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President: Mr. Yang (Cameroon)

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

Agenda item 135 (*continued*)

Eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War

The President: The General Assembly will now hold a special solemn meeting in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War, in accordance with resolution 79/272 of 4 March 2025.

I shall now make a statement.

On this eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we reflect on the immense sacrifices made by the millions who fought and died to secure the freedoms we too often take for granted. We remember them, and we honour them. Their courage, resilience and unwavering faith in a better future continue to inspire us. As time passes, these commemorations take on a deeper meaning. Most surviving veterans are now centenarians. The opportunity to hear their voices first-hand grows vanishingly rare. Preserving their stories is not only a tribute to them — it is a moral responsibility for us all. We must ensure that the lessons they leave behind do not fade but rather endure.

The United Nations was built to save succeeding generations from the disasters of war. Its founders were not naive idealists. They were practitioners of statecraft, tested by conflict and forged by history. They had seen the world torn apart, and they resolved to build a framework strong enough to hold it together. When they conceived the Charter of the United Nations — our Organization — they knew that peace would not sustain itself. Peace would require structure. Peace would require vigilance. Above all, it would require shared responsibility. We are all required to build the global peace we desire, to reaffirm faith in human rights, foster social progress and raise standards of life in greater freedom. Those were not abstract ideals. They were, and remain, concrete imperatives.

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Yet today, far too often, we see the principles of the Charter being ignored, undermined or completely violated. As conflict spreads and global peace comes under strain, we must renew our commitment to the Charter's founding ideals. If we fail to do so, we risk once again treading the path that led the world into war and catastrophe. The efforts of the founders of the United Nations and the sacrifices of those who endured and perished in order to deliver us a better world must not be in vain.

I call on the leaders of today to choose dialogue over conflict, diplomacy over escalation, cooperation over division and peace over the absence of peace. We stand at a defining moment not only for this institution but for all humankind. All humankind looks up to the United Nations. The choices we make today will shape the world our children inherit and the legacy we leave for all humankind. Let us choose wisely. Let us choose peace.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we have gathered for a special solemn meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate all victims of the Second World War.

On 9 May, the final act of unconditional surrender was signed in the Berlin suburb of Karlshorst. Nazism was vanquished in its lair, Berlin, which was taken by the Red Army. On 1 May, the red banner of victory was raised over the Reichstag, and on that day, Soviet General Chuikov was approached by the Chief of the General Staff of the German ground troops, who informed him that Hitler had committed suicide in his bunker.

The most tragic page of history had been turned, and the world was saved from plunging into the abyss of racial superiority theory, according to which the value of human life was determined by measuring skulls with the Mollison craniophor. We must not forget that that horrific theory was not a figment of Hitler's imagination — it was born among European intellectuals. It is enough to recall, for instance, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* by the French writer Arthur de Gobineau. That colonial racism, which was embraced by Europeans, was supplemented by the Nazis with radical antisemitism and antislavism. One can only imagine a world where such European "values" would have prevailed. But in fact, that is precisely what happened then. Champions of Nazism and fascism became popular and took power in many European countries. That is why Hitler's march was almost triumphant until it encountered the heroic resistance of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

It should not be forgotten that Hitler enjoyed the sympathy and support of a number of members of the British royal family, and that Italy, Finland and Romania put 700,000 troops at his disposal and fought on Hitler's side, as did a French volunteers legion, Spanish volunteers, the Norwegian SS Legion, the Dutch SS Legion, the Latvian SS Legion, which distinguished itself by its particular cruelty, the Estonian SS Volunteer Legion, the Belgian Volunteer Division and the SS "Denmark" Volunteer Corps, which was incorporated into the German SS "Totenkopf" Division. Ukrainian nationalists also fought on Hitler's side.

In 1941, all anti-fascist forces managed to unite. Ideological opponents — the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain — put episodes of armed confrontation behind them, demonstrated wisdom and stood shoulder-to-shoulder. At the time, the thought of playing ideological games and seeking to equate fascism with communism did not even cross anyone's mind. It was clear to everyone what constituted good and what constituted evil. To have acted otherwise would have been fatal for the whole world. We thank all who were part of the anti-Hitler coalition and we honour the Allies' contribution to victory. In Asia, China spearheaded the fight against Japanese militarism. Evil was defeated, but victory came at the cost of millions of lives. China lost 35 million people in the war, the United States approximately half a million. Serbia organized the largest partisan movement in Europe. Heroes

from Latin America, Asia and Africa waged the struggle for the freedom of peoples. The toll exacted on the Soviet Union stood at 27 million lives, of which 12 million alone were irretrievable military losses. The policy of genocide pursued by the Nazis against the peoples of the Soviet Union claimed millions of civilian lives.

The war aims in the Soviet Union were different to those in Europe. On 12 June 1941, Himmler stated: "The purpose of the campaign against Russia is to reduce the number of Slavs by 30 million." Another laconic and ingenuous statement, attributed to Hermann Göring, the Führer's successor and the Head of the Economic Staff-East, was made in the course of a conversation with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Fascist Italy in November 1941, involving a banal discussion about the starvation for 20 to 30 million Soviet citizens: "It might be necessary to cut some peoples down."

Those in power in the Axis countries viewed the need for genocide of the peoples of the Soviet Union with their inherent pragmatic cynicism. The goal was to extract food from the Black Earth regions, including Ukraine, and to divert them from the so-called "forested areas" — Moscow and St. Petersburg — to Europe. In addition, there were plans to populate the Soviet territories with Germans, which required getting rid of the "aboriginal population". That genocidal plan was documented in the "Economic Policy Directives in the Field of Agriculture", a product of the Economic Staff-East, which was based on the research by Nazi economist Herbert Backe. At the Nuremberg trials, those "directives" were presented by the American side. As United States prosecutor Whitney Harris put it,

"[t]his document discloses, on its face, a studied plan to murder millions of innocent people through starvation. It reveals a programme of premeditated murder of millions of innocent people through starvation. It reveals a programme of premeditated murder on a scale so vast as to stagger the human imagination."

Thus, the terrible tragedy of the siege of Leningrad, which claimed approximately 1 million lives, was no accident or the outcome of besieging the city, but was part of a general premeditated policy of starvation.

Starvation, however, was not the only weapon of genocide. As Hitler said,

"[i]t is a question of a struggle for annihilation ... this war will be very different from the war in the West. In the East, cruelty itself is good for the future."

Guided by that message, the Nazis meted out unprecedented cruelty against the civilian population of the Soviet Union: carpet bombing destroyed 1,740 cities and more than 70,000 villages. More than 6 million buildings were burned or destroyed, and approximately 25 million people were deprived of shelter. The populations of entire settlements were exterminated. It is impossible not to recall the Belarusian village of Khatyn, in which 149 residents, including 75 children, were burned alive.

Two hundred Ukrainian nationalists from the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and its arm, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-UPA), led by Stepan Bandera, were involved in that crime. They also gained notoriety for participating in particularly brutal incidents of the Holocaust, including pogroms in July 1941 in Bender and the shootings of Jews, for example, in Babi Yar near Kyiv and in Sosenki, near the Ukrainian city of Rivne, where 23,000 people were killed. It is impossible not to recall the terrible Volyn massacre perpetrated by UPA members. As a result of that crime, 50,000 to 60,000 Polish civilians lost their lives.

The fate of Soviet prisoners of war was no less horrific: they were starved, often kept outdoors and subjected to medical experiments. In the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp, Soviet prisoners of war were the first victims of the gas chambers. We must not forget the millions of "Ostarbeiters" — citizens of the Soviet Union, who had been forcibly deported to Germany. Such renowned companies as Daimler-Benz, Deutsche Bank, Siemens, Volkswagen, BMW, Bayer and Hugo Boss availed

themselves of that slave labour. Ordinary Germans had no scruples about using slave labour either. They would apply for those people and came to the distribution points, which amounted, in fact, to slave markets in twentieth century Germany. However, none of that broke the Soviet people. Not only did they go to the front, but they also joined partisan detachments. Prisoners of war demonstrated unparalleled courage in fomenting uprisings in the death camps.

No evidence of the horrific Nazi atrocities was needed: they were axiomatic. And yet nowadays, the sacred memory of the heroes and victims of Nazism is under assault from historical revisionism and revanchism. The perverted Nazi idea of dehumanizing representatives of “inferior races” is now being whitewashed, with the proponents of this idea being glorified not only by fringe radicals but also in State policy. For example, the Baltic States are holding marches glorifying Hitler’s henchmen. Both this and other Eastern European countries are demolishing monuments to the heroes who sacrificed their lives in the victory over Nazism. In neighbouring brotherly Ukraine, after the Maidan anti-constitutional coup and years of brainwashing, “Ukraine above all else” is being heard — identical to the Nazi slogan “Deutschland über alles”. Unfortunately, the parallels with the Third Reich do not end there.

All that is taking place against the backdrop of the demolition of monuments to those who fought fascism and the recognition of the likes of Roman Shukhevich, a deputy commanding officer of the Nachtigall Battalion, which reported to the Abwehr, or Stepan Bandera, a Nazi collaborator, as national heroes. We are also witnessing torchlight processions on neo-Nazi commemorative occasions and bans on the Russian language. For example, in Kyiv, the avenue named after General Vatutin — a Soviet general, a hero of the Second World War and the liberator of Ukraine from the Nazis — was renamed Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhevich Avenue.

We will not let the international community forget that Hitler’s followers are not confined to 1945. Nazism is re-emerging and rapidly gaining support. In Europe, the number of radical right-wing movements and adherents is steadily on the rise. They are using modern methods and means, such as social networks and instant messaging, to attract supporters, especially among the young. They even manage to hold rock concerts, organize sports events and give lectures. None of those developments are isolated events, they are systemic. We are closely monitoring the situation and publishing relevant reports. They are trying to prove that honouring Hitler, his followers and his ideology is part of the exercise of the right to the freedom of opinion and expression. And yet in Berlin on 8 and 9 May last year and this year not only was it prohibited to display the Victory Banner and the Ribbon of Saint George and to sing war songs in the vicinity of Soviet war memorials, but it was also forbidden to have decorations, medals and uniforms of victorious soldiers on display, including in photographs of veterans. Moreover, senior European Union officials are threatening participation in the Victory Parade in Moscow with sanctions and urging people to go to Kyiv on that occasion. The question is then: who will be honoured in Kyiv? Will it be the millions of Ukrainians who heroically fought with the Red Army and gave their lives in the fight against fascism or the Nazi henchmen of Bandera and Shukhevych? There is a need for clarity on this issue, as the victims and their executioners cannot be treated equally.

It is noteworthy that those who are refusing to commemorate Victory Day are precisely the States that for a number of years have been preventing the adoption by the General Assembly of a draft resolution, submitted by Russia, on combating the glorification of Nazism. How is it possible to even consider voting against such a draft resolution at the United Nations, an international organization that owes its very name to the self-designation of the member States of the anti-Hitler coalition?

We must remember that the victory not only saved people from suffering and brought freedom, but it also established a new world order, with a central role played by the United Nations, built on the principles of cooperation, the sovereign equality of all States and non-discrimination.

I would not be surprised if there are attempts today to tell an alternative history of the Second World War, in which the feats of Soviet soldiers are replaced by stories about occupiers and communist atrocities. But regardless of what fictions we hear, the only fact that matters is the one the world will always remember: on 9 May 1945, at 12.43 a.m., Hitler's Germany definitively surrendered. We won the victory over Nazism, which will never be denied.

Russia's commitment to preserving the historical truth will remain steadfast. Contrary to what our enemies try to claim, we do not monopolize the victory. We consider it a shared victory, and we pay tribute to all the peoples of the former Soviet Union who contributed to the victory in the Great Patriotic War. All peoples of the Soviet Union contributed to the victory, including Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Moldovans, Balts, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen and Jews, as well as dozens of other nationalities within our huge country. This year, we, together with our allies — Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — submitted for adoption by the General Assembly resolution 79/272 on the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, according to which the victory will be commemorated in this Hall every five years.

I will conclude my statement with the words of Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgy Zhukov, who is also known as the Marshal of Victory. He is precisely the person who, in 1945, accepted the surrender of Nazi Germany.

“With each passing year, we are moving further and further away from the war era. A new generation has come of age. For them, the war is what we remember of it. And there are fewer and fewer participants in these historical events with each passing year. The war will forever remain etched in our hearts, and we will always remember the feat that was achieved by the Soviet people. It was an exceedingly difficult time, but also a very glorious time. A man who survives great trials and is victorious will draw strength from that victory his whole life. That is true for our whole nation. Our victory in the war against fascism, speaking eloquently, was the finest hour of the Soviet people. In those years, we became stronger and gained immense moral capital. Looking back, we will always remember those who sacrificed themselves to defeat the enemy of our homeland.”

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, who will speak on behalf of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Canada and my own country, New Zealand.

As we meet today to mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe, we are reminded that few events have done more to shape the national and international identities of our countries. The values of liberty, tolerance, equality and justice that guided us through the Second World War endure to this day. Those values are shared by people from all walks of life and have shaped the fabric of our modern societies.

We are also reminded that we are all here today in some part owing to the sacrifices that were made by our ancestors during the Second World War.

The Second World War was New Zealand's greatest national military effort to date, with more than 140,000 men and women deployed overseas to fight in fighting formations. More than 1 million Canadians and Newfoundlanders fought in the war with a similar number from Australia. We served in campaigns in Europe, in the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in South-East Asia and the Pacific. We honour our servicemen and servicewomen who bore the ultimate sacrifice in pursuit of essential freedoms and the hope of a better world free from the scourge of war.

The end of the war was a victory against a rising tide of aggression and expansionism that had threatened the world. In the ashes of the Second World War, we built this institution with the Charter of the United Nations at its heart, with its fundamental purpose to uphold international peace and security and to prevent a repeat of the horrors of the Second World War.

The multilateral system established after the war is, as we know, far from perfect. There can be no doubt, however, that it has made the world a safer and more prosperous place, averting and containing conflict and facilitating cooperation and development.

Today our multilateral system is under acute strain, and the world is uncertain and complex — more than has been the case for many decades. It is in that regard that we deeply regret that Russia is now fighting a war of aggression in Europe. Russia's illegal and immoral full-scale invasion of Ukraine is completely inconsistent with the tremendous sacrifice of the Soviet peoples and the enormity of their contribution to the Allies' ultimate victory in 1945.

As we prepare to mark the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, we are reminded that now more than ever we need to work together to uphold the system we built together — a system underpinned by international law and the enduring foundation set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Pact for the Future (resolution 79/1) reinforced our commitment to multilateralism. Now, through the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative, we must seize the opportunity to advance meaningful, lasting reform to ensure our United Nations can meet the challenges in front of us. It is upon us and our efforts in this Hall to ensure that the horrors of the Second World War are never repeated.

Ms. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*spoke in Russian*): Today's meeting of the General Assembly is dedicated to an event of tremendous historical significance — the victory over fascism during the Second World War. That victory united us and laid the foundation for the founding of the United Nations, establishing the bedrock of the system of international security that is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Second World War, which was the most devastating war in the history of humankind, left a deep trace in the destinies of peoples and prompted all of us to draw the main and fundamental lesson, namely, that there must be no third world war. It is absolutely clear that there will be no victors in such a war — only the ruins of human civilization.

Victory in the Second World War was made possible by the unparalleled resilience, courage and unity of all the peoples of the anti-Hitler coalition, by the unimaginable sacrifice of every nation in the fight against the Nazi threat. Turkmenistan also made a worthy contribution to that common victory. From the first days of the war, the Turkmen people rose in defence of peace and justice. The Republic formed fighter battalions, the 87th rifle division, later transformed into the 128th Guards Turkestan Red Banner Mountain rifle division, and the 97th and 98th cavalry divisions. More than 30,000 of the finest sons and daughters of the Turkmen people went to the front.

Of them, 13,000 were awarded orders and medals, 11 became Full Cavaliers of the Order of Glory and 18 were honoured with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The feat of the Turkmen people was evident not only at the front, but also at the rear. The Ashgabat railway transformed into a key front-line railway linking Transcaucasia with the front and the centre of the country. It was used to transport troops, equipment and ammunition to the key Stalingrad direction. The country's economy was rebuilt on military rails. Ammunition, equipment, uniforms and parachute silk were produced. Turkmenistan supplied the front with cotton, grain, meat and other necessary goods. The inhabitants of the Republic actively participated in the establishment of the Defence Fund. During the war years, the women of Turkmenistan contributed more than seven tons of silver and gold to the Defence Fund. Those materials were used to build five tank columns and seven squadrons of combat aircraft. The women of Turkmenistan made a special contribution. Replacing men who left for the front, they took key positions in the economy. By 1945, women accounted for 59 per cent of workers and employees, and more than 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force. They became turners, welders, blacksmiths and miners, all traditionally male professions. That heroism and selflessness epitomized the indomitable spirit of the people of Turkmenistan. Our contribution to the victory includes thousands of heroes with names and millions of nameless people who remain etched in our memory.

Each of us, representing our peoples in the General Assembly Hall, has no right to forget those figures or to forget the lessons of a terrible war. We have an obligation to honour the memory of the victims and to confront new threats by supporting the key role of the United Nations in that process. However, it is not enough just to remember; we must also actively defend the peace that was won at a high price 80 years ago, counter the falsification of history and strengthen respect for the feats of those who liberated the world of that scourge, in order to prevent the revival of Nazism. That is the second great lesson of the war, namely, that its outcome must be defended on a daily basis.

The role of diplomacy in that process is crucial. It is the leaders of States and their wisdom and ability to dialogue that will determine whether the world can avoid repeating the tragedies of the past. The main vector of the foreign policy doctrine of neutral Turkmenistan is to consistently uphold the ideals of peace. In the current conditions of global instability, Turkmenistan's initiative to declare 2025 the International Year of Peace and Trust, enshrined in a General Assembly resolution, directs the joint efforts of the States Members of the United Nations to build and strengthen trust-based relations and promote peaceful political dialogue. That global campaign to strengthen peace and security continues the traditions of the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace in 2023 and the International Year of Peace and Trust in 2021.

Today terrorism, violence and war propaganda still pose a threat to us. Only unity, memory and respect for history can stop them. This meeting and the series of events commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the victory give us that opportunity. This date is a reminder of the price of peace and of the mission that the United Nations has fulfilled for eight decades.

We all need peace. We remember all those who won victory at the cost of their own lives. Eternal memory to them. Low bow to all those who forged victory in the Second World War. Happy Victory Day.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Moncada (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Friends in Defence of the Charter of the United Nations, whose member States join the international community in solemnly commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the historic victory of “We, the Peoples” over Nazism, fascism and militarism in the Second World War.

We take this opportunity to reflect not only on the sacrifices of the past and to honour all victims of that devastating global conflagration, but also on the enduring responsibility of the international community and the United Nations as a whole to uphold the principles that emerged from that pivotal moment in history.

Eighty years ago, the States that declared themselves the United Nations achieved a historic victory. We must therefore not forget the fundamental value of the judgment delivered by the Nuremberg Tribunal and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East in the shaping of the international order based on international law.

As we celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, we should remember all those people from different countries and continents who sacrificed their lives to eliminate Nazism, fascism and militarism. We should remember all those who fell in battle, died of wounds or exhaustion, and all those who were tortured to death in concentration camps in which prisoners were held captive. We must not forget that the murder and ill-treatment of civilian population by the Nazis reached its height in relation to the civilians of the Soviet Union, being a part of the plan to eliminate entire native populations by means of expulsion and annihilation. We therefore acknowledge that those heinous crimes must be regarded as an act of genocide against the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, today’s meeting also affords us a special opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of the millions of people — men, women and children — who contributed to the fight against Nazism through their heroic daily work on the home front and who resisted the Nazi military machine. We also pay tribute to the people in all the war-stricken societies who suffered or lost their lives to famine and disease resulting from the scourge of war. In that context, we also recall that the Second World War had deleterious impacts on many other countries that were not involved in the war and on their peoples, who suffered immensely during those years.

At this critical juncture, and bearing in mind the lessons of history, we are convinced that it is of the utmost importance to reaffirm the central role of multilateralism, as epitomized by the United Nations, which remains the most effective means of tackling today’s complex global challenges and to prevent the recurrence of large-scale armed conflicts. The legacy of the Second World War compels us to renew and deepen international cooperation, grounded in mutual respect, sovereign equality and the inalienable rights of all nations, especially in an era where unilateralism and exceptionalism are re-emerging in new and troubling forms.

We must remind ourselves that the desire “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war” inspired States to establish the United Nations, which for a long time predetermined the development of contemporary international relations and the future of our civilization as a whole. While recent decades have revealed this system to not be perfect, it is important to underscore that it has managed to prevent new global catastrophes, while defining the contemporary world order, aimed at maintaining international peace and security and promoting friendly relations among nations and countries. Nonetheless, there is an urgent need to reform the current unjust international order, with the aim of addressing the persistent inequalities that pose an extraordinary burden on developing countries.

In that vein, our Group of Friends underscores the importance of remembering the lessons of the Second World War and preserving the historic truth. Indeed,

we note that millions of people fought together to rid the world of Nazism, and further note that none of the members of the anti-Hitler coalition ever hesitated to recognize dangerous supremacism, fascism and arrogant exceptionalism as the true and sole enemy. Accordingly, we reject all politically motivated attempts to rewrite the outcomes of the Second World War or to revise the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal and the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

The manipulation of history for political gain constitutes a serious obstacle to international peace and stability, and, more importantly, to reconciliation. Far from being harmless, revisionist narratives dishonour the memory of those who perished, while also fostering division and mistrust among nations. As responsible members of the international community and as peace-loving nations, we must stand firm against such distortions, working collectively to preserve historical truth and to nurture a genuine culture of peace.

The Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations further stresses the importance of upholding the tradition to commemorate anniversaries of the end of the Second World War, as it was established and as it used to be observed in the United Nations. We are convinced that such events should unite us, rather than divide us. Only through the joint efforts of the entire international community can we effectively address challenges and threats that lie ahead.

As we commemorate this milestone in human history, we do not merely pay tribute to the past: we also sound a call to our conscience in the present for the sake of the future generations that we have repeatedly talked about in recent years. The sacrifices made by millions in the struggle against Nazism and fascism compel us to defend the principles for which they gave their lives. These are not abstract ideals, but living commitments: to peace over war, cooperation over domination and sovereignty over subjugation. At this inflection point in history, we need to safeguard what unites us, with the Charter of the United Nations at its core.

Let us therefore not falter in this duty. At a time when new forms of hegemony and coercion threaten to undo the very foundations of the international order built after the Second World War, enshrined in the very tenets of the United Nations Charter, our Group of Friends stands united in defence of truth, justice and that historical treaty that must be a shared symbol. History will judge not only the battles we remember today, but also the courage we show today in safeguarding the peace that was won with so much sacrifice, pain and hope for a better world.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Lambrinidis (European Union): I have the honour of making this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia; the European Economic Area members Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; as well as San Marino align themselves with this statement.

The eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a profoundly tragic chapter in the history of Europe and the world, is a moment for reflection and commemoration. It is the occasion to honour the sacrifices made and to mourn the countless lives lost during and after the War. It is also an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to collaborating with all States Members of the United Nations to ensure a more peaceful, equitable and prosperous future for generations to come — one where the use of force and aggression to subjugate independent nations, where the strong abuse their power to replace democracy with authoritarian rule and where hatred is weaponized to disenfranchise and even to exterminate entire

peoples, is unequivocally condemned and consigned to history by the peaceful force of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

We pay tribute to the historic role of the Allied forces and their sacrifices in the defeat of Nazism. We also recall that the Second World War brought about painful divisions in Europe itself, and that for many Europeans, the end of the war brought not freedom, but further subjugation and more crimes against humanity.

As we reflect on this solemn anniversary, we are confronted with the painful reality that war has returned to the European continent. The EU reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the United Nations Charter, and reaffirms its continued support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We recall the resolutions of the General Assembly, calling for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in line with the United Nations Charter.

To build our common future, we must also be cognizant of how our history informs the present. It is crucial that initiatives commemorating the Second World War remain committed to historical truth and reconciliation. Unfortunately, in this Hall today, we already witnessed a flood of historical distortions, of hateful speech and of divisive rhetoric by the first speaker. We emphasize, in line with the United Nations Charter, that there can be no justification for aggression against and attempted annexation of part of an independent, free and peaceful United Nations Member State. The effort to equate the invasion of Ukraine with the fight against Nazism is the vilest example of the distortion of historic and, frankly, a terrific offence to the memory of the victims of Nazism in the Second World War.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The United Nations Charter was the essential response to the tragic legacy of the Second World War. And so are the Geneva Conventions. We must recall that across continents, conflicts and wars continue to fester, demanding a collective response to guarantee peace and human rights. Eighty years on from the end of the Second World War, we are reminded of the solemn responsibility entrusted to us: to remain true to a collective commitment to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and to ensure that the horrors of the war are never repeated.

The European Union is itself a peace project, created in the aftermath of the Second World War to ensure armed conflict would never again be used as an alternative to dialogue and cooperation. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the universal respect, protection and fulfilment of human rights. We unequivocally condemn all forms of antisemitism, racism, hatred and discrimination, and call for further action to combat those phenomena. Holocaust remembrance is a key element for promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue.

In conclusion, as we honour the memory of those who suffered and perished in the Second World War, let us recommit ourselves to defending the international order based on international law, with the United Nations at its core. Let us promote peace in all its dimensions and reaffirm our determination to promote multilateral solutions based on the United Nations Charter.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tajikistan, who will speak on behalf of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Mr. Hikmat (Tajikistan) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), namely Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, we congratulate the participants in this special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly of the

United Nations on the eightieth anniversary of the victory over Nazism, fascism and militarism during the Second World War.

The peoples of the members of the CIS honour and remember this sacred date. as a symbol of courage, unity and the unique sacrifice made for the sake of peace on earth. The victory won by the forces of the anti-Hitler coalition, with the invaluable contribution of the multinational Soviet population, marked the triumph of humanism over misanthropic ideologies.

Today, our shared responsibility is to preserve the historic memory of the tragic events of those years, and of the deeds of the millions of people who fought and died in the name of freedom and the future. We consider unacceptable any attempts to revise or distort the outcomes of the Second World War and to downplay the roles of the peoples of the States of the CIS and the participants in liberation movements in European countries in the defeat of Nazism.

That principled position was enshrined in a statement adopted by the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on 8 October 2024, addressing the peoples of the commonwealth and the world community on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. Our Heads of State particularly affirmed that we must not forget the principled assessments of the criminal activities of the Nazi leaders, rendered by the Nuremberg Tribunal and confirmed by the United Nations General Assembly. We emphasize that the expulsion and extermination of peaceful populations by the Nazis and their accomplices, established in the rulings of the Tribunal, must be regarded as a genocide of the people of the Soviet Union. Attempts to place equal responsibility for unleashing the war on the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany are immoral and injurious to the memory of those who freed the world of the brown-shirted plague.

We resolutely condemn the attempts to absolve the true perpetrators of the war. In this regard, we urge the global community to strongly oppose the glorification of Nazi, fascist and similar nationalist movements, as well as their followers. At the same time, we call for the condemnation and prosecution of those who insult the memory of the liberator soldiers.

We welcome the General Assembly resolution on combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (resolution 78/190) and express our full commitment to the goals and principles of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

The year 2025 has been declared in the CIS as the year of commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, the year of peace. All States in the CIS are holding commemorative events to ensure the collective memory and promote international cooperation for the advancement of peace. Based on the plan of events to commemorate that anniversary in 2025, in the CIS we have developed national documents with a focus on providing targeted social support and material assistance to veterans and conducting educational programmes and events in order to preserve and pass on the historic memory.

We strongly believe that the preservation of peace and condemning manifestations of fascism, Nazism and militarism is our shared and urgent priority.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

In May 1945, 80 years ago, the guns fell silent in Europe. The war was over, but the continent lay in ruins. From the rubble of that devastation, a new world began to take shape.

The war, unleashed by Nazi Germany, caused immeasurable suffering, in Europe and beyond. That legacy of pain, destruction and loss will forever be tied to my country's name. We carry that burden with humility and a moral responsibility, and we accept it without hesitation.

The United Nations was born out of that catastrophe. And today, in this Hall, on behalf of Germany, I bow my head in remembrance of the millions who perished — men, women, and children from countless nations and communities, both soldiers and civilians alike. We mourn them, we remember them and we ask for forgiveness — knowing full well that the horror inflicted can never be undone.

The crimes of the Nazi regime have no parallel. The murder of 6 million Jews in the Shoah; the war crimes in Eastern Europe; the mass persecution and killings of Roma and Sinti, LGBTQI+ individuals, persons with disabilities, political dissidents, and all those who dared to speak up, or simply be or act different — those atrocities will forever mark our history.

Germany has embraced its responsibility for those crimes and will continue to do so. Our nation's history compels us to keep memory alive — not only through words, but through action. Especially now, as the number of survivors grows ever smaller, the duty of remembrance — and the duty of vigilance — is ours.

Crucially, remembrance must be paired with justice. The Nuremberg trials, held in the immediate aftermath of the war, marked a turning point in international law. For the first time, political and military leaders were held individually accountable for crimes against humanity. Nuremberg laid the foundation for transitional justice and for the development of modern international criminal law. It established the principle that those who commit atrocities cannot count on impunity.

Germany continues to uphold that principle. Today, we stand firmly behind international justice mechanisms — from our strong support for the International Criminal Court to our contributions to special tribunals and efforts to ensure international accountability. We believe that justice is not only a matter of the past, but a pillar of peace, reconciliation and deterrence in our world today.

For my country and its people, the end of the war was a day of liberation. It was a turning point for Germany, spiritually and politically — a call to face our past, not to suppress or shy away from it, and to build a democratic identity rooted in human dignity and human rights. The year 1945 was not just an end, it was a beginning — a beginning of international cooperation, of rules replacing brute force and of nations choosing peace and collaboration over vengeance and confrontation. The decades following 1945 unfolded in ways few could have imagined. France, Poland and our neighbouring nations, which suffered severely under German occupation, are Germany's closest partners and friends today. From a continent reduced to rubble, a peaceful and united Europe began to take shape — committed to democracy, economic integration and collective security. In an act of extraordinary courage and humanity, Israel reached out to Germany only two decades after the Shoah, forging diplomatic relations that have led to 60 years of partnership. In 1973, both German States were admitted to the United Nations as proud Members of the Organization, and in 1990, a reunified Germany returned to the world stage, fully sovereign and supported by the very nations that had once been its enemies.

Those milestones in German history should serve today as a reminder and a message of hope that the deepest trenches can eventually be overcome. Even after the darkest of times, forgiveness, reconciliation and the restoration of trust are possible, if they are grounded in the full and unreserved acknowledgement of the crimes committed. Only on that basis will peace and prosperity become a reality. That is why Germany's commitment to the United Nations and the maintenance of international peace and security is unwavering. "Never again" means never again

alone, never again indifferent, but always vigilant. It means defending the principles of international law, supporting those who face injustice and building bridges across divides. It means standing up together for dignity, humanity and peace. It also means speaking up when historical facts are purposefully distorted or misused for political ends, particularly when such narratives are invoked to justify the use of force against a sovereign State. We must not allow history to be weaponized.

“Never again” is not only a commitment for Germany — it is a universal obligation, and one that binds us all. It is an obligation to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, protect civilian lives and defend the vulnerable, uphold the dignity of every human being and safeguard the principles of the Charter of the United Nations for all, including future generations.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): On this anniversary, as we recall the horrors of the Second World War, when humankind witnessed the most heinous manifestations of violence and hatred and the most basic human rights were violated, we stand today in tribute to the millions of civilian and military victims of the war. One of the most important battles of the war took place on Egyptian soil. It was the battle of the two worlds, which took place in 1942 in north-west Egypt, on the shores of the Mediterranean. According to some estimates, about 20,000 soldiers were killed in the battle, and the land of Egypt continues to hold their remains. Many others were injured. Beyond the estimated loss of human life, the battle left a heavy legacy that has hampered Egypt’s development efforts for decades and claimed the lives of many civilians, with the devastating effects of the landmines that were laid in Egyptian territory on the battlefield. Egypt has made tremendous efforts to remove those mines and promote development in that precious area of Egyptian territory. Those efforts culminated in the official opening of the new city of El Alamein in 2018 as a civilized, cultural and tourist centre for the entire world.

Marking this anniversary is not limited to remembrance and reflection but rather is a renewed call to reflect on our collective responsibilities to prevent the recurrence of such tragedies and to exert all efforts to prevent conflicts from happening again, including by upholding the principles of dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes and by addressing the root causes of conflicts. The world emerged from the Second World War with a sincere will to establish an international system that promotes peace, guarantees human rights and protects peoples from the scourge of occupation and colonialism. That is how the United Nations was born, after the Charter of the United Nations was drawn up, upholding the principles of justice, humanity, equality and respect for human rights. As one of the founding countries of our United Nations, Egypt has always played a pioneering and steadfast role in pursuing the path of peace and advocating for it — a peace based on the principles of truth, justice and balance and a commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations founded on our belief that there is room for everyone in the world and that cooperation to achieve development is the most sustainable and effective option.

Based on our firm commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and as we pay tribute to the victims of the Second World War, we would like to draw attention once again to what the brotherly Palestinian people are witnessing today in the occupied Palestinian territory in Gaza — their ongoing suffering and the grave and horrific violations of international humanitarian law and resolutions of international legitimacy. The violence and destruction in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and the systematic deprivation of the fundamental rights of the brotherly Palestinian people raise deep questions about the extent to which the international community is committed to the principles that we all pledged to uphold after the Second World War.

From this rostrum and in the light of those delicate international circumstances and the unprecedented challenges facing the world, we renew our call to members to

use this eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War as an opportunity to renew our commitment to upholding the foundations of multilateral action and supporting the United Nations towards the implementation of the key roles for which it was created, in particular regarding the maintenance of international peace and security, supporting development efforts, strengthening the axes of humanitarian work and preserving human rights. That should be based on equity, equality, justice and non-discrimination, in a manner that preserves the human dignity of all peoples without exception, selectivity or double standards.

Ms. Shea (United States of America): We are gathered today to commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War — a conflict that left an estimated 60 million dead worldwide and countless wounded, displaced or missing, with civilians comprising the majority. At this time, we remember the singular horror of the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jewish men, women and children were viciously murdered by the genocidal Nazi regime and its collaborators in one of the darkest periods of human history. We also remember the Roma and the Sinti, the peoples of Slavic and Polish ancestry, the persons with disabilities, the Soviet prisoners of war, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the persons targeted on the basis of their sexual orientation and countless other innocent victims.

We must renew our solemn vow to never again allow such atrocities to take place and to declare that “never again” means now, as we confront the worst outbreak of antisemitism in generations. The memory of the Second World War must also be a time to honour the enormous sacrifices of the Allied forces against the Axis Powers, including the service members of the United States military and all of the civilians who joined in the noble cause. The bravery and dignity of those who opposed and resisted those forces are the legacy of all subsequent generations throughout the world. We call upon all members of the international community to reflect upon and confront the lessons of that terrible war, honestly and without distortion. One of the lessons is this: tyranny and aggression will be met with resistance, and justice will prevail in the end.

After the end of Second World War, the principles of the sovereignty and political independence of States and the equal dignity of all individuals were enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to guard succeeding generations from the scourge of war. As we mark the eightieth anniversary of the end of Second World War, let us remember the importance of those principles in serving as the basis upon which we must work together today to build a peaceful, prosperous and just world for all.

Mrs. Lora-Santos (Philippines): This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War — a war that brought untold sorrow to humankind. This commemoration allows us to recall and reflect on the lessons of war and to truly appreciate the need for, and the enduring importance of, enhanced international cooperation, peace and reconciliation amid a rapidly changing world in which mistrust and inequalities persist.

As in many parts of the world, today we honour the millions of people who fought and sacrificed and lost their lives in the Second World War. We pay tribute to our veterans, our brave soldiers and all those who stood firm for freedom and for humanity. Our country and people also suffered gravely as a result of the horrors of the Second World War. Manila, our capital, was the most devastated city in the Pacific and almost unrecognizable after three years of bombardment and fierce urban combat. We lost more than 100,000 Filipino civilian lives alone in securing Manila's freedom, and many more in the north of Manila, when many of our brave soldiers perished as they marched more than 60 miles during the infamous death march. From the ashes of the Second World War came hope and the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The devastation of the war

necessitated the birth of the United Nations. We need to remain seized of the spirit of unity and shared purpose that became the foundation of the United Nations.

As a country deeply familiar with atrocities brought about by war between and among nations, the Philippines has always chosen the path of peace, and it will continue to do so through diplomacy, dialogue and cooperation. As our President has stated, we will always make a stand and will always stand for what is right. We will continue to work with partners and the international community in building bridges, forging solutions, preserving our global commons and strengthening our common commitment to a region and a world governed by rules, not by might, in which the rights of countries — large and small — are respected.

In honour of the victims of the Second World War, we support and stand in solidarity with all efforts to advance global peace. We reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism, to the Charter of the United Nations, to being a responsible member of the international community and to building a more just, peaceful and prosperous world for the current generation and for those to come.

Mr. Song Kim (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): This meeting, convened at a time marking the eightieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations, serves as a significant occasion, reinvigorating the strong will of humankind to prevent the recurrence of the scourge of the Second World War, which brought untold suffering and misery to humankind, and to walk along the road towards independent development and a peaceful environment.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea takes this opportunity to express deep condolences for the tens of millions of innocent people who lost their precious lives during the Second World War and other victims and their bereaved families. At the same time, we pay solemn homage to the world's anti-fascist martyrs, who sacrificed their valuable lives in the fight against Nazi Germany and imperialist Japan.

The end of the Second World War was a historic victory for humankind, won by the joint struggle of the world's anti-fascist democratic forces, with the Soviet Red Army in the lead. It shocked the imperialist system of colonial rule to its foundations and laid the basis for building a new multipolar world. Victory in the world war against fascism is also imbued with the blood of the Korean people, who made sacrifices to defeat Japanese imperialism on the eastern battlefield. Kim Il Sung, the great President and founder of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, organized and waged a 20-year-long anti-Japanese bloody armed struggle, thereby making a contribution to finally defeating Japanese imperialism and hastening victory in the world's anti-fascist war. The exploits of the world's anti-fascist democratic forces, who unsparingly devoted their precious blood and lives to the sacred cause of defending global peace, security, justice and conscience, will be recorded forever in the history of the struggle of humankind for freedom and independence.

The end of the Second World War led to the creation of the conditions for the founding of the United Nations, with multilateralism at its core, and for the establishment of the system of international relations with the fundamental principles of sovereign equality, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs. However, today we are witnessing open moves to glorify and even revive the history of fascism in different parts of the world, arousing deep concern and vigilance on the part of the international community. In some European countries, dangerous, undisguised attempts are being made to destroy monuments to the Soviet Army and to heroize the Nazis.

In particular, the Japanese authorities are engaged in a plot to distort history, while persistently denying their past history of invasion. They are refusing to sincerely apologize and pay compensation for the crime of colonial rule under

Japanese imperialism and are instead preoccupied with the pursuit of their ambition to become a military Power. The reality is that, if worrisome attempts to negate the result of the Second World War continue to be dismissed, we will not be able to defend the fundamental spirit of the Charter of the United Nations of respect for the sovereignty of all countries and nations, thereby making it possible for fascism to be revived.

At this solemn forum to commemorate the victims of the Second World War, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea extends its full support and solidarity to the people and the Government of Russia in their efforts to safeguard their sovereignty and legitimate security interests against neo-Nazism.

And in the name of the 1 million Korean people massacred, the 8.4 million victims who were forcibly drafted and the 200,000 sexual slaves of the Japanese army, we strongly urge Japan to fully acknowledge, sincerely apologize for and provide thorough compensation for its past crime no later than this year, which marks the eightieth anniversary of its defeat.

In conclusion, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will, in the future too, fulfil its responsibility and role in firmly safeguarding peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in North-East Asia and in the rest of the world, with a view to ensuring that the tragedy of the Second World War is not repeated.

Mr. Evseenko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The Second World War was the largest and bloodiest conflict in the history of humankind.

The significance and tragedy of that global conflict has been so great for the people of my country that today, 80 years later, more than 90 per cent of the residents of Belarus consider it one of the most important events in the history of our State. That is why Belarus responsibly and proudly sponsored resolution 79/272, which requests the holding of a special commemorative meeting of the General Assembly. We are grateful to all States for supporting that important commemorative initiative.

Following the Second World War, Belarus was recognized as the republic of the Soviet Union that had suffered the most and the first to suffer the strike. The war and the period of Nazi occupation caused irreparable damage to Belarus. Nazis and their henchmen destroyed at least 12,300 of our villages, of which 288 were burned to the ground along with their inhabitants and were never revived after the war. Out of 270 towns, 209 were destroyed.

According to preliminary estimates alone, the damage to Belarus caused by Nazi criminals during the war years exceeds \$2.4 trillion, and that does not take into account the value of the cultural property that was removed from the country and new information about affected communities. Belarus has not received just or commensurate compensation for the damage caused to its country and, most importantly, to its people — if the very concept of compensation can be deemed appropriate under such circumstances.

The people of Belarus during the Second World War were subjected to all forms of Nazi genocide, which claimed the lives of one third of the residents of our country. On the territory of Belarus, the Nazis organized more than 570 death camps for the mass extermination of people. The forcible removal of adults and children for labour exploitation and de facto slavery was widely practiced, of which there were more than 380,000 victims.

No fewer than 187 major punitive operations against the civilian population of Belarus have been documented, including weekly raids over the course of four years. In exterminating Belarusians, the Nazis had no regard for the age or gender of the victims. It was fascism in its most inhumane form and on a horrific scale.

The war did not bypass a single family in Belarus. Every Belarusian family has stories and relics associated with that fateful event for the whole nation, including posthumously awarded medals, letters charred from the front lines, black-and-white photos with heartfelt words written on the back and death notices. That is why Victory Day, commemorated by Belarus every year to mark the liberation from Nazi occupation, is a special holiday for us, one that, as the post-war song goes, is commemorated with tears in our eyes.

We are proud that Belarusians made an invaluable contribution to the defeat of Nazism. Almost 1.5 million Belarusians, men and women, fought unremittingly on the front in the ranks of the Red Army and in partisan detachments, sacrificing their lives and fates for freedom and peace. Millions of home front workers and medical workers on the front provided the fighters with vital and invaluable support.

Therefore, we always pay special tribute to war veterans, the living witnesses and direct participants in those events, the guardians of the memory and the truth of the tragedy that took place. Today in Belarus there are a little more than 800 veterans and approximately 6,000 victims of the war. We honour their achievement and thank them for the victory and for securing peace.

Our country created a system of social support and assistance for participants in and victims of the Second World War, which is constantly being fine-tuned. A week ago, on 1 May, there entered into force an updated law on veterans, which establishes additional measures to provide support to veterans and victims of war, including a significant increase in pensions, free medicine, means of social rehabilitation and health resort treatments.

We honour and remember all those who are no longer alive. The heroism and feats of Konstantin Zaslonov, Vera Kharuzhaya, Vasily Korzh, Zinaida Portnova, Marat Kazei, Nikolay Goyshik, Petr Miroshnichenko and hundreds of thousands of known and unknown heroes will forever remain etched in our memory. Their names and legacies are immortalized in the names of streets and schools and on numerous monuments. In total, more than 8,500 monuments to the heroes and victims of the Second World War, as well as to the victims of the Holocaust, which took place in parallel with the genocide of the Belarusian people, have been created in our country over the past 80 years. They include memorial sites, military cemeteries, monuments, obelisks, memorial plaques, alleys and memorial parks.

Over the past five years, a number of important steps have been taken at the national level to memorialize the victims of the war and preserve historical truth and memory. The Law on the Genocide of the Belarusian People, which is aimed at preventing the rehabilitation of Nazism and attempts to falsify history, countering neo-Nazi manifestations in modern Belarusian society, was adopted and the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus was updated to include provisions on the preservation of the historical truth and memory of the Great Patriotic War and of the mass heroism of the people.

In 2025, Belarus is completing the implementation of the five-year State programme on perpetuating the memory of those who died defending the homeland, which is aimed at preserving the military-historical heritage of the Belarusian people, providing civic and patriotic education and ensuring the implementation of international agreements on military memorials.

It is clear that the preservation of historical memory is possible only if it is passed down from generation to generation with the active involvement of young people. The topics of the Second World War and its victims are included in all academic curricula in Belarus. New generations must remember the lessons of the past to prevent the recurrence of such a tragedy in the future.

The Second World War was not only a struggle of peoples against an existential threat, but it was also a triumph of allies, unparalleled heroism and mutual support of peoples in the face of danger. The anti-Hitler coalition united the efforts of countries with different political systems, cultural traditions and worldviews for the sake of a greater goal — saving the world from evil. And that solidarity, that ability to set aside differences for the common good, should serve as a lesson for us today.

Of course, in current realities, such a level of cooperation seems unimaginable. Today, when attempts are being made to justify and whitewash the Nazis and their henchmen, to rewrite history, to erase inconvenient countries' achievements and to draw new dividing lines for the sake of unconventional politicians and their short-term interests, Belarus firmly and resolutely stands for the preservation of historical truth and constructive cooperation.

In the name of the memory of our ancestors, we must move away from confrontation and prejudice, look for ways and opportunities to engage in dialogue and cooperation, promote technological progress and trade, share experiences and help one another. Only then will we be able to fulfil the pledge enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to form a community of truly united nations.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): There are few nations in the world for which the commemoration of the Second World War bears as profound historical and emotional a weight as it does for Poland. For us, this is not a symbolic exercise — it is a moment to confront painful memories, to pay our respects to those who suffered and resisted tyranny and to reaffirm our responsibilities.

Poland was the first victim of the Second World War, attacked by Nazi Germany on 1 September 1939 and then by the Soviet Union on 17 September of the same year. That came about as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, aimed at the partition of Central Europe, including Poland, which was a clear breach of the fundamentals of international law. The two coordinated acts of aggression marked the beginning of one of the darkest periods in Polish history and started the war and the suffering of all humankind.

For Poland, the Second World War brought devastation on a scale that is difficult to comprehend. Nearly 6 million of our citizens — approximately 17 per cent of our pre-war population — were killed. It was the highest proportional loss of any country in Europe. Many of them were Polish Jews, who lost their lives in the Holocaust.

The victims included those who died in battle, but far more were civilians: women, children and the elderly — deliberately targeted, deported, starved, tortured and murdered. They perished in Nazi Germany's extermination camps, in forced labour and mass executions, in Soviet gulags and persecutions, among which we particularly remember the Katyn massacre of thousands of Polish military and police officers, border guards and intelligentsia prisoners of war. Countless victims suffered as a result of pseudo-medical experiments, sexual violence, forced resettlement and the kidnapping of children. Those were not incidental atrocities; they were systematic tools of terror committed in the occupied territories of Poland. It is our duty to ensure that they will never be forgotten.

The Polish Government never collaborated with the occupants, or did the Polish citizens ever give up on their desire for freedom. On the contrary, brave Polish soldiers were fighting the aggressor all across the world, on the Eastern and Western Fronts, together with the Allied armies. Throughout the war, Poles heroically stood up to violence and subjugation by joining uprisings, most notably the Warsaw uprising and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Today we pay tribute to their heroism.

Thanks to that fight, Poland survived the war, but Polish citizens did not get the chance to choose their future freely. The end of the war in 1945 did not bring freedom to Poland or to many Central and Eastern European countries. Instead, it brought another form of oppression: Soviet domination behind the Iron Curtain, marked by economic exploitation, political persecution, torture and relentless repression.

There is a very telling story associated with that. Polish representatives were not allowed to take part in the San Francisco Conference in 1945 because of the Soviet refusal to allow them. A world-famous Polish pianist, Artur Rubinstein, who was performing during that event, saw that the Polish flag was missing. He said,

“In this hall, where the great nations have gathered to make this world a better place, I do not see the flag of Poland, on behalf of which this cruel war was waged. And so now I will play the Polish national anthem”.

And so he did.

We recall the crimes committed during the Second World War not to fuel hatred, but to uphold the truth. The truth is a foundation for justice and for peace. That historical experience shapes our deep and unwavering commitment to upholding international law and the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. As a founding Member of this Organization, Poland remains determined, in the words of the Charter, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. That determination is not a historical relic. Yet again, nowadays, peace in Europe is overshadowed by the unprovoked, brutal war of aggression waged by the Russian Federation against Ukraine, proving that peace is a living imperative. Europe is being confronted with a war started by a regime that is seeking to redraw borders by force again. Once again, civilians, including children, are the principal victims. We must call that war what it is — a neo-imperial campaign of conquest — and we must respond with unity, resolve and truth.

Facing that and remembering the victims of the Second World War, Poland calls on all States Members of the United Nations to stand by the principles upon which the Organization was founded: the right of peoples to self-determination and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We cannot allow any aggression to be normalized.

Peace and reconciliation are essential. But they cannot be built on false equivalence or on forgetting. The Latin origin of the word *reconciliāre* means “to make good again” — to restore what is broken. That restoration requires both accountability and reparation. It requires the courage to speak the truth and the will to ensure that those who commit war crimes are held responsible. Only then can we honour the victims of the past — not just with words, but with actions. Only then can we fulfil the Charter’s promise of peace, justice and human dignity for all. Let us ensure that the sacrifices of those who perished in the Second World War were not in vain. Let us ensure that our generation, faced with its own tests, does not fail the cause of peace.

Ms. Hayovyshyn (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Today we gather in the General Assembly Hall in solemn remembrance of all the victims of the Second World War, one of the darkest chapters in human history.

To our deepest regret, on Monday, this very General Assembly Hall was used shamefully by the Russian Federation for a so-called commemoration concert of victims of the Second World War, an event which, in reality, served as a vehicle for spreading Russian propaganda about the so-called “Great Patriotic War”. It resembled nothing more than a dance on graves. And all of that occurred at a time when the international community united to pay tribute to the millions who gave their lives for peace, freedom and dignity. That was a stark example of how the

Russian Federation commemorates the victims of the Second World War — with blatant moral disregard for tragedy. It glorifies a painful past and turns remembrance into a display of cynical celebration amid suffering and loss, ultimately serving as a tool for ideological manipulation and political propaganda. The memory of millions must not be defiled by tolerating the Soviet Russian “Great Patriotic” lie. This is about memory, not manipulation. It is about peace, not war. Again, I must emphasize that it was a disrespectful performance — a true dance on graves — held in the very heart of the United Nations.

Eighty years ago, nations across the globe united to confront evil. At the staggering cost of tens of millions of lives, the war was brought to an end, and the foundations for lasting peace and international cooperation were laid. From that devastation, the vision of the United Nations emerged — first in the 1942 Declaration by United Nations, and then with the founding of this Organization.

Ukraine was among the nations most devastated by the Second World War, suffering brutal oppression from the very outset, when totalitarian regimes in Berlin and Moscow jointly invaded Poland in 1939. We must never forget that the Soviet Union collaborated with Nazi Germany at the very start of the war. When that alliance collapsed in 1941, Ukraine bore the full weight of Nazi occupation, becoming a zone of terror, forced labour and mass murder. And that oppression of Ukrainian people continued during Soviet times.

The front swept across Ukraine’s territory twice. At least 8 million Ukrainians died — 5 million civilians and 3 million soldiers. Among the victims on Ukrainian soil were 1.5 million Jews murdered during the Holocaust — approximately a quarter of all European Jews killed during the Shoah.

The contribution of every nation that fought against Nazism must be acknowledged. My country’s role in defeating Nazism is undeniable. More than 6 million Ukrainians fought in the ranks of the Red Army, while hundreds of thousands more joined resistance movements and the armed forces of the Allies of the anti-Hitler coalition. This great victory — and the peace and freedom of Europe — were won with great Ukrainian sacrifice. That is why we categorically reject Moscow’s cynicism in attempting to appropriate this historic achievement to justify aggression against our State and our people.

We honour the memory of all those who fought and perished. Their sacrifice is an inseparable part of our national history and identity. We couple this tribute with an unequivocal condemnation of Nazism and all forms of totalitarianism. Fuelled by hatred and propaganda, the Nazi regime inflicted genocide, aggression and tyranny on an unimaginable scale. Today we must be equally resolute in standing against any attempt to revive or justify such ideologies.

Tragically, the solemn promise of never again remains unfulfilled. Since 1945, the world has witnessed new wars and atrocities. Today, Europe faces its most brutal war of aggression since the end of the Second World War. While attempting to monopolize the memory of victory over Nazism, the Russian Federation has, since 2014, waged a full-scale war against Ukraine — committing the very crimes it once claimed to oppose. Just as the Nazis dehumanized their victims, Russia is now dehumanizing Ukrainians under the false and cynical pretext of denazification.

For over three years, Russia has carried out widespread atrocities: relentless missile strikes on residential areas and civilian infrastructure, executions of prisoners of war, systematic torture and the forcible deportation of more than 19,500 Ukrainian children — acts that meet the legal definition of genocide. The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Putin in connection with those crimes.

By weaponizing the language of anti-Nazism, Russia seeks to justify its own war crimes and crimes against humanity. As we commemorate the victims of the Second World War, Russian missiles and drones continue to strike Ukrainian homes, hospitals and schools — killing civilians, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. We must collectively prevent all those who manipulate history, appropriate our collective victory and justify aggression and crimes.

On this day of remembrance, let us not only reflect on the past, but act with resolve in the present. The sacrifices made 80 years ago must not be betrayed. We call on all Member States to strengthen their collective efforts to defend the Charter of the United Nations and to ensure that justice, accountability and lasting peace prevail — in Ukraine and worldwide. Only through unity and unwavering support for those under attack can we truly honour the memory of all victims of the Second World War — and ensure that the promise of never again becomes our reality.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): Today we remember the enormous contributions and sacrifices made and honour the lives lost in pursuit of peace and security 80 years ago. Allied forces, united in their mission to liberate Europe from Nazi oppression, were victorious.

But we must never forget the tragic human cost of the Second World War — more than 70 million lives lost around the world. And as the world wars begin to fade from living memory, we must ensure the stories of those who lived through and fought in them are remembered by generations to come. This Organization was founded in the wake of conflict to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, underpinned by a charter that united the world with the aim of maintaining international peace and security, reaffirming our shared faith in human rights and promoting development. The United Kingdom remains deeply committed to those principles and to the Charter of the United Nations. In the Organization's eightieth year, our shared mission is more important than ever. The world faces the highest number of conflicts globally since the Organization's inception. The human costs are rising. In Europe, security is once again threatened by blatant disrespect for the principles of sovereign equality of States and respect for territorial integrity. Those principles matter for all States.

My grandfather served as a British Army officer in France and in Italy during the Second World War. And decades later, even at the height of the cold war, he spoke warmly of the Soviet forces he had fought alongside to defeat fascism. Russia's claims that the Ukrainian Government is akin to the regime of German Nazis is false and malicious propaganda that insults the memory of the Soviet forces who fought and died during the Second World War. We were called here today for one solemn purpose: to commemorate the victims of the Second World War. The fact that Russia sees fit to use this meeting to peddle blatant disinformation is shameful. But it will not distract us. As my Prime Minister said, this is a time to celebrate hard-won peace, honour the memory of those who lost their lives and remember the sacrifices made by so many to secure our freedom. The United Kingdom will continue to pay tribute to the victims of war by pressing for just and lasting peace in response to conflicts around the world. As we join together today, we encourage all Member States to consider this anniversary a stark reminder that peace cannot be taken for granted. We must all redouble our efforts to bring about the peace and security that the people of the world need and deserve.

Mr. Musayev (Azerbaijan): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in emphasizing the importance of this solemn meeting of the General Assembly. Today we come together to remember one of the most tragic and defining chapters in history — the Second World War — and to honour the immense sacrifices made in the name of peace, freedom and human dignity. The Second World War brought untold sorrow to humankind. Its scale, devastation and loss of life were unprecedented.

Tens of millions perished, entire cities were reduced to ruins, and generations were marked by grief. The horrors of the war and the memory of its countless victims must never be forgotten. This commemoration offers us a profound opportunity to reflect on our shared past. It reminds us of the resilience of humankind, the dangers of division and hatred, and the enduring importance of unity in the face of existential threats. It is a moment to pay tribute to those who gave their lives, and to recognize the nations and peoples whose courage shaped the victory over fascism.

The Second World War touched every continent and every nation and my country, Azerbaijan, was no exception. The war left its mark on every Azerbaijani family. Nearly 700,000 of our sons and daughters were mobilized to the front, out of the 3.4 million total population of Azerbaijan at the time. More than 350,000 made the ultimate sacrifice.

The victory was achieved not only on the battlefield, but also through unbreakable will and dedication of the home front. Azerbaijan played a pivotal role in supplying the wartime economy. The oil workers in our capital, Baku, toiled day and night, producing over 80 per cent of the crude oil and 96 per cent of the lubricants used by the army. More than 130 types of military equipment, armaments and ammunition were manufactured in Azerbaijan during the war.

Our people also opened their homes and hearts to those in need and provided vital humanitarian support. Forty-one military hospitals operated in Baku alone, in which more than 440,000 wounded soldiers received medical care.

The desire to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war led to the establishment of the United Nations and the development of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The creation of multinational judicial institutions to prosecute and punish war crimes underscored the potential of justice when backed by political will.

The lessons of the Second World War continue to shape our world today, particularly as tensions rise, old conflicts resurface or new ones emerge and international law and customs are eroded. If international law and the rule of law are to mean anything, and it is indeed so — judging at least by the statements and discussions that the walls in this very Hall hear almost daily — then selectivity and double standards must have no place in matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the promotion of human rights and justice.

As we commemorate this anniversary and all victims, we must reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and strengthen our resolve to prevent and settle conflicts, end impunity for serious offences, confront disinformation, foster cooperation and build a future grounded in peace, justice and mutual respect.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the convening of this special meeting of the General Assembly. On the eightieth anniversary of the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War, we deeply mourn the innocent victims of the war and pay our highest tribute to the heroes who dedicated their precious lives to that victory and to the cause of peace, civilization and progress for all humanity.

Eighty years ago, the people of the world, through a bloody and arduous struggle, completely defeated fascism, achieving a monumental victory in which justice triumphed over evil, light over darkness and the progressive over the reactionary. As the primary eastern theatre of the war, China endured enormous casualties, which exceeded 35 million. By holding back the main forces of Japanese militarism, China not only secured its own survival and national salvation but also provided

strong support to the resistance forces in Europe and the Pacific, making an indelible contribution to the victory in the World Anti-Fascist War.

The victory in the Second World War ushered in a new era of peace and development. Eighty years later, the world has entered a new period of turbulence and change, with unilateralism on the rise and bullying running rampant. We must seize the opportunity presented by the eightieth anniversary of the victory in the Second World War to learn from history, reaffirm our original aspirations and commitments, shoulder the responsibilities of our time and forge a bright future.

First, we must jointly promote a correct understanding of the history of the Second World War. Remembering history does not constitute hatred, but better cherishes the present and shapes the future. Only with a correct understanding of history can we fulfil the noble ideal enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”. Any scheme or action seeking to downplay, deny or distort the history of the Second World War, and any rhetoric that glorifies wars of aggression and colonial rule, is tantamount to a mockery of history and an affront to human conscience, and will surely forfeit the trust of the global community.

Secondly, we must jointly safeguard the victory in the Second World War. In the aftermath of that immense catastrophe, the international community joined hands to establish the United Nations and formulate the United Nations Charter, laying the cornerstone of the modern international order and establishing the basic norms governing international relations. Such concepts as sovereign equality, non-interference and the peaceful settlement of disputes have gradually taken root in the hearts of the people. We must firmly uphold the United Nations-centred international system, the international order based on international law and the rules-based multilateral trading system, and unequivocally say no to all forms of power politics and bullying.

Thirdly, we must jointly uphold the authority and status of the United Nations. The United Nations has been instrumental in maintaining world peace and promoting common development. That said, the United Nations needs to keep pace with the times through continuous reform and improvement. The more volatile the global landscape, the greater the need for international solidarity to support the central role of the United Nations in international affairs. Certain countries treat the United Nations as something they can use when it suits them and discard when it does not. They wilfully withdraw from agreements and organizations, default on contribution payments and cut funding in an attempt to place their narrow interests over the collective global good. Such practices are deeply unpopular and are ultimately doomed to failure.

History may have its twists and turns, but it always moves forward. Bearing the torch, defending peace and staying on the right course is the best tribute to those who have fallen for our cause. China stands ready to work with all Member States to practice true multilateralism, cement the foundation of world peace and development and jointly build a community with a shared future for humankind.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): Today we honour the memory of the millions who perished in the Second World War — a cataclysm that reshaped humankind’s conscience. From its ashes, the United Nations was born, entrusted with the mission to ensure peace, prevent global conflict and protect future generations. As we mark the eightieth anniversary of both the war’s end and the founding of the Organization, we reflect on the enduring lessons of that tragedy — the consequences of unchecked aggression, ideological extremism and disunity among nations. Those lessons call on us to choose dialogue over conflict, cooperation over isolation and development

over destruction. Peace demands an unwavering commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful means and diplomacy.

For Kazakhstan, this day carries profound significance. More than 1.2 million Kazakh sons and daughters fought in the war alongside other nationalities, and half never returned. Our nation endured immense sacrifice, and no family was untouched. Our home front endured unimaginable hardship. Factories fuelled the allied effort, and our people — not having enough food themselves — sheltered more than 1 million refugees, sharing every last bit of what they had. Every nine out of 10 bullets produced were made here. Kazakhstan became a symbol of resilience, unity and solidarity. Today Kazakhstan stands not only as a land of sacrifice but a champion of peace. We renounced the world's fourth-largest nuclear arsenal and established the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, and we promote multilateralism through initiatives such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Eight decades later, the victims we honour compel us to strengthen the United Nations, reject force in international affairs and uphold dignity, justice and cooperation. Peace is more than the absence of war — it is political stability, economic development and multifaceted cooperation. As the Kazakh saying goes, a tree with strong roots withstands the storm. Therefore, let the lessons of history be our roots and let our commitment to peace be the legacy we uphold.

Mr. Hovhannisyan (Armenia): Today, as we mark the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War — the darkest chapter of the history of humankind — we gather in solemn gratitude to honour the heroes — men and women alike — whose courage, sacrifice and sense of duty shaped the course of history. We also commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations and its Charter, which laid the foundation of the global order, anchored in international law. It is our moral duty to remember and pay tribute to all those who bore unimaginable losses with dignity and resolve. Their lasting legacy is the freedom we enjoy and the liberties we cherish. The Armenian people paid a heavy price in the victory. Nearly 600,000 Armenians took part in the war, and more than half never returned. Among them were four marshals, an admiral of the fleet and sixty generals. Thousands of our diaspora compatriots served valiantly in allied forces worldwide. The legendary resistance fighter Missak Manouchian, now laid to rest in France's Pantheon, stands as a powerful symbol of that sacrifice. We also pay tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations — including Armenians — who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust, keeping the flame of humanity alive in its darkest hour.

Eight decades later, the international community continues to face the growing volume and severity of conflicts, utter disregard for international law, destabilizing military build-up and gross violations of human rights, as well as racism, xenophobia and hate on ethnic and religious grounds. We resolutely condemn any manifestation of anti-Armenian hatred in the region, including the deliberate destruction and desecration of monuments, memorials and museums dedicated to the contribution of the Armenian people to the victory in the Second World War. In the light of those challenges, we stand at a pivotal moment in history, where the determination of the international community to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war requires renewed global resolve. The international community should resolutely respond to the use of force as a means for conflict resolution. It is through their commitment to the principles of the peaceful resolution of disputes and upholding human rights for all that Member States can collectively address emerging threats to peace and security.

I would like to reiterate Armenia's strong determination to contribute to the efforts aimed at strengthening the multilateral system, based on international law and the shared values of freedom, justice and human rights.

Mr. Danon (Israel): It is symbolic that we gather here today in this Hall of nations to remember and honour the victims of the Second World War. This is not only a commemoration of the past — it is a warning to the present, and it must be a call to action for the future. Too often, the story of the Holocaust is told from the moment the gates of Auschwitz opened, but that is not where it began. The Holocaust did not start in the gas chambers. It did not begin with ghettos or deportation trains. No, it began with words, with lies, with the slow, steady normalization of Jew hatred. It was not gas chambers that laid the foundation of the Holocaust — it was ideology and centuries of antisemitism repackaged by the Nazi regime into a campaign of extermination. Long before there were concentration camps, there were insults. Before Kristallnacht, there was libel. Before the 6 million were murdered, they were dehumanized. The ground was fertile, and the hatred was ancient. The world had seen it before, but it looked away, and that is what we must not do again.

The Jewish people have not forgotten. We carry the memory of the Holocaust in our bones, in our blood, in our families. As Israel's Ambassador, I stand here to speak not only for the memory of the 6 million, but for the mission they passed on to us to ensure that what happened once will never happen again. But I must say that hate is again gaining momentum. Today, in 2025, we are witnessing an explosion of antisemitism that is impossible to ignore and harder still to bear. Synagogues are being attacked. Jewish students are being hunted across campuses. Social media is being flooded with blood libel. Swastikas are being spray painted on playgrounds. Jewish people are being told that their very identity is cause for shame. In the wake of 7 October 2023, Jews were once again slaughtered in their homes — babies, mothers, entire families. We did not see universal condemnation, but rather justification. We did not see global solidarity, but silence, or worse still, even celebration. What are we to make of a world that claims to remember the Holocaust but refuses to recognize antisemitism today? Have we learned nothing? When terrorists filmed their massacres, paraded dead kidnapped children through the streets and then called it "resistance" and the world justified it, what lesson from the Second World War was truly learned? When Jewish grief is questioned, when Jewish trauma is dismissed, when Jewish life is treated as negotiable, what does remembrance really achieve? When the world allows hatred of Jews to fester, Jews are murdered. That is a fact. That is history. That is why we cannot separate remembrance from responsibility. That is why I urge all Member States to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. As a nation born from the ashes of the Holocaust, a nation of which our murdered grandparents could only dream, we do not take this task lightly. We will continue to educate. We will continue to speak the truth. We will call out antisemitism, even when it comes dressed in the language of human rights, because antisemitism has evolved. It no longer always wears a swastika; sometimes it wears a suit. Sometimes it waves a flag and, too often, it is granted a platform, even in this very institution, even in this very Hall.

Nowhere is that more apparent than in the Islamic Republic of Iran — the world's leading State sponsor of Holocaust denial. Its leaders have not only questioned the Holocaust, but they have openly mocked the victims. While denying the murder of 6 million Jews, they dream of doing it again. Iran's Supreme Leader has repeatedly and proudly called for the destruction of the State of Israel, home to more than 7 million Jews. Iran is not alone, having outsourced this genocidal agenda to its terrorist proxies. They are instruments of Iran's sick mission — a mission inherited from the Nazis to wipe the Jewish people and a Member State of the United Nations from the Earth. Look at the Houthis in Yemen. From hundreds of kilometres away, they fire ballistic missiles at Israeli population centres simply out of hatred of Jews. We have no border with them. We have no conflict with them. It is pure hate.

But, unlike in the Holocaust, the Jewish people are no longer defenceless. Today we can rise and strike back. We will do whatever we deem necessary to prevent a

second Holocaust — whatever it takes. That is why this commemoration matters, because we need more courage to confront the evil that remains and that is hoping to drag us backwards. Today, as we remember the victims of the Second World War, let us remember all of them: the soldiers who fought evil, the civilians caught in the crossfire, the nations that paid the price and the Jewish people, who bore the worst of humankind's failure to stand up in time. If the United Nations is to honour the legacy of the Second World War II, it cannot do so selectively. It must confront antisemitism wherever it arises. It must call it out in every forum, every resolution and every gathering. It must stand with the Jewish people, not only when it is easy, but also when it is hard. Many here and many around the world proclaim "never again". Now is the time for that proclamation to finally become action. Let it be our policy. Let it be the promise that, this time, the world will not be silent.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): Allow me first to thank the President for convening this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly, as this year marks the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

I would like to pay my deepest tribute to all the victims of the War who made a great sacrifice for humankind.

On this sombre occasion, I recall that the United Nations was established 80 years ago in order "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind", as stated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. It also stipulates that this body is built to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights and human dignity, to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. On the basis of that founding philosophy, the United Nations and its Member States have made relentless efforts, allowing the institution to play an indispensable role in maintaining international peace and security and in promoting respect for international law.

Yet, as we turn our eyes to the world today, division and confrontations continue to exist. While more crises are erupting in various parts of the world, conflicts, hunger and humanitarian crises profoundly threaten the human dignity of every person. Faced with those significant challenges, Member States gathered at the Summit of the Future in September last year. I commend the adoption of the Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), aimed at protecting the needs and interests of present and future generations. The Pact covers a broad range of issues, including human dignity and the rule of law among others, and pledges a new beginning in multilateralism, with the United Nations playing a central role.

For the United Nations to respond effectively to the challenges of our time, it, including the Security Council, needs to reform. In that endeavour, the importance of the unity of the international community cannot be overstated, especially as we celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations this year.

In reflecting upon the past eight decades, Japan has walked the path of a peace-loving nation. The current Administration has upheld the positions of previous Cabinets on history in their entirety, including their Prime Ministers' statements, and will continue to do so. Today freedom, democracy and fundamental human rights are the unshakeable foundations of every decision and action that Japan takes. Concurrently, Japan has made serious efforts to promote the rule of law in international society, while stressing the importance of full compliance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. We are proud of our endeavour as part of collective global efforts towards international peace and prosperity, and we will spare no effort in that pursuit. Looking towards the future,

Japan will continue to work hand in hand with the international community and the United Nations so as to tackle today's mounting challenges.

To realize a world without nuclear weapons, Japan has steadily advanced efforts towards nuclear disarmament. This year marks the eightieth year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi attended and actively contributed to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which is currently taking place in New York. By also taking on global issues such as climate change, global health, development and disaster risk reduction, Japan will accelerate its efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 based on the concept of human security. We will continue to promote human rights and gender equality, including the women and peace and security agenda, as well as humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding.

In conclusion, I cannot overstate the importance of the United Nations critical role in addressing the challenges that people around the world are confronted with. Today Japan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to making every effort to contribute to that end as a responsible Member State of this unparalleled institution.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): Lithuania aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. I will also make a statement in my national capacity.

Today we pay tribute to those who perished and suffered during the horrors of the Second World War. We remember tens of millions who died, the majority of them innocent civilians, as well as the many wounded, displaced and missing. We honour and mourn all those mercilessly killed and tortured in the Holocaust, in the persecution of targeted population groups and individuals. That tremendous loss will never be recovered.

The Second World War caused enormous trauma that is being and will be felt for generations. That tragedy of the twentieth century should never be forgotten. Moreover, it should never be repeated.

Lithuania, like so many European nations during the Second World War, suffered the calamity of foreign occupations. We were subjected to both the Nazi and Soviet onslaught, which unleashed bloodshed, losses and pain on our communities. Throughout the most difficult times of the occupation, the nation never lost hope or stopped striving to restore the State. We fought for our dream.

On 16 February 1949, the seven Commanders of all military formations of Lithuania's anti-Soviet resistance signed a declaration expressing the nation's will to re-establish a democratic, independent Lithuania. They supported the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and called for it to be applied to Lithuania. They shaped Lithuania's desire to join the United Nations and the ongoing European integration process. And their voices were never heard in this Hall. The Iron Curtain split the continent. Outnumbered and outgunned, they died ambushed in the battlefields or, if betrayed and taken alive, were tortured and executed by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs or the Committee for State Security in Moscow or Vilnius prisons. Out of seven signatories, only one had military rank. Others were teachers, students and accountants. We Lithuanians owe them our resilience to withstand totalitarian regimes.

The Second World War ended for us in the 1990s when independence from the occupying Soviet rule was restored and when the last Soviet soldier left our territory.

After being admitted to the United Nations in 1991, Lithuania joined the democratic transatlantic and European alliances. We continue working with all the peace-loving nations to build a better peaceful world based on international law, human rights and the sovereign equality of States.

Regrettably today, we must also recognize that our aspirations for the future are being brutally challenged. Russia's continued unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine targets and destroys Ukrainian cities and murders civilians. It is being done in pursuit of the neo-colonial legacy of the Soviet Union, brutally violating the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Just as communism crushed entire nations under the pretence of liberty, Russia now falsely claims to be fighting neo-Nazism while waging a cruel war of conquest against Ukraine. It instrumentalizes the memory of the Second World War to justify its former and current crimes, avoiding accountability. Glorifying the Soviet Union's role in the war, it tends to conveniently obscure the fact that it was the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact — its secret protocols signed between the Soviet and Nazi Foreign Ministers on behalf of Stalin and Hitler — that illegally divided Europe, including Baltic States among themselves. That was the final step towards the Second World War. Now, as in 1939, we again hear Russia's blatant demand that half of Europe return to its sphere of influence.

We should not allow selective memory to distort the past and justify present aggressive behaviour. We regret that Putin's regime has stifled Russia's own community of credible voices, historians from Memorial and other civil society organizations. They have worked diligently in archives and with members of society to establish the facts and present the names and the fate of the victims of the repression of the past century. In 2009, the European Parliament issued a call in defence of Memorial and its work.

The suppression of trusted and honest voices only delays the freeing of Russia's society from the narratives adapted from the totalitarian handbook. Until that happens, it is the responsibility of all peace-loving members of the international community to defend human rights, international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of equality and the sovereignty and integrity of States and to reject war and aggression and pursue the peaceful coexistence of all. That is our duty in remembering all victims of the Second World War.

Mr. Ilić (Serbia) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we are speaking not as victors, but as the guardians of memory.

Eighty years have passed since the end of the most devastating war in human history, a conflict that claimed tens of millions of lives, destroyed cities, destroyed generations and tore apart family histories.

The Second World War was not merely a military conflict; it was a moral collapse of civilization and the moment when humankind was on the verge of self-destruction.

The magnitude of the tragedy has been a severe blow to the human conscience, and the peoples of the world have resolved never to allow such a scourge to happen again. The result of that decision was the establishment of the United Nations, a system based on agreement, peace, solidarity and collective security.

In addition to the military victory over fascism, the establishment of this Organization was a key step forward for civilization. That is why the Republic of Serbia, a country that incurred tremendous human losses in the fight against Nazism and fascism, perceives a deep moral duty to participate in this solemn meeting.

Our history reminds us not just of what happened but is also a warning about what kind of people we want to be.

History shows that peace cannot be preserved passively. Peace is built on responsibility. And today, 80 years later, we commemorate that moment not only as a remembrance, but also as a renewal of our obligation to oppose all forms of fascism — whether armed or ideological, overt or covert. Fascism sometimes wears

a uniform and sometimes is seen in rhetoric. During that war, the people of what was then Yugoslavia, especially the Serbian people, suffered immensely. In the death camps of the independent State of Croatia, attempts were made to systematically exterminate Serbs, Jews and Roma. In Jasenovac alone, hundreds of thousands of innocent people were killed in the most brutal way.

Serbia has not forgotten those victims, for forgetting would constitute a second death. But in that suffering, heroic dignity was also born. Shoulder to shoulder with the Allies, the representatives of our people fought and defeated the invaders, inscribing their own names in golden letters into the annals of freedom. We are especially grateful to the Red Army, which, together with the Yugoslav partisans, liberated Belgrade, leaving an indelible mark on the history of our capital and on fraternal relations between peoples.

Today, as a State Member of the United Nations, Serbia actively participates in preserving peace, upholding multilateralism and respect for the core values of freedom, equality and cooperation. That is why we were proud to be key sponsors of the General Assembly resolution commemorating the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war (resolution 79/292). We want to ensure that that commemoration does not remain a mere record in the archives, but that it prompts people towards concrete action so that the places of suffering are not forgotten, crimes are not downplayed, the heroes are not placed on equal footing with the executioners and the truth remains a criterion and not a subject of political interpretation.

We are gathered here today not to talk about the past, but to preserve the future. War begins not with a shot, but with forgetfulness. And peace begins not with a signature, but with responsibility. If we lose the ability to remember, we will lose the ability to empathize. And without empathy, the world ceases to be a community of peoples and becomes a marketplace of interests.

On behalf of the Republic of Serbia and its citizens, on behalf of all innocent victims and in the name of the peace that we owe to our children, I thank the Assembly for coming together today to remember.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 7 May 1945, as dawn broke over an exhausted Europe, the surrender was signed in Reims, marking the beginning of the end of the most devastating conflagration that humankind has ever known. That day, not only did a war end, but a dark chapter of civilization closed, and amid smoking ruins and broken souls, a window of hope to reinvent the world was opened. If indeed that window of hope opened in Europe in May 1945, we must remember that the war would continue to bleed the Pacific for three more months, culminating in that incinerated August, when humankind crossed the irreversible threshold into the atomic age.

Today, we gather under the weight of memory to honour the 75 million lives cut short during those six years — a chilling mosaic of interrupted dreams that represented 3 per cent of the world's population at the time. Every number and every statistic hides a universe of personal stories: the children who never reached adulthood, the promises of youth that the conflict unravelled, the families that grief scattered like leaves in the wind and the elderly who saw the archives of their memories burn. And that grim tally does not even begin to measure the intergenerational trauma that, like a silent shockwave, continues to reverberate in the DNA of families and entire peoples.

At this critical moment, when the shadows of war once again cast their darkness over three continents, allow me to articulate three thoughts to understand our present in the light of that past.

First, we must recognize that true peace is not built solely on the silence of weapons, but through the constant presence of fair institutions and cooperative solidarity. The United Nations was born then, not only as a covenant between States, but also as a solemn promise to the dead that their sacrifice would not be in vain. That promise, renewed every day in this Hall, has saved countless lives from hunger, war and hopelessness. However, the architecture of collective security that we built today resembles a cathedral with threatened foundations and pillars that tremble before new storms. In 2024, global military spending reached its highest level in history, exceeding \$2.7 trillion, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Redirecting a fraction of global military spending would be enough to change the destiny of humankind: to halt climate collapse, eradicate extreme poverty and ensure basic education for every child on the planet. That is not a utopia; it is a matter of political will.

Secondly, Costa Rica reiterates its unwavering commitment to nuclear disarmament. When we remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we commemorate not only the end of a war, but the beginning of an era in which humankind acquired the power to extinguish itself. Almost eight decades ago, the first resolution adopted by the General Assembly (resolution 1 (I)) established a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy and formulated proposals to eliminate atomic weapons from national armaments. That founding aspiration of the United Nations remains an unfinished historic task. In that context, Costa Rica urges the nuclear-weapon States to comply with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). That call cannot be considered in isolation from recent progress in that area. We also urge those States to recognize that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons strengthens and complements the NPT and that it represents a decisive step towards compliance with that original resolution and an essential element of the non-proliferation regime. Far from guaranteeing security, nuclear deterrence has created a balance of terror, the long-term persistence of which is ethically unacceptable.

Thirdly, we must honour the legal and moral legacy that emerged from the ashes of the Second World War. The end of the Second World War brought about a fundamental transformation in international relations, with the establishment of the United Nations system and of the international rule of law. That historic achievement was crystallized in crucial instruments, such as the Charter of the United Nations and the establishment of the International Court of Justice, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the Geneva Conventions and subsequently, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among others. More than a simple codification of principles, those instruments shaped a new multilateral legal paradigm, cemented in shared universal values. This normative edifice represented an unprecedented global consensus: that lasting peace can be built only on the foundations of social justice, equitable development and full respect for human dignity. History has shown that where this normative order is weakened or where systematic discrimination, extreme inequality and exclusion prevail, the seeds of new conflicts are inevitably sown.

Peace is not the ending point of a conflict, nor the spoils of the strongest. Peace is practised, cultivated and defended.

May this eightieth anniversary be not only an exercise in remembrance, but a renewed pact among all the States present here: to reimagine security as cooperative solidarity and to work tirelessly for a world free of nuclear weapons and for an international order where law prevails over might and where we understand peace as a shared endeavour. And may the memory of those who perished in the Second

World War not be trapped in stone monuments, but rather mobilize us to engage in the concrete and transformative action that our time demands and humankind deserves.

Mr. Babo Soares (Timor-Leste): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this meeting.

The memory of the Second World War remains a stark and indelible scar on human history. The sheer scale of suffering, the millions of lives lost, the widespread devastation and the profound societal upheaval serve as potent reminders of the catastrophic consequences of unchecked aggression and ideological extremism.

Remembering the victims of this global conflict is not merely an act of historical acknowledgment but a crucial exercise in extracting vital lessons and formulating future recommendations to achieve lasting peace and development for all humankind.

One of the most profound lessons gleaned from the Second World War is the utter fragility of human civilization and the absolute necessity of maintaining peace and stability. The conflict shattered economies, decimated infrastructure and displaced populations on an unprecedented scale, setting back development efforts by decades in many regions, including in my country. The immense human cost — measured in lives lost, families torn apart and long-lasting psychological trauma — underscores the fundamental truth that sustained development and economic growth are impossible in the face of widespread violence and insecurity. The memory of the victims compels us to prioritize diplomatic solutions, strengthen international institutions and actively work to prevent future conflicts through dialogue, cooperation, reconciliation and addressing root causes such as poverty, inequality and injustice.

The Second World War also highlighted the critical importance of international cooperation and multilateralism. The eventual defeat of the Axis Powers was a testament to the power of nations uniting against a common threat. The subsequent establishment of the United Nations and other international organizations reflected a collective understanding that global challenges require global solutions.

The lessons learned from this era underscore the need to foster strong international partnerships, promote free and fair trade and work collaboratively to address shared issues such as pandemics, climate change and economic instability. Sustainable development and inclusive economic growth in an interconnected world demand a commitment to multilateralism and a rejection of isolationist or unilateral approaches.

The aftermath of the Second World War also demonstrated the power of investing in human capital and rebuilding societies. The Marshall Plan and similar initiatives, while not without their complexities, illustrated the potential for economic recovery and growth through strategic investment in infrastructure, education and social welfare.

Moreover, the Second World War served as a stark reminder of the dangers of unchecked nationalism, xenophobia and the dehumanization of others. The ideologies that fuelled the conflict led to unimaginable atrocities and the systematic persecution of entire groups of people.

Remembering the victims necessitates a continued commitment to promoting tolerance, understanding and respect for diversity. Education plays a crucial role in fostering empathy and critical thinking, helping to dismantle prejudice and build inclusive societies where all individuals can contribute to and benefit from economic growth and development.

The memory of the Second World War and its countless victims — from the Holocaust to the victims of our days — offers profound and enduring lessons for our pursuit of human development and economic growth. It underscores the importance of

peace and stability, the necessity of international cooperation, the power of investing in human capital and the critical need to combat intolerance and promote inclusivity.

By diligently remembering the past, we can reach vital future recommendations that prioritize peaceful conflict resolution, strengthen multilateral institutions, champion human development and foster inclusive societies. Only by learning from the devastating consequences of this global conflict can we hope to build a future where development and economic growth are sustainable and equitable and contribute to the lasting well-being of all humankind.

Mr. Yoseph (Ethiopia): Almost 90 years ago, Ethiopia stood before the world and appealed to the then League of Nations for assistance from the destruction that had been unleashed against our country. At the time, Ethiopia stated the clear and eminent danger of the war and declared that it was not the Covenant of the League that was at stake, but global morality itself.

Ethiopia then warned that actions of the League were little use if the will to maintain such actions was lacking. History attested to the accuracy of our warning. The Second World War is a stark reminder of the horrific manifestation of what destruction of that magnitude could do to humankind and human civilization. It was a war that claimed the lives of many millions and brought the world to near annihilation. Many millions had fallen defending humanity and freedom. As we all know, it is that devastation that led to the birth of the United Nations and to Member States saying “never again” and to pledge to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Despite the various challenges it has faced over the years, since its establishment the United Nations has remained instrumental in keeping that promise and strides forward to maintain international peace and security. It is in this global body that the principle of collective security is enshrined, with the Charter of the United Nations setting forth the noblest aspirations of humankind.

The world has changed immensely since the end of the Second World War. The multifaceted challenges we face today are quite different from those that the founders of the United Nations had to grapple with in the aftermath of the war. It should, nevertheless, be our collective responsibility to continue the efforts of maintaining peace and achieving sustainable development.

We cannot afford to spare time nor effort. We need to further strengthen global cooperation and forge stronger partnerships. In realizing that critical objective we need to continue in our endeavour to reinvigorate multilateralism with the aim of making the United Nations fit for purpose. We must also be vigilant to finish what we have started in order to ensure sustainable peace.

Still, our multilateralism framework has failed to ensure equal representation of States, particularly in reference to the composition of the Security Council, on which Africa still lacks permanent representation. It is also critical that we scale up our efforts in peacekeeping activities. The world cannot afford to witness any relapse in the hard-fought gains achieved through the deployment of various peacekeeping missions. It remains essential, therefore, that the necessary political and financial support be provided to peace operations, to enable them to fulfil their mandates effectively.

In conclusion, as we commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, my delegation would like to reiterate Ethiopia’s commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and to continuing its efforts towards realizing the noble objectives of the Organization.

Mr. Hoang Giang Dang (Viet Nam): Eighty years ago, the deadliest war in human history came to its final days, after inflicting unimaginable suffering on hundreds of millions of people across the globe.

Today, my delegation joins others in solemnly commemorating the end of the Second World War. We honour the immense sacrifices made by countless individuals and pay tribute to all victims of the war. We remain forever indebted to all who fought and fell in Europe, Asia and Africa, to the Allied forces and, not least, to the peoples of the former Soviet Union. Their courage and sacrifice not only helped to save humankind from the tyranny, violence and genocide of fascism, but also paved the way for the liberation of many peoples around the world from the shackles of colonialism and imperialism.

The end of the Second World War holds profound and enduring meaning for peoples worldwide, for the United Nations and for my own country, Viet Nam. Amid the global upheaval of 1945, the Vietnamese people launched the August Revolution, ending nearly a century of colonial and, later, fascist domination, and marking Viet Nam's historic transformation from a semi-feudal colony into an independent and democratic nation. It was a powerful testament to the unyielding spirit of a people steadfast in their pursuit of independence, freedom and a brighter future.

In many ways, the Allied victory in the Second World War served as a crucial catalyst for the birth of the nation of Viet Nam in the modern era. Regrettably, the end of the war did not guarantee lasting peace. Our people continued to struggle and endure decades of devastating conflict before ultimately achieving unification and peace in 1975, exactly 30 years after the Second World War had ended.

The defeat of fascist and aggressor forces in the Second World War, and in all wars and conflicts, underscores a timeless truth — no force can prevail over the enduring aspiration for peace and the universal values of freedom and self-determination. In the aftermath of the war, the United Nations was born out of the shared resolve of the international community to live in peace and stability. Nations came together to establish a collective security system anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The Charter's core principles — sovereign equality, territorial integrity, the prohibition of the use of force and, especially, the peaceful settlement of disputes, have been instrumental in averting another global war.

As we reflect on one of the darkest chapters in world history, today's commemoration serves as a stark reminder of the immense destruction wrought by wars, of the precious gift of peace and of our collective duty to prevent such tragedies from ever recurring. At a time when the world continues to face growing security challenges and intensifying great-Power competition, safeguarding peace demands renewed multilateralism and principled joint action.

Viet Nam strongly believes that upholding international law, strengthening global solidarity and fostering mutual trust and cooperation are essential to preserving the hard-won peace and stability we enjoy today. Viet Nam's own turbulent history has taught us to never take peace for granted.

As a responsible and reliable member of the United Nations, Viet Nam has spared no effort in advancing peace, security and development, not only for our own nation, but also for the broader international community.

Let me conclude by reaffirming Viet Nam's commitment to working with all partners to build a more peaceful, just and sustainable world for future generations.

Mr. Akakpo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Eight decades ago, one of the most deadly conflicts in history came to an end, claiming tens of millions of lives, to whose memory my delegation would like to pay homage on this solemn occasion.

That conflict, which pitted the totalitarian ambitions of a handful of obscurantists against the desire for freedom of the majority, took many lives, including those of freedom-loving men and women who made the supreme sacrifice in the name of the ideal of peace on which their commitment was based. Among them, history

records the commitment and sacrifice of African infantry units, whose war effort was decisive in defeating the totalitarian forces that imposed their domination.

The sacrifice of all the victims, whether members of the resistance or civilians, that we celebrate on this day, was not in vain. They died to bring about a new, peaceful world based on dialogue among civilizations and on sharing a culture of peace that is firmly rooted in our customs.

The post-Second World War world has seen some major changes, illustrating the reconfiguration of international relations towards multilateralism, which became a reality with the creation of the United Nations and its system, whose mission is to work to maintain and perpetuate peace. As regards Africa, the end of the conflict helped to accelerate decolonization struggles, which, with the support of the United Nations, led to several territories attaining international sovereignty and joining the community of nations, thereby revitalizing multilateralism. The creation of the United Nations at the end of the Second World War therefore arose from the profound aspiration to close the parentheses of war and open those of peace by promoting multilateralism. I would also like to take the opportunity offered by this meeting to welcome, on behalf of my delegation, the Secretary-General's commitment to peace in the world. Unfortunately, despite the efforts made by the United Nations, we can see that the world remains plagued by conflict that continues to grow as the years go by and that the challenges are becoming more complex. For the Togolese delegation, the best tribute that can be paid to all the victims of the Second World War is that of reaffirming, on this occasion and in the run-up to the eightieth anniversary of the United Nations, our commitment to working harder to make peace and security effective throughout the world.

As recognized by the Heads of State and Government at the Summit of the Future, it is possible to build a better future for all humankind, including those individuals living in poverty or those who find themselves in vulnerable situations. The current international context, which is marked by the expansion of conflict zones, the exacerbation of historical crises and the range and scale of their effects, gives the impression that the world has been plunged into a permanent state of conflict, which must certainly not turn into a global conflict. To achieve that, my delegation believes that it is important that urgent measures be taken to put an end to the perpetual belligerence that is holding back the world's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Togolese delegation therefore calls for respect for the sovereignty of States and the abolition of all forms of interference in their internal affairs. My delegation also calls for the total, immediate, verifiable and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which remain at the heart of many crises and permanent tensions in the world. It calls for the reform of our common Organization so that it better reflects the multilateralism that it promotes. My delegation therefore reiterates its position in favour of reforming the Security Council in order to make it more representative. The Council is at the heart of the institutional mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security. Such reform, which we call for wholeheartedly, must also address the international financial architecture so as to make it more efficient, more equitable, better adapted to today's world and better able to address the difficulties faced by developing countries.

Lastly, the establishment of a new world order free of crises and conflicts requires the elimination of all forms of injustice and inequality. It also requires the recognition of historical facts whose effects continue to be perpetuated over time, to the point of them having become structural obstacles that weaken or undermine stability in some parts of the world. That is the case for painful historical facts, such as slavery and colonization, which, it should be noted, have been qualified as crimes against humanity and genocide by the African Union. As with any crime

committed, damage is involved, and any damage must be redressed. Togo believes that the United Nations must support the need for reparations for those crimes. We therefore advocate historical truth and memory reconciliation so that a new order based on lasting understanding and peace can reign among our nations from now on.

Our tribute to the victims of the Second World War today must give us greater insight into the atrocities of war and the importance of abolishing them, because, as John Fitzgerald Kennedy said, “mankind must put an end to war, or war will put an end to mankind”.

Mr. Lapasov (Uzbekistan): It is a great honour to address this solemn meeting of the General Assembly on behalf of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Eighty years ago, humankind witnessed the end of the bloodiest conflict in history — one that took more than 70 million lives and left deep scars across continents. The terrible cost of that war reminds us of our duty to preserve peace and prevent the resurgence of hatred, aggression and violence.

On this day, we honour the memory of all victims and heroes of the war — soldiers who perished on the battlefield and civilians who bore the hardships of war with dignity. Among them were the valiant sons and daughters of Uzbekistan. Out of a population of 6.5 million, nearly 2 million were mobilized to the front lines. More than 538,000 gave their lives, and more than 158,000 remain missing. Those are not just numbers — they represent families, dreams and sacrifices that will never be forgotten. We mark this date with both pride and sorrow. The bitter trials of war that our people endured are not forgotten, even after all these years.

During the war, Uzbekistan became a powerful strategic rear. More than 170 factories and plants were relocated to our country, and production was swiftly resumed to meet the urgent needs of the front. But perhaps the most enduring contribution of our people was humanitarian. More than 1.5 million evacuees found shelter in Uzbekistan, including more than 250,000 orphans. They were welcomed into our homes and hearts. Our people displayed exceptional humanism, embracing children who had lost everything and sharing with them even their last piece of bread.

The legacy of the war is a lesson that lives on. In Uzbekistan, we are deeply committed to preserving historical truth and passing it on to future generations. We have built the Victory Park Memorial Complex in Tashkent — a symbol of our people’s sacrifice and resilience. Our youth must know this history. They must understand that the freedom and peace that they enjoy today were won at a tremendous cost. The heroic traditions of our veterans serve as a guiding example for educating young people in the spirit of patriotism, peace and mutual respect. We believe that instilling that sense of moral responsibility in younger generations is vital, not only for Uzbekistan but for global peace and solidarity. In that context, Uzbekistan reaffirms its strong commitment to the principles of multilateralism. The enormous human cost of the Second World War underscores the critical importance of collective action and international cooperation. Today, as the world faces complex and interlinked challenges, we must strengthen multilateralism as the foundation of a fair, rules-based international order. Only through dialogue and shared responsibility can we build lasting peace and development for all.

As we look to the future, let us remain united in our determination to prevent war, promote dialogue and strengthen the foundations of international cooperation. Let us honour the past through our actions in the present by standing together in defence of peace, dignity and humanity.

The Acting President (*spoke in Russian*): We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We shall continue the special solemn meeting after the consideration of the items already announced in the Journal of the United Nations.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 135.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.