, causing 16 civilian casualties, followed by a double-tap strike against survivors and those desperately trying to help them. Those are cowardly and despicable actions.

Tragically, those attacks against Ukrainian civilians continue without pause. On 21 March, a child and both her parents were killed in Zaporizhzhya, with 14 other civilians injured. On 23 March, a 5-year-old girl and her father were killed in Kyiv, with 10 more civilians injured. On 24 March, missiles struck apartment blocks and schools in Sumy, injuring at least 88 people, including 17 children. And just this month, over a seven-day period, Russia launched 2,700 missiles, drones and glide bombs at Ukraine. Needless to say, the humanitarian suffering caused by such an uninterrupted aerial blitz is truly horrific.

Russia's illegal war of aggression is not just a European concern. On 11 March, a Russian ballistic missile, armed with cluster munitions, targeted a Barbados-flagged civilian vessel in Odesa that was loading wheat bound for Algeria. The attack killed four Syrian sailors and wounded two other civilians — another display of the complete disregard for civilian lives. That contributes to humanitarian suffering across the globe, as the most vulnerable, especially in several African countries, face much higher food and energy prices and a scarcity of supplies.

In recent days, we received the latest report by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (A/HRC/58/67). It is a grim catalogue of crimes against humanity perpetrated by Russian forces against civilians and war crimes against prisoners of war, including systematic torture and even executions. The report notes an apparent new policy in Russia's armed forces not to take prisoners but to kill them.

I want to highlight the extreme vulnerability of Ukraine's women. I pay tribute to the brave testimonies given here in New York two weeks ago by Ukrainian women held captive for years by Russian forces and subjected to terrible abuse and degradation. We also remember the Ukrainian children who have been abducted to Russia and had their identity brutally erased. That underscores the fact that, if there is to be an enduring peace, it must be built on accountability and justice for all.

Russia's systematic violations of international humanitarian law in the temporarily occupied territories are well documented, including by the United Nations. We have frequently heard in this Chamber how Russia has cut off approximately 1.5 million Ukrainians from humanitarian aid. We call on Russia to respect its international obligations and facilitate full, safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access in the territories that it has temporarily occupied. We call on the international community to heed the call that we heard today from Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for more support. Since the beginning of this brutal war, Denmark has allocated \$1 billion in humanitarian and civilian aid.

Russia could end the war today if it would only stop attacking Ukraine. Russia has raised preconditions for peace while at the same time increasing attacks on Ukrainian civilians, resulting in further humanitarian suffering. We have noted the first steps towards a ceasefire. It remains crucial that further steps be taken towards a just and lasting peace, while respecting Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and territorial integrity.

The majority of United Nations Members clearly stood with the people of Ukraine on the third anniversary of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion. They reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. They demanded that any peace must be in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations — the Charter that we all signed up for. Denmark will continue to stand with the people of Ukraine as we, it is hoped, move closer to achieving a just, comprehensive and enduring peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Ms. Hayovyshyn (Ukraine): I would like to thank Denmark's presidency for convening this meeting. I am also grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya for her substantive briefing.

The Russian Federation continues to terrorize Ukrainian civilians by relentlessly striking critical infrastructure and residential areas across the country with missiles, multiple-launch rocket systems, guided bombs and attack drones, causing widespread death and destruction. Front-line and border regions, particularly Sumy, Zaporizhzhya, Kryvyi Rih and Kharkiv, remain under constant Russian attack.

We should focus on Russia's actions and not its statements, and the actions are as follows.

On the night of 1 March, the Russian Federation launched at least nine Shahed drones on Kharkiv, damaging a hospital with patients inside and injuring at least seven of them.

On the night of 3 March, a Russian attack on an ecopark near Kharkiv destroyed animal enclosures, a medical centre and a mother and child house. On the same day, air strikes on Omelnyk, Zaporizhzhya, destroyed a home, killing one person and injuring another.

On 4 March, a drone strike on Sumy caused a fire in a children's medical facility.

On 5 March, a ballistic missile struck a hotel in Kryvyi Rih, killing at least 4 people and injuring 32, including two children. The damage included 14 apartment buildings, a post office, a cultural centre, shops and vehicles.

On 7 March, a massive Russian assault on energy infrastructure hit multiple regions across Ukraine — Odesa, Poltava, Chernihiv and Ternopil — using nearly 70 missiles and 200 drones. In Kharkiv, a missile injured civilians near an apartment building. That same day, at night, the Russian Federation launched a ballistic missile attack on the centre of Dobropillia, in the Donetsk region, killing at least 11 people and injuring 50 others, including seven children. As firefighters worked to extinguish the blaze, Russian forces carried out a second strike, targeting the rescuers.

On 11 March, in Dnipro, Russian drones damaged an infrastructure facility and approximately 10 private houses, and broke windows in a kindergarten and a school.

On 12 March, Russia launched ballistic missiles at Kryvyi Rih, killing one person and injuring 15. Russia launched a double-tap strike on rescuers and medics who arrived at the scene. The strike damaged an infrastructure facility, multistorey residential buildings, administrative buildings, a shop, garages, 12 cars and two units of rescue equipment.

On 13 March, Russians massively attacked Kherson with artillery, killing a woman and injuring a man. The same day, critical infrastructure facilities in the Zaporizhzhya and Dnipro regions were attacked.

On 14 March, Russians attacked a hospital in Zolochiv, in the Kharkiv region, with drones. A double-tap attack was carried out 40 minutes after the first strike.

On 14 March, Russian troops attacked the centre of Kherson with guided aerial bombs, killing one civilian and injuring seven others.

On 15 March, an attack drone damaged 65 apartments in a multistorey building, 12 private houses and 19 cars, in one of Chernihiv's neighbourhoods.

On 16 March, an attack drone hit a multistorey building in Chernihiv, injuring a woman.

On 21 March, the Russian Federation launched a drone attack on Zaporizhzhya, killing a family — a 17-year-old girl, her father and her mother. The attack injured at least 14 people, including a 9-month-old baby. The drone strikes caused fires and widespread destruction in Zaporizhzhya.

Overnight, on 23 March, Russia attacked residential areas of Ukraine, using nearly 150 strike drones. Russia's massive drone attack on Kyiv and the Kyiv region killed at least three people, including a father and his 5-year-old daughter, and injured 10 others, including an 11-month-old baby. That attack damaged apartment buildings, private houses and cars.

On 24 March, the Russian Federation launched a missile strike on the city centre of Sumy, injuring at least 88 people, including 17 children, and damaging several high-rise residential buildings and civilian infrastructure, including a school. The same day, Russia launched its third consecutive overnight air attack on Kyiv.

On 25 March, Russian forces struck a residential area in the village of Kurtyvka, in the Donetsk region, with a FAB-250 bomb, killing a 36-year-old mother and her 3-year-old daughter, and injuring her 15-year-old daughter, who was hospitalized. The family was at a playground when the strike hit them.

Last night, Russia launched 117 strike drones, mostly Shaheds, against civilians across Ukraine. Dnipro, Sumy, Cherkasy and other regions came under Russian attack. Kryvyi Rih suffered a massive drone strike targeting local enterprises and civilian infrastructure. In Okhtyrka, in the Sumy region, homes, stores and civilian infrastructure were damaged. Communities in the Donetsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya regions also came under fire. It was another night of Russian terror targeting Ukrainian civilians.

These attacks are a daily reality.

In just the first half of March alone, the Russian Federation launched hundreds of strikes against the Ukrainian people, using approximately 2,800 guided aerial bombs, nearly 2,000 attack drones and more than 100 missiles of various types. That means that, on average, each day Russia used 200 guided aerial bombs, 143 attack drones and seven missiles — every single day.

The Russian Federation must be held accountable for the vast destruction it has inflicted on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure. According to Ukrainian law enforcement, more than 212,000 civilian sites have been damaged or destroyed, including more than 171,000 residential buildings. The attacks have also affected more than 1,600 schools, with at least 200 completely destroyed, and nearly 2,000 medical facilities, of which 300 have been reduced to rubble.

From the very first day of the invasion, Russia has deliberately sought to block Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea, directly threatening global food security. It has consistently targeted southern Ukraine's port infrastructure, commercial vessels and grain storage facilities. All of that was done to weaken Ukraine's export capacity and deliberately provoke a food crisis in regions heavily reliant on Ukrainian grain.

On 1 March, Russia launched a missile strike on port infrastructure in Odesa, injuring two port workers and damaging two civilian vessels, including a Sierra Leone-flagged bulk carrier loaded with more than 21,000 tons of corn and soybeans, and a Panama-flagged container ship.

On 11 March, a ballistic missile attack on the same port killed four Syrian crew members and injured two others, a Ukrainian and a Syrian. The attack damaged another ship, docks and grain storage facilities. The vessel targeted was loading wheat for export to Algeria.

Such strikes directly undermine food security in vulnerable regions across the globe. Today more than 40 countries rely on Ukrainian grain exports. Those deliberate attacks risk deepening instability in areas already facing food shortages.

In its latest report, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (A/HRC/58/67) has further confirmed that the widespread use of torture is not incidental, but a deliberate and systematic element of Russian State policy, amounting to crimes against humanity. The report documents the ongoing torture of civilians and prisoners of war, inhumane detention conditions and the use of sexual violence, particularly against male detainees, as a method of torture. It also presents clear evidence of numerous executions of prisoners of war and a disturbing take-no-

prisoners policy by the Russian military, in direct and cynical violation of the Geneva Conventions. The Commission's efforts to investigate and document Russia's war crimes are essential to ensuring justice and accountability. Therefore, we urgently call for the continued support of its mandate and the allocation of adequate funding to sustain its work.

Ukraine also welcomes the recent thematic report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, focused on the impact of Russia's aggression on the rights of Ukrainian children, the first of its kind. The report provides vital verified evidence of systematic violence, especially in territories temporarily occupied by Russia. It confirms that at least 669 children have been killed and 1,833 injured, owing to Russia's use of explosive weapons in civilian areas, and documents the destruction of schools and hospitals, the militarization of children, the forced implementation of Russian curriculums, the suspension of the Ukrainian language and the persecution of families trying to protect their children's rights to education. Particularly alarming are the forcible transfers and deportations of Ukrainian children to Russia and Belarus, the illegal change of their citizenship and efforts to erase their Ukrainian identity.

Ukraine urges all relevant United Nations mandate holders to continue their critical monitoring and reporting work, and we call on the international community to act on those findings — ensuring accountability and supporting the return of deported children through initiatives such as the Bring Kids Back UA platform and the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children.

On 20 March, we saw another decree from the Kremlin, which provides for the forced expulsion of Ukrainian citizens living in the temporarily occupied territories and in the territory of Russia, without so-called legal grounds. It is yet another step in Russia's campaign of discrimination, persecution and forced displacement of Ukrainian citizens from their homeland or coercion to acquire the status of a foreigner. These systematic deportations and persecutions are part of Russia's policy of genocide against the Ukrainian people.

Those responsible for the crime of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity must be brought to justice.

We are grateful to all those who contribute to freeing our people from Russian captivity, both military and civilian, as well as to return Ukrainian children who were forcibly taken by the Russians. It remains our priority.

Ukraine began recording episodic cases of the use of dangerous chemical substances by Russian troops, from the beginning of the full-scale invasion, in flagrant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. According to the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, from February 2023 to February 2025, more than 6,900 cases of the Russian use of munitions containing hazardous chemicals have been recorded and documented. More than 3,400 Ukrainian servicemen have been hospitalized with poisoning from chemicals used by the Russians.

Two reports by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) emphasize that the evidence provided by Ukraine has been collected and provided to OPCW representatives in compliance with the chain of custody and relevant procedures. Two independent OPCW-designated laboratories have confirmed that the evidence provided by Ukraine contains the substance known as CS, which is a riot-control agent.

The situation at Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant remains critically difficult. The Russian Federation continues to ignore General Assembly resolution 78/316, entitled "Safety and security of nuclear facilities of Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant", as well as resolutions adopted by the International Atomic

Energy Agency General Conference and Board Of Governors on nuclear safety and security in Ukraine. The only way to ensure nuclear safety and security is the complete withdrawal of the Russian Federation's troops and other unauthorized personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant facilities and the return of the plant to the full sovereign control of Ukraine.

Ukraine welcomes President Trump's continued efforts to end Russia's aggression against Ukraine and to restore a just and lasting peace. We welcome American mediation in advancing that process. We are grateful to Saudi Arabia for its hospitality and facilitation. Nobody wants peace more than Ukrainians. Ukraine has already clearly demonstrated its desire for peace and its readiness to take concrete steps. But we will not accept peace at any price, as any appeasement of the aggressor would only encourage it to continue attacks in future.

Ukraine has made its three principal positions clear.

First, we will not recognize any temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine as Russian.

Secondly, we will not agree to any foreign diktat regarding the structure, number and other characteristics of the defence forces of Ukraine.

Thirdly, we will not accept any restrictions on Ukraine's sovereignty or our domestic and foreign policies, including on the choice of alliances that we would like to join. We have already demonstrated our commitment to give peace a chance. Ukraine has agreed to the United States proposal of an immediate, interim and full 30-day ceasefire. Russia's refusal to support it is clear evidence of who is an obstacle to peace.

A crucial aspect of any future peace framework is that a temporary ceasefire does not turn into a frozen conflict. Current ceasefire efforts, the results of the consultations in Riyadh on 23–25 March, are only a measure to lay the foundation for permanent peace. Ukraine and the United States have agreed to a ceasefire regarding energy facilities. We believe that such a ceasefire took effect at the moment when the relevant statement was published following the Ukraine-United States meeting.

Ukraine and the United States also agreed on a ceasefire in the Black Sea, which applies not only to civilian shipping, but also to ports. We believe that the agreement on the Black Sea does not extend to Russian warships. If Russian warships currently concentrated in the eastern part of the Black Sea enter our territorial waters, Ukraine will consider it a threat and will exercise our right to self-defence. We continue working closely with our American and European partners to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, with real security guarantees for our people.

Moscow speaks of peace while launching brutal strikes almost daily on densely populated residential areas in major Ukrainian cities. Instead of making hollow statements about peace, the Russian Federation must stop bombing Ukrainian cities and end its war against civilians. Everyone should focus on Russian actions, not their statements. The coming days will be critical in determining whether Russia is serious about peace or intends to deceive the United States and the world. Any diplomacy with Moscow must be backed by sanctions, pressure and increased support for Ukraine. To push the Russian Federation towards peace, we need strong measures and decisive actions. We are ready to take the necessary steps towards peace as quickly as possible, together with the United States, Europe and all our partners.

However, if the Russian Federation continues attacking our energy sector, we will respond. If Russia manipulates the naval ceasefire, we will work with our partners to increase pressure. Our position will remain strong. Ukraine resists and stands firmly. We will continue to defend ourselves. To sustain this fight against aggression we need further international support, including in arms. NATO and the

European Union are indispensable elements of regional security, and Ukraine is eager to become a part of them, not only as a security recipient, but as a security provider. We must establish a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with clear security guarantees.

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

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and my own country, Lithuania.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU).

We thank our briefer, Assistant Secretary-General Joyce Msuya, for the valuable information provided.

The Baltic States strongly support the role of the United Nations agencies and volunteers providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. Having visited Kyiv and Odesa in February, I can personally attest to the resilience, courage and persistence of the United Nations team, headed by United Nations Development Programme Resident Coordinator Matthias Schmale, and the representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies working in a very stressful and dangerous environment. I also note that we joined the United Nations regional refugee response and contribute to humanitarian needs and response plan.

Russia's war of aggression continues to cause suffering to the Ukrainian people. Every single day, Russia continues its criminal actions against Ukrainian civilians despite all the relevant General Assembly resolutions, including those adopted on 24 February (General Assembly resolutions ES-11/7 and ES-11/8), and resolution 2774 (2025), adopted on the same day.

Since Russia's invasion, Ukraine has repeatedly expressed its unwavering commitment to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. To reach such a peace, Ukraine agreed to an unconditional ceasefire two weeks ago. In response, Russia has not taken any credible steps towards accepting the ceasefire and only keeps raising its demands while committing further violence against civilians in Ukraine. If Russia were serious about reaching peace, it would stop murdering innocent civilians, withdraw its armed forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and implement the United Nations resolutions.

The recent attacks perpetrated by Russia this month further indicate that its goals in Ukraine remained unchanged. According to the most recent Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report, at least 123 civilians were killed and 567 injured in Ukraine in February 2025 alone. The vast majority of civilian casualties — 94 per cent — and damage to educational and health facilities — 94 per cent — occurred in territory controlled by Ukraine. Russia has also continued restricting humanitarian access, thus complicating the delivery of life-saving aid to those most affected. We also fear for the fate of civilians in the temporary occupied territories, as access for humanitarian workers to those territories is non-existent.

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, in its 11 March report (A/HRC/58/67), stated that Russian authorities committed enforced disappearances and torture as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population and pursuant to a coordinated State policy.

President Putin's latest decree, forcing Ukrainians in Russia or in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to leave or to receive Russian documents by

10 September, is yet another example of Russia's ongoing policy of ethnic cleansing, Russification and forced assimilation, aiming to erase the Ukrainian identity and nation. That is in gross violation with international human rights law and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The Baltic States strongly condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. Russia's continued attacks against civilians, including children, humanitarian workers and medical personnel, constitute heinous war crimes. We demand full accountability for the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Launched in April, the Register of Damage Caused by the Aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine enabled work on a compensation mechanism. Furthermore, the European Court of Human Rights is dealing with over 4,000 cases against Russia related to events in Crimea, Donbas and the wider war against Ukraine.

While war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide can be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court, the crime of aggression can be prosecuted only by a special tribunal. The Baltic States have continuously advocated for a strong and effective special tribunal with broad cross-regional support that would be empowered to bring justice for the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

In March, a core group consisting of senior legal experts on Ukraine from 37 States, the EU and the Council of Europe have marked a significant step towards ensuring full accountability by finalizing the technical work on three draft documents necessary for the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, which will now be submitted for political consideration.

Impunity leads to repeated crimes. That must stop. No one from Russia's highest political and military leadership is untouchable. Accountability also forms an integral part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We stand by Ukraine and reiterate our call to Russia to respect its obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and international human rights and humanitarian law. The Baltic States support efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting.

The candidate countries Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, as well as Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Let me begin, as so many others did, by thanking Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for highlighting once again the dramatic humanitarian consequences of Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine. Three main points require particular stress.

First, Russia must uphold international law and cease its missile and drone attacks on Ukraine's civilians, civilian infrastructure and densely populated areas — now. While its President states that Russia can agree to a limited ceasefire, its continued military actions demonstrate the exact contrary. Every day, successive, deliberate attacks and aerial bombardments cause more death and destruction. Its campaign of systematic air strikes against Ukraine's civilians and critical civilian infrastructure violates international humanitarian law and must stop immediately. We have heard from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) about the impact on the most vulnerable households. According to the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission, the attacks were not accidental but were of a widespread

and systematic nature. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has further documented that more than 12,000 civilians were killed over the past three years, more than 600 of them children.

Let me add that the gall displayed by the Russian Federation in this Chamber today in accusing others of a lack of conscience in the face of such brutality is unseemly, unconscionable and, frankly, shameful. For shame.

There can be no impunity for those atrocities. Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression and for other crimes of the utmost gravity under international law.

Secondly full, safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access needs to be ensured. We commend the efforts of OCHA and its humanitarian partners in providing assistance to those in need. The United Nations has repeatedly highlighted the challenge of reaching civilians in areas under temporary Russian occupation. That means that an estimated 1.5 million people are being cut off from humanitarian aid. While it wages a war of aggression, Russia shows no concern for the well-being of civilians in the areas that it temporarily occupies. In accordance with international humanitarian law, it must facilitate the full, safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for all civilians in need.

As is the case for all crises around the world, the European Union and its member States will continue to contribute generously to the United Nations humanitarian response in Ukraine. We call on all nations to step up their support too. The European Union remains committed to supporting repairs, recovery and reconstruction for Ukraine in coordination with its international partners. The Ukraine Recovery Conference in July 2025, to be hosted by Italy, will be important in that context.

Thirdly, the European Union reiterates its support for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. One month ago, the General Assembly sent an overwhelming message, calling on the aggressor to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine. That was what the General Assembly said one month ago.

We welcome all efforts towards reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We welcome the efforts of the United States and Saudi Arabia in hosting the ongoing discussions. The proposal for a ceasefire, if accepted by Russia, can be an important step in that direction. It is now for Russia to show its willingness to achieve peace. The European Union is ready to play its full part in supporting upcoming steps, together with Ukraine and other partners. As we have stressed repeatedly, there can be no negotiations on Ukraine without Ukraine and no negotiations that affect European security without Europe.

In conclusion, I reaffirm the European Union's unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes and as intensely as needed to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which are applicable to all nations.

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

Mr. Miarka (Poland): Poland aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Danish presidency for calling this timely meeting and our appreciation to France and Panama for requesting it and to Assistant Secretary-General Msuya for her presentation.

While many look forward to restoring peace in Ukraine and stability in Europe, the events of last week, recounted moments ago by the representative of Ukraine, cast a dark shadow on those hopes. Reports indicate that Russian forces launched massive attacks against Ukraine, deploying a staggering number of Shahed drones, decoys and ballistic missiles. That demonstrates that Russia regrettably does not seem genuinely interested in ceasing its illegal war against Ukraine, despite growing international calls for peace.

Russia disregards fundamental international norms and principles — a fact tragically evident in its ongoing attacks on Ukraine's civilian population and deliberate targeting of energy and civilian infrastructure. Those actions have resulted in frequent and widespread power and heating outages, leaving millions vulnerable. Poland continues to respond to Ukraine's critical needs on a bilateral basis, including by providing vital equipment and increasing energy exports to help alleviate the suffering caused by the relentless aggression.

The recent political momentum underscores Ukraine's resolve in pursuing meaningful advancement towards peace negotiations. The key ingredient to unlocking a peaceful future, regrettably, is still absent — and that is Russia's genuine and constructive commitment to pursuing a negotiated settlement. It must be more than a mere pause, which will allow the aggressor to rearm and strike again, as it did before, and must instead meet a number of criteria. It must entail the cessation of all attacks on the civilian population. It must be agreed with, and accepted by, all stakeholders — first and foremost Ukraine, but also Europe. It must guarantee Ukraine's independence and sovereignty, enabling the country to freely choose its leaders, control its borders and decide on its future integration aspirations. Addressing root causes is a challenge because they lie squarely within the decision-making processes of Russia, which is repeatedly choosing war over peace and aggression over diplomacy. Perhaps Russia finds it frustrating that neocolonial attempts to rebuild the Soviet empire by force and coercion continue to fail, as they should.

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that Ukraine is not a helpless victim of aggression. Ukraine fights back. Ukraine has allies around the world, including the European Union and Poland. Our commitment to justice and peace will not waver, and our pursuit of a just solution will continue.

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

Mr. Feruță (Romania): I want to start by thanking you, Madam President, for keeping this important topic related to the peace and security of Ukraine on the Security Council's agenda.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU).

I would like to reiterate Romania's support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We share with Ukraine the longest border of an EU member State by land, rivers and sea. We are disappointed that the dialogue efforts and proposals of the past few weeks are yet to be met by deeds. Since the night of 21 March, Russia has launched further massive air attacks — mostly against civilian targets in Ukrainian cities, including Odesa, Zaporizhzhya, Sumy and the Ukrainian capital — that have produced numerous casualties. Just last night, the city port of Mykolayiv was attacked, as was Kryvyi Rih, in the disputed area. All those casualties will be referenced in future reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, just as in previous ones from the past more than three years. However, that cycle of violence can, and should, be discontinued. Romania is of the opinion that any ceasefire must include in its scope and objectives respect for international humanitarian law and the protection of all civilians without discrimination. The path to peace also means bringing dignity to all victims of the war. We welcome the ongoing efforts being made by the United States towards a ceasefire and safe navigation in the Black Sea.

As Romania has always underlined, the Black Sea matters not only to our region but to the whole world. Discussions in Riyadh earlier this week acknowledged that importance, and, as a riparian country, Romania welcomes the prospect of returning to safe and free navigation in the Black Sea. Ensuring security for critical trade routes and supply chains is of the utmost relevance, especially as the needs of grain and food markets worldwide are increasing. My country has been involved in multiple efforts to tackle the food and supply shortages created by the Russian aggression in Ukraine ever since the Black Sea Initiative was still in place. We have informed the Council of that all along. Romania has facilitated the export of more than 70 million tons of goods, including 55 million tons of grains, to ensure the continuity of the global supply chain. At the same time, the European Union created the European solidarity lanes, which made use of Romania's infrastructure, alongside that of other neighbours of Ukraine, to make food products available to the global market.

In conclusion, our long-standing position since day one of the Russian invasion of Ukraine has been very clear: the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace must be in line with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, applicable to all nations.

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

Ms. Kalkku (Finland): I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Finland.

I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for her briefing.

To achieve peace, we must talk about its contours, and we note the ongoing discussions to that end. Ukraine deserves peace — a peace that is comprehensive, just and lasting, based on the rules and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Any other short-term solution risks renewed conflict or aggression elsewhere. The Nordic countries stand ready to support all efforts towards a sustainable peace.

Nothing underlines the need for peace as concretely as the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine. Close to 4 million Ukrainians are displaced internally, and almost 7 million have had to flee their home country. The unlawful deportation of thousands of children by Russia is abhorrent. Almost 13 million people continue to require urgent humanitarian assistance and protection, including children and persons with disabilities. Especially in front-line areas, the limited humanitarian access is making it hard and dangerous for humanitarian workers to deliver life-saving assistance to the people most affected. In the areas occupied by the Russian Federation, more than 1 million vulnerable people remain largely without any humanitarian response. The Nordics remain substantial humanitarian donors to Ukraine and elsewhere. We encourage other donors to maintain or increase their life-saving assistance.

While we talk about peace, Russia has continued its ruthless attacks against civilians and civilian objects in utter disregard for the laws of war. Just two days ago, on Monday, a Russian missile attack injured dozens of civilians and damaged a school and a hospital in the city of Sumy. On Sunday, Russian attacks in Kyiv

killed a father, his 5-year-old daughter and an 80-year-old woman. Such acts unavoidably raise the question whether Russia is genuinely willing to move towards peace or whether it is using the discussions as a mere charade, without giving up the ultimate goal of subjugating Ukraine and its people. Last night, just hours after the agreement on safe navigation had been announced, Russia directed a drone attack on the Ukrainian port city of Mykolayiv. Ukraine has expressed its readiness to immediately enact a 30-day ceasefire. Russia, on the other hand, agreed only to a limited ceasefire with several preconditions. That speaks volumes. Russia seems to continue to choose war while we speak. Across the globe, people continue to suffer from soaring food and fuel prices, as the war continues to disrupt supply chains and destabilize international markets.

It is up to all of us now to defend the international peace architecture, built on the Charter of the United Nations, wherever it is threatened. It is in the interest of all of us to ensure that might does not make right and that internationally recognized borders are not moved through the use of force. The Nordic countries want to underline that every sovereign State must maintain its right to choose its own alliances and its legal defence and security arrangements.

We note the new agreement on safe navigation in the Black Sea, which should be implemented without delay and without additional conditions.

Despite the immeasurable hardship caused by Russia's invasion, Ukraine continues to defend its freedom, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Nordic countries will stand by Ukraine in that endeavour as long as is needed.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Beresford-Hill.

Mr. Beresford-Hill: At the outset, I wish to thank the presidency of Denmark for convening this meeting and for affording the Sovereign Order of Malta the opportunity to contribute to the critical discussion on the deepening humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Just over a month ago, we marked a sombre milestone — three years since the escalation of this devastating conflict. They have been three years of unrelenting suffering, forced displacement and shattered lives and three years in which civilians have endured unspeakable hardship — needless bloodshed, life-altering injuries and the loss of their homes, loved ones and, for many, a sense of hope.

While responding to the present crisis is paramount, we must also look to the future. A cessation of hostilities, however distant, must not find us unprepared. We must recognize that, when the guns are silent, the humanitarian toll will persist. The sheer scale of destruction, the economic devastation and the deep societal fractures will not be undone overnight. Rebuilding shattered communities requires long-term commitment, combined efforts and, above all, an enduring concern for human dignity.

While the scale and conditions are clearly different, it is worth recalling the beginning of the last century, when a war that ended amid retribution and economic humiliation fed the seeds of resentment that, two decades later, led to a conflict of far greater consequence and suffering. We should recall, too, that a phoenix arose out of those ashes. The foresight, commitment and strategic genius of one nation, also caught up in that conflict, led to the Marshall Plan, which secured a prosperous future for nations that had battled each other, while, on the other side of the world, General Douglas MacArthur saw to it that a decimated Japan would reinvent itself as both an ally and an economic powerhouse. The imagination and the skill that created the Bretton Woods system, however much it has now served its purpose, back then made a major contribution to reconstruction, development and the one thing that war-ravaged populations want most: security. It is not too much to ask that

we invoke a similar inspirational spirit of reconciliation when we consider a future Ukraine, at a time when artillery no longer dots the landscape and drones are used for peaceful purposes.

In addressing the transcending humanitarian concerns of the Ukrainian people, the Sovereign Order of Malta wishes to highlight six key areas that we believe must be prioritized, drawing from the first-hand experiences of our operational staff, both Ukrainians and volunteers from other countries, numbering more than 40,000, who have been working on the ground in Ukraine over the past three years.

First, psychological support for those affected by war-related trauma must be both comprehensive and accessible. The invisible wounds of conflict — particularly among children and young adults — will endure long after the fighting subsides. Without sustained intervention, those scars risk becoming lasting barriers to healing, social cohesion and stability. And those children taken from their homes in Ukraine must be returned to their families. To do anything other than that would be absolutely inhumane.

Secondly, the restoration of Ukraine's healthcare system is of paramount importance, requiring not only the reconstruction and effective operation of medical facilities but also the guaranteed availability of medicines, supplies and support. According to our colleagues in Ukraine, the creation of a network of national emergency storage centres will be vital to ensuring that those in need — whether of urgent or of routine care — receive timely and adequate treatment.

Thirdly, the extensive destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure demands a coordinated and sustained rebuilding effort. Beyond simply restoring houses, we must facilitate the safe and dignified return of displaced families — millions of them. That necessitates urban development plans that prioritize sustainability, accessibility and long-term resilience. Essential services — electricity, water and transportation — must be fully reinstated to ensure that communities can function and thrive.

Fourthly, the land must be restored and made habitable, and it must be protected. The detritus of war must be cleared away; destroyed and damaged military vehicles, ammunition still littering the fields and, of paramount importance, the danger of landmines must all be addressed. The international community must redouble its efforts to ensure the safety of nuclear installations, in order to prevent contamination and the dangers that arise as a result of poor maintenance and deliberate damage. The implications of that cannot be stressed enough, because they affect not only the health and welfare of Ukraine and Russia but also those of neighbouring countries.

Fifthly, food and water security must be urgently addressed. Immediate humanitarian interventions are needed to ensure and restore reliable access to basic necessities, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, strategic efforts must be undertaken to revitalize Ukraine's agricultural sector, a cornerstone of its economic recovery and social stability. Ensuring the revival of agribusiness and local food production will be instrumental in preventing prolonged dependency on external aid.

Lastly, education must be at the heart of the recovery effort. Schools are not merely places of learning; they are pillars of normalcy and of hope and are the foundation of a better future. Learning programmes must be widely implemented to facilitate a smooth return to schooling, alongside structured socialization initiatives to help children and young people both to process the trauma they have endured and to reintegrate their lives into a new society. Higher education, whether academic or vocational, is going to be critical in rebuilding a shattered economy. A new generation must learn the importance of turning guns into harvesters, of using critical thinking skills not to outwit the enemy but to outwit climate change and the myriad problems that we are all confronting in a changing world.

In conclusion, the reality is that those measures represent only a small fraction of what is needed. The humanitarian toll on all sides in this war is vast; the road to recovery will be long, and neither will it be easy. A coordinated approach involving local, regional and international actors will be indispensable in ensuring that our collective efforts lead to a sustainable and enduring future, much as occurred 80 years ago after the Second World War. As we reflect on the path ahead, let us recall the words of Pope Francis. At a vigil of prayer for peace in 2013, he said this:

“Can we get out of this spiral of sorrow and death? Can we once more walk and live in the ways of peace? ... I would like for each one of us, from the least to the greatest, including those who are called to govern nations, to respond in one voice: yes, we want peace!”

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.