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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sekeris	(Greece)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Ms. Landi
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Guyana	Ms. Benn
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Totangi
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Ibrahim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
	United States of America.	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

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

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: When I most recently briefed the Council on developments in Ukraine, exactly one month ago (see S/PV.9908), there was cautious hope of progress on the diplomatic front to stop the fighting. Regrettably, instead of steps towards peace, we have witnessed a brutal surge in large-scale Russian attacks across the country. That escalation comes after a relative reduction in the intensity of attacks, including the unilateral 72-hour truce declared by the Russian Federation from 8 to 10 May.

For three consecutive nights last weekend, Russian armed forces attacked Ukrainian cities and towns with record numbers of long-range missiles and drones, killing and injuring dozens of civilians. Most of the casualties were recorded in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa and Mykolayiv, as well as in other densely populated areas.

On Monday, 26 May, at least six people were reportedly killed and 24 injured across the country, including in the Donetsk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Odesa and Mykolayiv regions. According to Ukrainian officials, with 355 drones, Monday's attack was the largest drone attack on Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. That topped the previous record from the night before.

On Sunday, 25 May, 12 people, including three children, were reportedly killed and more than 60 others were injured when missiles and drones hit Kyiv and other locations in the Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolayiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Sumy and Poltava regions. More than 80 residential buildings were reportedly damaged.

On Saturday, 24 May, at least 15 people, including two minors, were reportedly injured in a Russian strike on Kyiv. Elsewhere, at least 13 people were reportedly killed — four people in the Donetsk region, five in the Kherson and Odesa regions, and four in the Kharkiv region. The Dnipro and Zaporizhzhya regions were also hit. In addition, the Sumy region in the north-east of Ukraine has been hit particularly hard by continuous cross-border heavy shelling.

On 17 May — only hours after Russian and Ukrainian delegations met in Istanbul — a Russian drone strike on a civilian bus in Bilopillia, in the Sumy region,

reportedly killed nine people and injured seven others. Among those killed were three members of the same family — a mother, a father and their daughter.

In total, since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, at least 13,279 civilians, including 707 children, have been killed. The confirmed number of civilians injured stands at 32,449, including 2,068 children.

The overall security situation so far in 2025 is significantly worse than in the same period last year. Civilian deaths in the first quarter of this year are 59 per cent higher than in the same period of 2024.

Since my last briefing, Russian regions bordering Ukraine also reported civilian casualties. According to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, nine civilians were killed and 117 were injured because of Ukrainian strikes from 19 to 25 May. The Ministry also reported that from 12 to 18 May, 17 Russian civilians were killed, and more than 100 others were injured, following Ukrainian attacks on Russian border regions, bringing the total for the month of May to 59 killed, including five children, and more than 400 others injured, including 21 children.

The United Nations is not able to verify those reports. However, if confirmed, those figures serve as a vivid reminder of the rising civilian toll of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, most egregiously in Ukraine, but also increasingly in the Russian Federation itself.

Let me reiterate clearly: attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are strictly prohibited under international humanitarian law. They are unacceptable and indefensible, wherever they occur, and they must stop immediately.

My colleague, Lisa Doughten, of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, will provide updates about the impacts of the renewed attacks on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and our response to deliver life-saving aid to all those in need.

The latest dangerous escalation follows some significant diplomatic developments. On 16 May, Ukrainian and Russian delegations met in Istanbul for the first direct negotiations in three years. We welcome those talks and commend the important role of Türkiye and the United States in facilitating those discussions. While the talks did not result in the much-needed, complete, immediate and unconditional ceasefire that the Secretary-General has called for, it is encouraging that the sides have reportedly agreed to continue the process.

We also welcome an important result of those talks — the recently completed phased exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war on each side. We hope that all remaining prisoners of war and civilian detainees will soon return home.

Throughout the war, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported on the human rights violations in the territories of Ukraine occupied by the Russian Federation. The Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, meanwhile, continues to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law in Ukraine. Just yesterday, the Commission reported on allegations of systematic drone attacks by Russian forces targeting civilians in Kherson.

The impact of the war on children is particularly heartbreaking. More than 5.1 million children have been displaced from their homes. One in five children has lost a relative or friend since 2022. And the fate of Ukrainian children reportedly deported to the Russian Federation remains a question of deep concern.

The massive wave of attacks over the weekend is a stark warning of how quickly this war can reach new destructive levels. Further escalation would not only aggravate the devastating toll on civilians but also endanger the already challenging

peace efforts. The longer the war continues, the longer its regional and global effects will be felt, and the more difficult it will be to find a peaceful resolution.

The United Nations position has been and remains principled in support of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders. We continue to call for peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

In February, the Security Council adopted resolution 2774 (2025), the first since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, imploring a swift end to the conflict and urging a lasting peace. And soon after adoption of the resolution, after more than three years of brutal, illegal war, the global community was heartened by what appeared to be the first sprouts of a potential peace process. However, anticipation and excitement quickly gave way to frustration around the world and more suffering in Ukraine following the recent and massive Russian attacks. The hope that the parties will be able to sit down and negotiate is still alive, but just barely.

Serious, demonstrable and good faith efforts are needed, now, to get back on the road that could lead to a just peace. A full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire is such an effort, if only an initial one. A peace process will not be easy, and it will take time. But it must not wait. The people of Ukraine especially cannot wait.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Doughten.

Ms. Doughten: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to brief the Council on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

Since our most recent update to the Council one month ago (see S/PV.9908), attacks have continued to exact a staggering toll on civilians in Ukraine. Over just the past week, the humanitarian consequences have worsened — marked by forced displacement, the destruction of essential infrastructure and the disruption of basic services.

Despite peace talks earlier this month, a series of air strikes and other hostilities, especially over the past weekend, caused civilian casualties across Ukraine, including the killing of three children. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at least 14 civilians were killed and more than 39 injured. The attacks also caused extensive damage to civilian infrastructure, homes and schools, including in densely populated areas.

Healthcare services remain under severe strain, particularly in the front-line areas of Kharkiv and Donetsk regions. Those disruptions are limiting access to trauma care and other critical services, putting the sick and injured at serious risk. The World Health Organization has now verified more than 200 attacks affecting healthcare facilities, personnel, transport, supplies and patients across Ukraine in 2025.

Civilians continue to face constant and grave dangers, particularly in the east, the south and along the northern border regions. Missile and drone attacks over the past week have caused extensive civilian casualties and damaged residential buildings and essential infrastructure, including gas pipelines, schools and public transport across at least 10 regions far from the front line, including Kyiv, Zhytomyr and Khmelnytskyi.

Those incidents underscore the continued vulnerability of civilians nationwide, including the more than 3.7 million people currently displaced across Ukraine. In the past week alone, more than 5,000 people — mainly from the Kherson, Donetsk and Sumy regions — were newly displaced as violence escalated. According to

unverified reports, civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure were also recorded in the Kursk and Belgorod regions of the Russian Federation.

As the Secretary-General reaffirmed earlier this week, and as we have said multiple times before, under international humanitarian law, constant care must be taken to spare civilians and civilian objects.

The war continues to have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, particularly in those forcibly displaced areas. Risks of gender-based violence remain high, with ongoing demand for protection services outpacing available support — especially in some front-line areas.

The dangers also remain high for humanitarian workers. So far in 2025, 37 incidents of violence impacting humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities have been recorded. Two aid workers have been killed and 23 have been injured while delivering assistance. Again, under international humanitarian law, humanitarian workers and assets must be protected.

We remain gravely concerned about the 1.5 million civilians in areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya currently under occupation by the Russian Federation. Those communities remain largely out of reach for humanitarian actors — not due to a lack of capacity or will, but because of persistent impediments to humanitarian access.

International humanitarian law is unequivocal: all parties must allow and facilitate the rapid, unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. Obstructions that leave the civilian population without the essentials to survive run contrary to that obligation.

Despite escalating challenges, humanitarian partners — many of them local non-governmental organizations — continue to deliver vital assistance. That includes food, clean water, hygiene kits and protection services for civilians living near the front line, those in the process of evacuating and the most vulnerable among the internally displaced. In support of local emergency teams, emergency programmes have also been carried out in the aftermath of recent attacks.

Over the weekend, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine Matthias Schmale and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs led an inter-agency convoy to front-line communities in the Kherson region, where daily shelling continues to threaten civilians — many of whom are older persons. During the visit, he met residents who have chosen to remain despite the risks, holding onto hope that, even after three years of hostilities in the area, life in their home communities would return to normal. The convoy delivered dignity kits for older people, as well as first aid kits, hygiene and food kits. So far this year, 10 inter-agency convoys have reached nearly 14,000 people along the front line in Kherson.

The humanitarian response continues to serve as a vital lifeline for millions. Since the beginning of 2025, 440 humanitarian organizations, mainly local non-governmental organizations, have provided life-saving assistance to approximately 3.1 million people across Ukraine.

However, we are now more than five months into the year, and owing to the sharp contraction in humanitarian funding, only a quarter of the \$2.6 billion required for the 2025 humanitarian needs and response plan has been received. Funding shortfalls have already forced reductions in cash assistance, mental health support, shelter assistance and services for survivors of gender-based violence. Without urgent support, core programmes risk being suspended, just as needs are rising.

Let me conclude with three urgent messages.

First, civilians and civilian objects must be protected. Attacks directed against homes, hospitals and internally displaced person shelters must stop, as must all indiscriminate attacks.

Secondly, sustained humanitarian access must be facilitated. Humanitarian actors must be granted safe, rapid and unimpeded access to all civilians in need — wherever they are and regardless of which party controls the territory. We will persist in our engagement with the parties to that effect. The Council and all Member States have much influence to exert to ensure both the protection of civilians and unimpeded humanitarian access.

Thirdly, the humanitarian response must be supported. Lives depend on it. Every delay costs lives. Every dollar helps us reach the next family under fire with aid, educate the next child out of school, help evacuate people with disabilities and sustain water in front-line communities.

There is no respite for civilians in Ukraine. The bombs do not stop. The trauma does not subside. The needs do not shrink. And so, our resolve cannot falter.

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

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

Ms. Landi (Denmark): I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for their briefings.

As the briefers have both highlighted, much has happened since the Security Council last convened to discuss Ukraine one month ago (see S/PV.9908). I would like to focus on a few major points.

First, with regard to the humanitarian situation, we welcome last weekend's largest prisoner exchange since Russia's full-scale invasion and commend Türkiye for its continued efforts. However, we cannot ignore the striking fact that while those exchanges were under way, Russia dramatically increased its aerial attacks against Ukraine's civilians and cities. In the past two weeks alone, Russia has fired more than 1,000 drones, as well as ballistic and cruise missiles, on Ukraine's population. Scenes of Kyiv ablaze, of buses hit while evacuating civilians and of children in the wreckage are haunting reminders of the sheer brutality of the war. Even more cynical is the fact that some of those most deadly attacks took place while President Zelenskyy was himself in Türkiye, ready and willing to engage in ceasefire talks. Such an escalation in attacks on civilians is completely incompatible with Putin's claimed desire for peace. As the Danish Prime Minister said on Monday, "during the day Putin talks about negotiations, then he bombs Ukraine during the night".

Secondly, regarding the efforts to achieve a ceasefire, we have seen the victim of the aggression, Ukraine, repeatedly offer a comprehensive, immediate and unconditional 30-day ceasefire. Meanwhile, Putin has not engaged seriously in any talks. That playbook is well-known by now. When the international pressure increases, Putin offers a symbolic ceasefire of a few days. We saw that for Easter and the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe. His forces then engage in widespread violations, exposing the true and empty nature of those promises. Just yesterday the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine published a report concluding that Russian armed forces had been systematically committing crimes against humanity by hunting civilians using remote-controlled drones.

Rather than engage in good faith negotiations, Russia has simply reissued the same maximalist demands — demands that Russia knows will end talks before they even begin, curbing Ukraine's right to defend itself, violating Ukraine's territorial

integrity and internationally recognized borders, offering no reparations for the hundreds of billions of dollars of damage Russia has inflicted across Ukraine. Ukraine cannot be expected to accept terms that amount to its full capitulation and subjugation. Let there be no doubt: those demands are completely unacceptable. They are simply distractions, smokescreens to buy time and continue the killing.

In conclusion, it is now high time for Russia to come to the negotiating table to engage seriously. As a start, Denmark calls for an immediate 30-day ceasefire. Denmark will continue to stand with Ukraine until a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations is achieved.

Ukraine must be free to decide its own future. There must be accountability for the terrible and widespread suffering its people have endured. We cannot and we will not remain silent in the face of the suffering and the dramatic escalation.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their briefings.

Every day Russia chooses to continue its aggression against Ukraine. No rhetoric can hide that fact. No excuse can justify that fact. The people who die every day in that war are the victims of Moscow's deliberate, renewed and unjustifiable choice.

Everyone is calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine — everyone except Russia. Only Russia is standing in the way. A month ago in this very Chamber, in the presence of Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, all members of the Security Council except Russia called for an end to the hostilities (see S/PV.9908). Ukraine recalled that it had been ready since 11 March to accept an immediate, complete and unconditional ceasefire.

What has happened since then? Ukraine has reaffirmed its readiness to end the hostilities. It has repeated that consistently at every level. President Zelenskyy reaffirmed that in Kyiv on 10 May, along with the leaders of Germany, France, Poland and the United Kingdom. Once again, the Russian President dodged the issue. Once again, he refused to stop his attacks. To divert attention and deliberately prolong the carnage, he called for direct negotiations in Istanbul, which he did not attend. President Zelenskyy was waiting for him in Türkiye.

Everyone knows this. Russia has not responded to proposals for a ceasefire by initiating real peace negotiations. Russia's real response was the massive strikes it carried out throughout Ukraine on 23, 24 and 25 May, killing more than 15 people and wounding hundreds more. The disproportionate means employed by Russia speak for themselves. In Istanbul, there was a motion of no action, a lower-level delegation, a new refusal of an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and vague commitments to continue talks. In Ukraine, there is open contempt for the fate of civilians and human life, deliberate targeting of civilian objects in violation of international humanitarian law, a record number of missiles and combat drones being launched and the inflexibility of the Kremlin with regard to its objectives, even as war crimes and crimes against humanity are being committed, as documented by the recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.

Let us pause for a moment to consider the adjective “unconditional”, for it is essential that the Security Council have a common definition of it. What does “unconditional ceasefire” actually mean? It implies, as Ukraine has shown itself willing to do since 11 March, an immediate and unconditional end to the fighting. It is not, as Russia understands it, a possible cessation of hostilities with an indefinite time frame that depends on the conclusion of a peace agreement, which is tantamount to a capitulation by the attacked party.

What does it mean to initiate unconditional peace talks? It means agreeing to participate in talks that are not subject to any conditions. That is what Ukraine did in Istanbul on 16 May, when it agreed to direct negotiations with Russia, without demanding a prior ceasefire. It does not mean setting maximalist conditions. But that is what Russia did in Istanbul on 16 May, when it demanded that Ukraine withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson. Let us recall here: on 12 October 2022, the General Assembly condemned Russia's attempted illegal annexation of those territories (see A/ES-11/PV.13 and A/ES-11/PV.14).

France stands ready, alongside Ukraine and its partners, to enter into a virtuous process of discussions on a peace plan. France stands with the Ukrainian people to bring them the humanitarian assistance they need. Russia is not credible in pretending to negotiate in good faith, while at the same time stepping up its strikes against Ukrainian territory. That is why the Security Council must demand a complete, immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The demilitarization of Ukraine is neither a precondition nor an objective of peace talks. The aggressor cannot demand, as a condition for ending its aggression, that the party under attack renounce its right to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. A just, robust and lasting peace, as repeatedly called for by the General Assembly, will require robust and credible security guarantees for Ukraine. Ukraine should be able to choose its future.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for briefing us today.

We convene today to address the situation in Ukraine, as we collectively mourn the lives lost owing to Russia's recent attacks

This weekend saw two of the largest mass air attacks of the war, back-to-back. Over three days Russia launched more than 900 drones and missiles at Ukrainian cities, reportedly resulting in the deaths of 30 people and injuring a further 150. And those deaths were not an accident. Russia's missile and drone strikes struck major urban centres and densely populated regions.

Over the night of 24 May, among those killed were three children — specifically, three siblings: Stanislav, aged 8, Tamara, aged 12, and Roman, aged 17. Each of them on the edge of a new chapter of childhood, adolescence or emerging adulthood, and all of them robbed of life too soon. Such acts are a stark reminder of the urgent need to bring this war to an end.

Russia's attacks are not only sustained, but they are also worsening. As the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified, in the first three months of this year alone, there have been 2,641 civilian casualties, nearly 900 more than during the same period in 2024 and more than 600 more than in early 2023.

The increased killing of civilians is an affront to our shared values of human dignity and peace, values which President Putin claims to share yet continues to violate. Putin's priorities are demonstrated by his timing: those attacks were launched days after talks in Istanbul in which Russia, yet again, refused to agree to an unconditional ceasefire. Presented with another opportunity for meaningful progress towards peace, Putin chose war.

While Ukraine stands ready for an unconditional ceasefire, Russia sustains its aggression. And once again, innocent civilians are paying the price. Russia's actions speak much louder than its words. We therefore call on Russia to comply with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and to stop the killing of innocent civilians. Russia's unrelenting invasion of its sovereign neighbour

will only redouble our resolve to help Ukraine to defend itself and use the necessary measures to restrict Putin's war machine. We will work in unison with the United States, Ukraine and our European and international partners until a just and lasting peace is no longer an aim but an enduring reality.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting, which Slovenia called for along with other members of the Security Council from Europe. I would also like to thank the briefers, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten.

We need an end to the fighting in Ukraine, an end to civilian deaths and displacement and deportations of children and an end to the destruction of schools, hospitals and houses. With hopes for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, Slovenia continues to support the ongoing diplomatic efforts. Meanwhile, however, Ukraine and its population are enduring a relentless barrage of aerial attacks, as we just heard from Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo. Last weekend, Russia launched a wave of large-scale air strikes, with hundreds of drones and missiles raining down on Ukrainian cities during the overnight attacks. The air strikes on 26 May were the single largest aerial attack since the war began — I know that other colleagues have said that before, but I think that it is always good to repeat that it was the largest attack since the war began — with no other apparent aim than to cause the destruction of civilian infrastructure and instil fear and terror in the civilian population. All of that happened just before the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine concluded that the drone attacks by the Russian armed forces around Kherson last year amount to the crime against humanity of murder. Slovenia condemns those attacks in the strongest possible terms. They represent a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. They seem to represent nothing other than a large country, an aggressor, flexing its muscles over its smaller neighbour. It is a display of bad faith amid of diplomatic efforts.

With death and destruction on the rise, the need for diplomacy is obvious. Slovenia welcomes all contacts between Ukraine and Russia, such as the Istanbul peace talks in mid-May. We welcome the agreement on the prisoner-of-war exchange in that regard. We underline, however, that the overall outcome is underwhelming. Russia has been claiming that it wants peace for a very long time, but its actions say otherwise. It has torpedoed all efforts aimed at stopping the fighting. It met Ukraine's efforts for a full ceasefire only with demands and conditions. To any onlooker, the situation is obvious: Ukraine is ready to silence the guns, and Russia is not.

We need a lasting and verifiable ceasefire that can pave the way to negotiations on enduring peace in Ukraine. With that in mind, Slovenia calls on Russia to stop hesitating and agree to a full and unconditional ceasefire. Ukraine and the whole of Europe want and need peace — not war, but peace. They want a peace that lasts and a peace that is just and firmly anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. It is our duty to provide Ukraine with an opportunity to achieve it. Only that way can Ukrainians and their country start to heal and hope for a better tomorrow.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would also like to extend my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for their timely briefings. I also welcome the representative of Ukraine to today's meeting.

We are meeting today at a critical juncture of both fragile promise and alarming peril. Indeed, two weeks ago, after nearly three years, Russia and Ukraine resumed ceasefire negotiations — a significant step made possible largely owing to the steadfast mediation efforts led by the United States. Of particular note, both sides agreed to the exchange of 1,000 prisoners each, and that swap was successfully concluded on Sunday. That was one of the largest humanitarian measures since the onset of

the war, offering deep solace to countless families who have endured prolonged separation. We earnestly hope that that will serve as a stepping stone, however small, towards building trust between the two warring parties. However, the path towards comprehensive and lasting peace still appears distant. As today's briefers already explained in detail, just days after those negotiations, Russia launched hundreds of sustained, large-scale drone and missile attacks across Ukraine, killing and injuring innocent civilians and destroying homes, schools and other infrastructure. Let us be clear, once again, that those unjustifiable attacks serve as a grim reminder that words alone will not stop the war, only action will. We reiterate that such massive and indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law.

Ukraine has already stated its agreement to a full and immediate ceasefire. It is now Russia's turn to demonstrate its true sincerity and political will — not just through words, but through concrete actions. The reality is that negotiations cannot proceed in good faith while missiles and drones are continuously bombarding Ukrainian cities. Partial or fleeting time-constrained ceasefires will not suffice. What is needed now is a complete and immediate cessation of hostilities. That is the only way to protect civilians and create space for lasting diplomacy. We can no longer afford any further delay.

As we have consistently emphasized, the war in Ukraine is not a distant or irrelevant conflict for the Republic of Korea. The large-scale transfer of arms and the deployment of 15,000 North Korean troops constitute flagrant violations of multiple resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations. That collusion between Russia and North Korea not only seriously undermines international law and global norms but also deteriorates the global non-proliferation regime and directly threatens the lives and security of innocent people in both Ukraine and on the Korean Peninsula. Regrettably, it is no longer surprising that North Korean ballistic missiles are being used to kill and injure civilians in Ukraine. Furthermore, potential military assistance from Russia to North Korea and the combat experience being acquired by North Korean troops pose a serious and growing threat to the people of the Republic of Korea as well. The illegal military cooperation between Russia and North Korea in blatant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions must therefore cease immediately.

We urge all members of the Council to speak with one voice: to demand an immediate and full cessation of hostilities and to insist that negotiations proceed in a manner that upholds the United Nations Charter and international law. The longer this war continues, the harder it will be to repair the damage to lives, livelihoods and international peace.

In that connection, we implore the international community to maintain the momentum needed to continue to push for an end to this senseless war, ensuring that both a ceasefire and peace are ultimately achieved.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Ms. Lisa Doughten for their insightful briefings.

Pakistan remains deeply concerned about the devastating humanitarian and security consequences of the Ukraine conflict that has been raging for over four years. Despite the hopeful momentum generated by diplomatic initiatives, including resolution 2774 (2025), ceasefire understandings and negotiations facilitated by the United States, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, we are alarmed by the recent reports of intensification of hostilities. That escalation, marked by increased attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, undermines the fragile progress achieved through painstaking diplomacy.

I would like to make the following three points in that context.

First, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a fundamental obligation under international law, including international humanitarian law. Pakistan deplores the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure under any pretext. All parties to conflict must uphold those principles, without exception.

Secondly, military means cannot resolve this conflict. Every day of continued hostilities deepens the suffering of civilians, further distancing the parties from a negotiated settlement. Pakistan reiterates its firm belief that only dialogue and diplomacy can deliver sustainable peace.

Thirdly, the fragile foundation of peace laid down by diplomatic efforts needs consolidation. We welcome the direct talks between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, including agreements on prisoner exchanges, as steps in the right direction. However, those efforts are being overshadowed by the worsening situation on the ground. Diplomatic channels must not be abandoned in favour of escalation. Instead, the parties must redouble their commitment to dialogue, building on the existing frameworks to achieve a durable ceasefire, leading to a lasting solution. In that context, we take note of the Russia's offer to hold a second round of direct negotiations, in Istanbul, and hope that the two sides can make further progress in bringing this protracted conflict to an end.

Pakistan's position on the Ukraine conflict has remained clear and consistent. From the outset, we have advocated an immediate de-escalation to prevent further loss of life; have urged all sides to follow meaningful negotiations, addressing mutual security concerns, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations; and have supported inclusive and constructive diplomacy involving key regional and international stakeholders to pave the way for a just and lasting peace.

In conclusion, Pakistan reiterates its firm support for a peaceful resolution of this conflict. The alternative — a continued conflict with no end in sight — serves no one's interests. Pakistan stands ready to support all efforts towards a peaceful resolution that is anchored in the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law, the relevant multilateral agreements and that addresses the legitimate national security interests of all sides.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and Director Doughten for her intervention.

More than three months have passed since the Council adopted a resolution imploring a swift end to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Following that historic resolution, the United States has worked tirelessly with both sides, seeking a path to peace. We want an end to this war. As the first step on that path to peace, the United States put forward a proposal for an immediate, unconditional and comprehensive ceasefire. Ukraine unequivocally accepted, pending Russia's agreement to do the same. Since then, we have been urging Russia to accept a ceasefire.

Following President Trump's 21 May call with Russian President Putin, the Russian Federation is expected to provide a term sheet broadly outlining its vision for a ceasefire. We will judge Russia's seriousness towards ending the war not only by the contents of that term sheet, but more importantly, by Russia's actions.

On that note, we condemn Russia's decision over the past weekend to launch some of the largest missile and drone strikes against Ukraine since the beginning of the war. This disregard for human life does not demonstrate a desire for peace. It must cease.

On the other hand, the recent agreement, by both Russia and Ukraine, to exchange 1,000 prisoners is an indication of what might be possible. If both Russia and Ukraine are truly interested in peace, the United States will work with both

parties, with European partners and with the United Nations to help achieve that goal, beginning with a meaningful ceasefire. But we will insist that the discussion of peace by both sides must be undertaken in good faith.

If Russia makes the wrong decision to continue this catastrophic war, the United States will have to consider stepping back from our negotiation efforts to end this conflict. To be clear, in doing so, we would not be abandoning our principles or our friends. Rather, we would be recognizing Russia's refusal to work with us towards a desirable outcome.

As President Trump has made clear, we want to work with Russia, including on this peace initiative and an economic package. There is no military solution to this conflict. The deal on offer now is Russia's best possible outcome. President Putin should take the deal. The alternative — continuing to wage the war — would not be in anyone's interest, including Russia's. Doing so would continue to damage Russia's economy, military resources, national security and international reputation.

Additional sanctions on Russia are still on the table. President Trump has emphasized from the beginning that this war was a strategic mistake and should never have happened; time is not on the side of any who would prolong it.

We call on both Russia and Ukraine to make the difficult, historic decision to pursue peace. The responsibility of ending this war ultimately lies with them. If one side proves unable or unwilling to do so, it will own the consequences.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo and Ms. Lisa Doughten for their valuable briefings.

Despite the signs of de-escalation in Ukraine over the past few days, through the first direct negotiations in more than three years between Russia and Ukraine, aimed at reaching a ceasefire and a peaceful solution to end the war between the parties, it is regrettable that the recent hostilities have once again driven the situation towards confrontation. Ongoing military operations between the parties still pose a multi-scale threat to the lives of civilians, including women, children and the elderly, and to social infrastructure and vital facilities. That undermines any diplomatic effort aimed at ending the protracted war. In that regard, we reaffirm our full condemnation of the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure. That is a flagrant violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

Algeria has always expressed its concern about the military escalation between the parties, which has only led and will continue to lead to more innocent victims, threatening the safety and security of civilians and destroying essential infrastructure such as healthcare, education and energy facilities, not to mention the serious consequences it will have on food and energy systems. That continues to have an impact on countries around the world, in particular developing countries.

In the light of those developments, Algeria reiterates its call on both parties to refrain from escalation and military confrontation, put an end to human suffering and fully adhere to the provisions of international humanitarian law, which places the responsibility for the protection of civilians with the parties to the conflict.

Algeria also reiterates its call to the parties to prioritize constructive dialogue and consultation by focusing efforts on advancing negotiations and improving the chances of reaching consensus, while overcoming and removing the obstacles that hinder that process.

Moreover, Algeria urges all parties to avoid polarization, which will only widen the divisions and undermine mediation efforts, and instead adopt approaches aimed at promoting inclusive and constructive dialogue to prevent a return to the logic of escalation and fuelling differences between the two parties.

In that regard, Algeria welcomes the various efforts currently being made to facilitate dialogue between the two sides and to bring their diverging views closer together, as exemplified recently in the direct meeting that brought the two sides together in Istanbul, Türkiye.

We also welcome the agreement on the exchange of prisoners of war, reached during the same meeting, which is an important step and a tangible example of the benefits of constructive dialogue, including the ability to achieve mutual understanding and consensus between the two sides.

In conclusion, Algeria reiterates its commitment to supporting all international efforts to find a peaceful, just, lasting and mutually satisfactory solution based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that takes into account the legitimate security concerns of both parties.

Mr. Ibrahim (Somalia): My delegation thanks Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for their briefings.

The current developments serve as a reminder of the ongoing volatility in the region and the far-reaching consequences for civilian populations and infrastructure.

Recent incidents underscore the urgent need for renewed efforts to reduce tensions and prevent further escalation.

We take note of the forthcoming meeting between the representatives of Russia and Ukraine, planned for next Monday in Istanbul, Türkiye. That initiative represents an important opportunity to advance dialogue and build momentum towards a peaceful settlement.

My delegation welcomes all constructive engagement aimed at fostering mutual understanding and facilitating substantive negotiations. In that context, we call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire by all parties and urge restraint to prevent any further deterioration of the situation.

Lasting peace in Ukraine will be possible only through genuine diplomatic commitment, open channels of communication and respect for established principles under international law.

Constructive engagement remains essential. Only through sustained diplomatic efforts and a willingness to compromise can a durable and just peace be achieved.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its call for comprehensive de-escalation, renewed diplomatic engagement and the pursuit of a negotiated, lasting peace in Ukraine. We stand ready to support all efforts that move us closer to that shared goal.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for their briefings.

Recently, Russia and Ukraine held direct negotiations in Istanbul, Türkiye, and reached consensus on the exchange of prisoners. The prisoner swap has been completed smoothly, and Russia and Ukraine will soon hold a second round of direct negotiations. China welcomes those positive developments and supports all efforts towards peace. At the same time, the two parties to the conflict are still engaged in large-scale drone and missile attacks. The fighting shows no sign of stopping, and the number of civilian casualties continues to rise. That is heartbreaking and deeply troubling. It fully shows that the Ukraine crisis involves complex dynamics and problems and cannot be resolved overnight. In that regard, I wish to make three points.

First, the parties to the conflict should demonstrate political will, maintain the momentum of peace talks, address the root causes of the crisis through dialogue and

consultation and reach a fair, lasting and binding peace agreement acceptable to all parties concerned, so as to ultimately achieve a political settlement.

Secondly, the parties to the conflict should earnestly abide by international humanitarian law and refrain from attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure under all circumstances. Both sides should make concerted efforts and take active measures to de-escalate the situation on the battlefield.

Thirdly, the international community, especially key stakeholders, should increase their reasonable calls for a ceasefire and an end to the fighting and their promotion of peace talks and should create a conducive environment and enabling conditions and provide the necessary assistance to facilitate a political solution to the crisis.

China's position on the Ukraine issue is consistent and clear. Since the start of the crisis, we have been calling for dialogue, negotiation and a political settlement and have been guided by the four principles put forward by President Xi Jinping, that is, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be abided by, the reasonable security concerns of all parties should be taken seriously and all efforts for peace should be supported. China has maintained contact with both Russia and Ukraine and has been working consistently to promote peace talks. China, together with Brazil and other countries of the global South, initiated the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis, which is aimed at building international consensus and promoting peace efforts to facilitate a political solution to the crisis. On 13 May, China and Brazil issued a joint statement on the Ukraine crisis, supporting direct dialogue between Russia and Ukraine and stating the expectation that fruitful negotiations between the parties concerned would begin to build greater consensus and realize a political settlement. Together with the global South and the wider international community, China will continue to play a constructive role in achieving real peace.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Panama considers the convening of this meeting of interest in view of the current situation of the conflict in Ukraine. We are grateful for the briefings provided by Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and Ms. Lisa Doughten, Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which contained valuable insights. We acknowledge the presence of the representatives of the delegations of Ukraine, Czechia, Estonia, Poland, Iceland and the European Union.

Panama reiterates its dismay at the protracted war in Ukraine, which continues to cause loss of life, injuries and displacement. As we have stated in this and other conflicts, we condemn the incessant attacks on civilians and urgently call for compliance with international humanitarian law.

In that regard, we deplore the recent attacks reportedly carried out by Russian forces with missiles and drones on three consecutive nights — 24, 25 and 26 May — in Kyiv and other regions, against civilians and civilian infrastructure. According to the statement of the High Commissioner, Volker Türk, those attacks resulted in the death of 14 civilians, including three children, and some 88 wounded, of whom 11 were children. A generation of children has already been scarred by the sound of air raid sirens and the loss of loved ones, in what is a collective failure on the part of humankind.

Similarly, over the past weekend, numerous long-range drones were launched against the Russian Federation by the Ukrainian armed forces, injuring at least 11 civilians, according to the Russian authorities.

Panama reiterates its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, unrestricted respect for the life, safety and dignity of the civilian population and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Opposition to a ceasefire causes civilian suffering, as they are held hostage to uninterrupted attacks, and an increase in internally displaced persons whose total, according to figures from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, had reached more than 3.6 million by early 2025.

Political and diplomatic efforts have led to the exchange of prisoners and the start of talks towards a peace process. It is therefore imperative to continue diplomatic efforts and to create a climate of trust and ongoing dialogue, refraining from actions that continue the escalation of the conflict and damage the chances of a political settlement.

In the same vein, the ability to negotiate in order to find common ground, as demonstrated by the recent repatriation of prisoners of war, is a practice that should continue, always in line with the principles of international humanitarian law.

The consequences of the conflict also affect supply chains and the global economy, exacerbating the multiple crises that developing countries face, and it is therefore incumbent on the international community to assist in all initiatives that contribute to its peaceful resolution.

Panama encourages the parties to use dialogue and diplomacy as the only possible path towards understanding and commitment and a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Mr. Totangi (Sierra Leone): I too thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten for their briefings. We welcome the participation of the representative of Ukraine in today's meeting.

As the conflict in Ukraine moves beyond day 1,190, it is essential that the Security Council remain actively engaged in efforts to forge a path towards peace and bring an end to the conflict, which continues to claim innocent lives and cause widespread devastation.

In recent days, attacks on densely populated areas across Ukraine have resulted in at least 13 civilian deaths and 65 injuries, including women and children. Several regions of Ukraine remain particularly affected, with the period of 24 to 28 May reported to have seen the most intense assaults since 2022.

Drone attacks targeting areas in Russia, including Moscow, also signal an alarming escalation. The indiscriminate use of long-range missiles and drones, on both sides, underscores a troubling development, running counter to the principles of international humanitarian law and the imperative to protect civilian lives.

Sierra Leone remains deeply concerned by the continuing escalation of retaliatory attacks; even as diplomatic efforts are under way to secure a ceasefire. After more than three years of active conflict, it is increasingly clear that a military solution is unattainable. Only a negotiated ceasefire and a comprehensive peace agreement, one that takes into account the legitimate concerns of all parties, will offer a pathway to sustainable peace.

The humanitarian consequences of the conflict have been devastating. Since February 2022, a conservative estimate puts the number of casualties at approximately 45,001, including more than 13,134 killed. Children remain disproportionately affected, with more than 220 killed or injured between January and April 2025, and many subjected to mental and psychological trauma owing to the persistent threat of violence and disruption of essential services, including education.

We reiterate our call for the return of Ukrainian children who have been forcibly removed or separated from their families. We also note the recent statement by UN-Women on the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women's lives and livelihoods, and we emphasize the need for women's full and meaningful participation in peace negotiations and recovery processes on both sides.

Approximately 12.7 million people in Ukraine require life-saving humanitarian assistance this year. We commend the bravery and dedication of humanitarian workers who continue their efforts despite ongoing risks. Sierra Leone deplores the killing of two humanitarian workers and the injury of 16 others during the months of March and April. The protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel, must remain a central obligation in accordance with international humanitarian law and the fundamental principles of human dignity.

The widespread destruction of critical infrastructure, including healthcare, education, water and energy and gas facilities, has deepened an already dire humanitarian crisis. The World Bank has estimated this year's damage at approximately \$176 billion, with long-term reconstruction and recovery projected at approximately \$525 billion over the next decade. In that regard, we join the call for sustained and increased support for the Ukraine humanitarian response plan and the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, noting with concern that recent funding shortfalls have led to the suspension or scaling back of essential humanitarian assistance.

In the light of the enduring and far-reaching consequences of the conflict, Sierra Leone urges all parties to recommit to meaningful ceasefire and peace negotiations. We acknowledge the efforts of the United States, European leaders and regional actors which continue to facilitate dialogue aimed at de-escalation. We also take note of positive developments, including the recent exchange of approximately 1,000 prisoners of war and civilian detainees from both sides, as a significant confidence-building measure.

At this critical juncture, we call on both sides to prioritize peace and the well-being of their populations and to engage in direct, high-level dialogue. We further urge a de-escalation of military activities, including the mobilization of troops along border regions.

In conclusion, the Council must remain engaged in supporting the parties with a view to a comprehensive ceasefire and a stable peace, including in areas such as the Black Sea, which is vital to global commerce. Our efforts must remain guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Sierra Leone reiterates its call for full adherence to international law, particularly international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, the facilitation of unhindered humanitarian access and renewed diplomatic engagement aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace.

Ms. Benn (Guyana): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Director, Ms. Lisa Doughten, for their updates and welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Czechia, Estonia, Poland and Iceland and the observer of the European Union in today's meeting.

Like clockwork, the Security Council knows that, every month, we will meet to discuss the situation in Ukraine — some months, as many as four times. In similar terms, we have grown accustomed to expecting that the meetings will conclude without us having reached or gotten any closer to a solution. Yet every time we meet, we are briefed about the worsening situation, as lives and livelihoods continue to be shattered. It is time for that cycle to be broken and for progress to be made towards ending the war. The briefings highlight in very stark terms the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine — a situation that has tragically worsened in recent weeks

with drone and missile strikes. The aerial strikes over the weekend are reportedly the largest seen so far in the war and have claimed the lives of several civilians, including children. They came at a time when considerable efforts are being made to achieve a ceasefire. We are deeply disappointed that there have been setbacks along the road to a lasting ceasefire and welcome the recent announcement of a follow-up meeting between the two parties. We took positive note of the first meeting between Russian and Ukrainian officials in Istanbul on 16 May, which resulted in the exchange of 1,000 prisoners on each side. We welcome such efforts, which we hope will ultimately lead to a ceasefire and much-needed respite for the Russian and Ukrainian people.

Regarding the humanitarian situation, Guyana deplores the continued killing and maiming of civilians and calls for an immediate end to the indiscriminate attacks. International humanitarian law is clear: conflict parties must take all feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm. Guyana continues to stress that the consequences of such violations of international law are not confined to borders and cannot be left unchecked. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has repeatedly sounded the alarm about widespread and systematic attacks being carried out in Ukraine. We are now hearing about the use of drones with embedded cameras that are focused on visibly civilian targets. Guyana calls for an end to the senseless violence and for full accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. We also reiterate that central to achieving a permanent ceasefire in the current context is the need to reach an agreement on the immediate cessation of hostilities, unimpeded humanitarian access — including to the temporarily occupied territories — and the provision of necessary security guarantees, *inter alia*.

At this critical juncture, we urge the parties to remain focused and avoid any missteps that could doom millions of Ukrainian and Russian citizens to even more bombardment and displacement. We remain supportive of all efforts aimed at bringing the parties together and achieving a lasting and sustainable ceasefire. We urge the Council to engage constructively towards that end. Three years on, it should be clear to all that there is no military solution to, and no winners in, this war.

Finally, we must all uphold our responsibility and, as custodians of peace and defenders of the Charter of the United Nations, work together to ensure the protection of civilians, wherever they are.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to once again state for the record that we completely disagree with the presidency's approach to inviting delegations to today's meeting under rules 37 and 39. Besides Ukraine, five other delegations have been invited, all of them are either members or allies of NATO and the European Union (EU). Time and again, these delegations take up at least half an hour of the Council's precious time — which is also literally very expensive given the budget deficit of the United Nations — to simply read out the same narratives that have zero added value and are virtually identical to those of the EU observer. That is an unacceptable situation, and the presidency is fully responsible for it. It is obvious that, when presiding over the Security Council, the European nations are simply incapable of placing the Security Council President's obligation to act impartially above bloc solidarity. That undermines the Council's credibility and devalues our discussions.

However, we expect the European delegations — especially those who largely sponsored the “pumping” of the Kyiv regime with arms — to request to address the Security Council tomorrow at the briefing that we requested in order to discuss what Europeans are doing to thwart the peace process regarding Ukraine. We have many questions for them, and we are waiting for answers. Still, we have significant doubts as to whether the Europeans will summon the courage to come and give their answers, as they will have to do that not in the format of a staged EU-NATO “get

together” where they feel comfortable and act according to the “scripts” agreed on in Brussels, but rather in the format of an interactive discussion with the entire global community looking on, which is what the Security Council discussion should really be. However, our former European partners lost their strategic sovereignty long ago and are simply incapable of doing what I just asked for.

The script of today’s meeting is absolutely clear and predictable: much like previous similar initiatives by our Western — and of late European — colleagues, today’s meeting is not geared towards solving problems or bringing the Ukrainian crisis closer to a peaceful settlement. Instead, the goal is to make sure that the image of a supposedly free and democratic Ukraine is not destroyed for good. Ukraine is portrayed as the victim of an alleged “Russian aggression” with the European sponsors of the Kyiv regime trying to keep that image afloat for quite some years now, as they began to create it long before Russia started its special military operation in Ukraine. It is becoming increasingly difficult for London, Paris, Berlin and their satellites to inflate that propaganda “bubble”, as it is all too obvious now that what they have in Ukraine is nothing but a dictatorship and the Kyiv expired princeling would stop at nothing to hold on to power, which he would lose if peace prevails. What he fears most are elections, since he and his sidekicks would have to answer for failing to deliver on their promises to have peace with Russia, protect the rights of Russian-speaking Ukrainians and respect the rights and freedoms of everyone in the country, which he himself has turned into a concentration camp and a meat grinder.

In addition, as long as the bugbear of “Russian threat” persists, Zelenskyy’s clique can evade accounting for all the embezzled budget money and Western assistance, primarily provided by the United States, which already amounts to tens, if not hundreds, of billions of dollars. That is something that neither Zelenskyy’s henchmen in Europe nor the Biden Administration want, as they too have profited handsomely from the Ukrainian conflict. That is why the main objective of that group of militarists is to draw out the war for as long as possible and prevent the main stakeholder, the United States, from withdrawing from the Ukraine/anti-Russia geopolitical project. Yet that is not that easy, because the new American Administration has had its eyes opened in the past few months to the true colours of Zelenskyy’s regime and the root causes of the Ukrainian conflict. The only thing that those warmongers can do about that is resort to all kinds of provocations and spreading lies about Russia, its actions and its plans.

Today yet again, in the Chamber, they are trying to make us believe that Russia is deliberately shelling residential areas of Ukrainian cities. As evidence, they offer the consequences of the operation of Ukrainian air defence stationed near homes and social infrastructure in violation of the basic norms of international humanitarian law. At the same time, what is being kept quiet is the fact that our strikes target exclusively objects related to Ukraine’s military-industrial complex, and we are successfully destroying them or rendering them inoperable. Over the past few days alone, we have hit ammunition stores and depots in the Dnipropetrovsk region, a temporary deployment site and a storage facility for rocket-artillery weapons of a mechanized brigade of the Ukrainian armed forces in the Sumy region, as well as temporary accommodation sites for foreign mercenaries near the town of Svyatohirsk, in the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Kharkiv region. Another strike hit a Ukrainian defence industry plant — the Pavlograd chemical plant, in the Dnipropetrovsk region — and two Patriot anti-aircraft missile launchers were destroyed. Rockets were fired on an unloading and storage area containing military equipment and munitions in the port of Odesa. It resulted in the destruction of roughly 100 containers of important components for uncrewed vessels and drones, as well as ammunition.

Another fact that is being hushed up is that Russia is doing what I have just mentioned only in response to the massive and targeted shelling of peaceful Russian towns by the Kyiv regime. Despite the 72-hour ceasefire declared by Russia on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the victory over fascism, we recorded over 14,000 violations from 8 May to 11: more than 4,000 attacks from cannon artillery, tanks and mortars; 62 attacks using multiple-launch rocket systems; 9,900 strikes and releases of munition using uncrewed aerial vehicle systems (UAVs). We also recorded five attempts to break through the Russian State border in the Belgorod and Kursk regions, as well as 37 attacks waged by the Ukrainian armed forces.

During these three days of aggression, six Russian civilians were killed at the hands of Banderites, and at least 17 were wounded. What is telling is that the most massive drone attacks on civilian objects in a number of Russian cities located far from the front line, including Moscow, were unleashed by the Kyiv regime right after we saw nascent progress towards peace. Specifically, these attacks were waged after the resumption of direct Russian-Ukrainian talks in Istanbul to set a course towards ending the conflict.

Between 8 p.m. on 20 May and 8 a.m. on 27 May, we intercepted and destroyed 2,331 UAVs launched from Ukraine, with 1,465 drones intercepted outside of the special military operation zone. Regrettably, these attacks resulted in the injuries and deaths of civilians, including women and children.

On 22 May, eight people were wounded as a result of an attack on the village of Panteleymonovka, in the Donetsk People's Republic. On the same day, drone strikes in the Vasilyvka municipal district of the Zaporizhzhya region killed a woman, born in 1990, and injured four children. The Ukrainian armed forces also launched two strikes with High Mobility Artillery Rocket System missiles on civilian facilities in the town of Lgov, in the Kursk oblast, where 16 people were injured, including two children.

The plans concocted by Zelenskyy and his accomplices are plain and clear. Their task is to trick and mislead President Trump, who is taking decisive steps towards peace; they are ready to go to any lengths to steer the United States, which has already wasted hundreds of billions of dollars helping Ukraine, back to an anti-Russian and Russophobic course. At tomorrow's briefing, we will discuss the methods and tactics they are using to derail the peace efforts undertaken by the leaders of Russia, the United States and a number of other regional mediators. We will not dwell on it now, as we have requested a meeting on this very topic.

What I will say now is that promoting Ukrainian and Western lies about Russia is becoming increasingly difficult, since the actual steps of the Kyiv regime, its deliberate choice of war and the further suffering of its citizens speak volumes. What is also clear and undeniable are the peace initiatives and concrete steps being taken by the Russian leadership.

We intend to continue pursuing this course and are willing to proceed with the serious direct negotiations with Ukraine, which Ukraine itself suspended in April 2022 at the instigation of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and like-minded Russophobes. This negotiation process should bring about a solution that reliably addresses the root causes of the Ukrainian conflict and the threats to the security of my country emanating from Ukraine. The Ukrainian side has been invited to meet in Istanbul on 2 June to discuss the content of our memoranda regarding approaches to the negotiation process.

As long as Kyiv tries to prolong the war and provoke Russia by striking at residential and civilian infrastructure on our territory, we will continue our special military operation and we will continue destroying facilities linked to its regime's military capabilities. No new anti-Russian sanctions, nor deliveries of weapons to

Ukraine, nor other hostile steps vis-à-vis Russia will be able to prevent the inevitable military defeat of the Zelenskyy regime.

The ball is in Ukraine's court: either talks followed by peace or the unavoidable defeat of Ukraine on the battlefield, with different conditions for ending the conflict.

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

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Director Doughten for their detailed briefings.

It has already been a month since the Council was last seized on the war in Ukraine (see S/PV.9908). One would hope that, in the meantime, peace talks under the United States-led initiative would have borne tangible results. After all, the United States and Ukraine agreed to a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire almost three months ago and all parties to the war, including Russia, have declared their intention to achieve a peaceful settlement. Yet, this ceasefire still eludes us — because of Russia.

Instead of building on the promise of peace, there has been a continuation of deadly attacks in May, while noting that April, according to verified data of the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, became the deadliest month — not only for Ukrainian civilians, in general, since September 2024, but, particularly, for children, since June 2022. As the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator has stressed, across Ukraine no place is safe.

We echo the Secretary-General's condemnation of the latest attacks and add our voice with the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership, which, in multiple General Assembly resolutions, has demanded the cessation of hostilities and the return to peace, in full respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Greece condemns any targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure as a clear violation of the basic tenets of international humanitarian law and demands accountability for the perpetrators and justice for the victims. In that regard, we commend the role of United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF, for their multifaceted support to civilians, in particular children, as well as the tireless efforts and courage of humanitarian workers, who have also suffered increased casualties these past months.

Regrettably, peace efforts, culminating in the attempts at direct bilateral negotiations on 16 May, did not produce any breakthroughs. On the contrary, they have only further confirmed Russia's intransigence. At the same time, the agreement for the largest exchange of prisoners of war and civilian detainees between the two sides since the start of the war is a welcome development and the only tangible deliverable of the negotiations.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Greece's stance through these 39 months of war has been principled and consistent, in favour of international law, including international humanitarian law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. In that respect, we reiterate that a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire should remain our first priority on the way to our ultimate goal of achieving first, a permanent cessation of hostilities; secondly, a just, comprehensive and lasting peace achieved through inclusive diplomacy, in line with the United Nations Charter and international law, that upholds Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; and thirdly, security guarantees that will prevent the recurrence of war.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Ms. Hayovyshyn (Ukraine): I express gratitude to the Greek presidency for convening today's Security Council meeting and thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Ms. Doughten, representative of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their substantive briefings.

Today is already the 1,191st day of Ukraine's resistance against the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale military invasion. Russia's aims remain unchanged — to subjugate Ukraine militarily, seeking control over our entire nation to further its imperialistic ambitions. Failing to achieve those objectives independently, it enlists support from authoritarian regimes such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. Moreover, Ukrainian intelligence has confirmed that China is supplying special chemicals, gunpowder and machinery to 20 Russian military factories. That cooperation must cease immediately.

Ukraine continues to defend itself in full accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We are grateful for the unwavering support of our European and American and other partners and allies, which bolsters our defence capabilities.

Simply put: Ukraine did not initiate this war, nor do we desire its continuation today. On its part, Russia could end its aggression at any moment, but persistently rejects all credible paths to peace.

Ukraine has consistently demonstrated its commitment to diplomacy and remains open to any format that can yield tangible results. We supported the United States proposal for a 30-day full interim unconditional ceasefire agreed upon in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 11 March. Ukraine firmly believes that a ceasefire of at least 30 days must be the first step towards negotiations on a just and lasting peace. We reaffirmed that proposal multiple times, but Russia consistently refuses to accept it. Russia's actions clearly indicate its unwillingness for peace.

On 20 April, despite media reports of Russia's alleged readiness for a so-called Easter ceasefire, Russian forces carried out 1,882 shelling attacks, conducted 33 strikes of multiple-launch rocket system strikes and deployed 957 kamikaze drones against Ukraine.

Russia again declared, solely through media channels, its readiness for a ceasefire from 8 to 10 May. In practice, it launched 115 air strikes, dropped 197 guided aerial bombs, carried out 12,100 shelling attacks, including 187 by multiple-launch rocket systems, and targeted civilian infrastructure with 7,303 kamikaze drones. That is what Russia's so-called ceasefire entailed.

On 10 May, Ukraine, alongside European leaders from France, Germany, Poland and the United Kingdom, supported by the United States and other partners, called on Russia again to agree to a 30-day ceasefire. The collective will of Ukraine and its partners was clear: if the Russian Federation refused, robust sanctions would be imposed on Russia, particularly targeting the energy and banking sectors. Russia's response was to reject an unconditional ceasefire and instead demand direct negotiations with Ukraine in Türkiye.

We are not afraid of talks. We are for constructive talks. President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy was ready for a personal meeting with Putin, because only Putin decides the strategic issues of war and peace in Russia. Our President visited Türkiye on 15 May, ready for a direct meeting — whether in Ankara or Istanbul. Putin, however, refused to attend, sending a low-level delegation lacking decision-making authority. Despite that, a high-level Ukrainian negotiating team, headed by Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, was ready to discuss the ceasefire.

Notably, the Russian delegation mostly consisted of the same individuals it had sent to Istanbul in 2022. That demonstrates that Russia has not altered its fundamental approach. Its goal is to transform the Istanbul meeting into a staged, hollow process,

reminiscent of the talks in 2022. It is not Ukraine or Western leaders who are undermining negotiations, as Russia claims. It is Russia that sends a delegation with no decision-making mandate, effectively nullifying the prospects of diplomacy.

The only positive result of the meeting in Istanbul was an agreed exchange of prisoners of war in the format of 1,000 for 1,000, implemented from 23 to 25 May. Overall, if one sets aside all Russian nonsense, pseudo-historical statements, provocations and the like, the Russian plan to present the Istanbul meeting as a continuation of March 2022 has failed. There is a completely new dynamic. The conditions and realities are different now.

In order to overcome the current diplomatic stalemate, there is a need for a meeting at the leaders' level. And President Zelenskyy has repeatedly reaffirmed his readiness to meet with Putin at any time and at any mutually agreeable location.

We will continue to insist on an unconditional and a complete ceasefire for at least 30 days as the only viable foundation for the success of any further discussions and steps.

However, Russia is now trying to buy time in order to continue its war and occupy more Ukrainian land. It continues to intimidate and terrorize Ukrainian civilians by attacking critical infrastructure and residential areas. All of that sends a clear signal: Russia does not desire to end the war and is neither ready nor willing to engage in genuine negotiations. Russia's actions warrant full-scale pressure to limit its military capabilities and to push it towards real peace.

The Istanbul meeting and its follow-up cannot and will not serve as an excuse not to increase pressure on Russia. On the contrary, it is proof of why such pressure is urgently needed. The strength of the pressure is inversely proportional to the Russians' willingness to be constructive and embark on a genuine peace process.

The Russian Federation continues to escalate its brutal and systematic attacks on civilians across Ukraine. Day and night, Ukraine endures relentless waves of deadly drone and missile strikes. In May, their scale and intensity reached unprecedented levels of devastation. On 24 and 25 May, the Russian Federation executed one of the largest combined assaults since the onset of its full-scale aggression — launching 83 missiles of various types and 548 drones against civilian targets across Ukraine. The attacks killed at least 12 civilians and injured dozens of others. In the Zhytomyr region, an air strike on a residential neighbourhood killed three siblings from one family — 8-year-old Stanislav, 12-year-old Tamara and 17-year-old Roman.

On 26 May, Russia launched its largest drone attack since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, using 355 attack drones, along with nine cruise missiles targeting civilian areas, again killing and injuring civilians and damaging or destroying residential buildings and civilian infrastructure.

In just these three days, Russia launched more than 900 attack drones, along with ballistic and cruise missiles.

Russian terror against civilians continues every single day. Today Russia launched an air strike on the village in the Zaporizhzhya region, using guided bombs. The attack killed at least two civilians and injured three others. More than 50 homes are damaged, and five were destroyed. And nearly 600 households lost electricity.

Those strikes lack military logic. The aggressive State is gaining nothing. They are clearly intended to terrorize the civilian population, inflict widespread destruction and reflect a blatant disregard for international humanitarian law and a profound contempt for diplomacy. They also represent a deliberate political decision — Putin's decision — to continue his war of aggression.

Each such terrorist attack justifies the imposition of new, strengthened sanctions against the Russian Federation. The silence of the international community only emboldens Putin.

Those ongoing attacks underscore the urgent need for continued and expanded support to protect Ukrainian civilians from indiscriminate violence. We are deeply grateful for every partner and ally assisting Ukraine in strengthening its air defence capabilities. The timely delivery of air defence systems saves lives.

Ukraine welcomes the recent report by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, which for the first time documents Russia's systematic drone attacks against civilians in the Kherson region. That inhumane tactic of terror has continued for a long time and must not go unpunished.

Threats to Ukraine's civilian population represent a new and troubling aspect of modern warfare, potentially setting a precedent for future full-scale conflicts. A defining feature is the constant, direct threat of missile and long-range drone attacks across the entire country, even in regions over a thousand kilometres from the front line. That sustained threat not only endangers civilian lives but also severely impacts the psychological, security and socioeconomic well-being of the population. It is an integral element of Russia's military strategy that must be duly addressed within the United Nations broader efforts and discussions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Let us recall that thousands of Ukrainians, both civilians and military personnel, remain imprisoned in the Russian Federation or in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. Many were captured before 2022. They continue to be subjected to torture, inhumane and degrading treatment and conflict-related sexual violence, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. Russia continues to return Ukrainians in a highly selective and arbitrary manner. Ukraine demands an immediate and unconditional stop to all torture and ill-treatment of detainees and full adherence to the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, as well as compliance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, and the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders, known as the Bangkok Rules.

The situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant remains critically difficult, where all seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict continue to be systematically violated. Moscow blatantly disregards international diplomatic efforts, including by the United States, aimed at ending Russia's war of aggression and ensuring global nuclear safety. According to Greenpeace, Russia is building a new high-voltage power line in the temporarily occupied territory of the Zaporizhzhya region to illegally connect the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to the Russian power grid. Let me stress that disconnecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant from Ukraine's power grid significantly increases the risks. In the event of an emergency, the plant could lose its last reliable source of external power. That is a direct path to a blackout at the plant, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

Furthermore, Moscow's policy of blackmail and blatant disregard for international law forced the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to conduct a second rotation through the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine. We insist that, despite Russian pressure, the IAEA must remain committed to the principles of international law, in particular the inviolability of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and not recognize any changes in jurisdiction over the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

Ukraine urges the IAEA and the international community to respond to those actions by the Russian Federation decisively. The rotation of IAEA personnel should be carried out exclusively through the territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, until the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is fully returned to its rightful owner, Ukraine.

Achieving peace at any cost will not end the war. A comprehensive, just and lasting peace must rest on fundamental respect for non-negotiable principles. We repeat, Ukraine will never accept and recognize any part of its temporarily occupied territory as Russian. We will not tolerate interference in sovereign decisions, including our defence or alliances. There must be no appeasement of the aggressor — such attempts only embolden future aggression.

Russia is not signalling any genuine intention to stop its war. Therefore, we see no alternative but intensified international pressure — political, military and economic. Sanctions must be expanded and strengthened. Russian oil, its shadow tanker fleet, financial networks and its military industry must all be targeted.

Russia is facing a moment at which it needs to prove its seriousness. We need concrete decisions, first and foremost regarding an unconditional and complete ceasefire for at least 30 days. Ukraine is ready to work for peace. Russia must also show that it is ready.

As a confidence-building measure, we propose the immediate and unconditional return of all abducted Ukrainian children, prisoners of war and detained civilians.

For peace to endure, justice must prevail. We welcome progress by the core group on establishing a special tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Technical work on the necessary legal instruments is complete.

At the heart of global peace and security lies the Charter of the United Nations. Upholding it is not optional; it is our collective duty. That is the standard by which each member of the Council, and indeed the international community, will be judged.

Yet today we see a grave distortion of that duty. The Russian Federation, still present in the Soviet permanent seat, is using its status not to preserve peace but to shield its war of aggression against Ukraine. That abuse strikes at the core of the international system we are all meant to uphold.

Ukraine, for its part, seeks a just and lasting peace, one rooted in the principles of the United Nations Charter and reinforced by binding, long-term security guarantees.

Peace cannot rest on words alone and, particularly, words do not work with Moscow. It requires concrete steps: an immediate and just ceasefire, sustained diplomatic engagement and the establishment of a credible security architecture centred around effective security guarantees for Ukraine that will prevent the recurrence of aggression.

That is why Ukraine is working with all partners — the United States, the European Union and all international partners — to build a broad-based, principled coalition for peace. But to succeed, the international community must act with unity and resolve. Now is not the time for hesitation. Now is the time to increase coordinated pressure, not merely to influence the course of Russia's war of aggression, but to bring it to a close, and to secure peace for all of our future generations.

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

Mr. Kulháněk (Czechia): Let me begin by thanking the Greek presidency of the Security Council for convening this important meeting.

We stand at a critical juncture — a moment that demands we decide whether the senseless killing and suffering of civilians in Ukraine shall continue, or whether

we shall finally see an end to Russia's illegal and unprovoked invasion, now in its twelfth year.

The choice before Russia is stark and simple. No amount of diplomatic sophistry or propaganda can obscure this fundamental question — is Putin's Russia prepared to end the death and suffering it has inflicted upon Ukraine?

Ukraine has demonstrated its commitment to peace through actions, not merely words. President Zelenskyy has repeatedly stated Ukraine's readiness for an immediate, unconditional 30-day ceasefire and the commencement of talks to end the war, permanently, with no strings attached and no preconditions.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to play for time. When Russia's President suggested direct talks, Ukraine's President accepted without hesitation, ready to meet his counterpart face to face. Yet, while Ukraine stretches out its hand, the Kremlin bides its time. I invite members of the Council to draw their own conclusions about who genuinely seeks peace and who perpetuates killing and suffering.

The past several days have reminded us, yet again, of Russia's true intentions. We have witnessed the relentless escalation of aerial attacks against Ukrainian cities, which kill innocent civilians, including children, and devastate civilian infrastructure with calculated cruelty.

The time has come to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Czechia joins others in calling upon the Council and the wider international community to help to create the conditions for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine — a peace that upholds the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Peace cannot be dictated by the aggressor. Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to choose its own future must be guaranteed.

The path forward is clear. The choice is Russia's to make. The world is watching. End the invasion. Respect international law. Silence the guns. Sit down at the table in good faith. End this now.

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

Mr. Tammsaar (Estonia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States — Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union. I would like to thank the briefers for their valuable input.

There has not been a day since the beginning of the Russian aggression when Russia has not bombed Ukraine. Even this past weekend, while Russia claims that it is actively pursuing peace, it conducted the most intense wave of aerial attacks against Ukraine since the beginning of the aggression, using roughly 1,000 drones and missiles to deliberately attack civilians and civilian infrastructure. That terror should be condemned by all who claim to stand for peace and justice.

Since Russia's aggression, Ukraine has repeatedly expressed its unwavering commitment and political will to reach a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant General Assembly resolutions. Ukraine agreed to a full and unconditional ceasefire, proposed by the United States. President Zelenskyy expressed readiness to meet with Putin to discuss peace, but the Russian side ignored that opportunity, sending a sham delegation to the meeting instead. We see the Kremlin dragging its feet and using all sorts of fabricated excuses while raising already unreasonable demands even further, making it clear that Moscow has no interest in agreeing to a real ceasefire in Ukraine.

How long do we have to endure this drawn-out routine, while Russia keeps on implementing its genocidal policy? Those attacks are not madness, but a deliberate attempt by Russia to eradicate any hope Ukrainians have. Russia is adopting the tactics of the Nazis who systematically carpet-bombed London in 1940 and 1941, with the sole aim of making the British population feel terrified and hopeless and force its leaders to surrender. The Nazis failed and so will Russia.

The Kremlin is trying to convince all of us, the United States in particular, that our support for Ukraine is futile. Russia is calculating that by demonstrating its ability to harm and bleed Ukraine, it can also paralyze our political will to support Kyiv. However, Russia's assessment seems to be as adequate as its original expectation that it would overrun Ukraine in three days. Yet Russia's aggression and imperial zeal can only be curbed by increased joint international pressure to force it into peace in Ukraine and to cease its aggression once and for all. Persuasion and appeasement are perceived as weaknesses in Moscow and therefore embolden the aggressor. Only increasing support for the victim of the aggression, Ukraine, and raising the cost of the aggression for Russia can pave the way to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Full accountability is an integral part of any just peace. By establishing the special tribunal on Russia's crime of aggression against Ukraine under the auspices of the Council of Europe, we will bring to justice those individuals who have committed heinous crimes.

We welcome the talks in Istanbul between Ukraine and Russia on 16 May and the subsequent exchange of prisoners of war. We call on Russia to proceed immediately with an all-for-all prisoners swap, as Ukraine proposed a long time ago. The testimonies of the returned Ukrainian prisoners of war are consistent with United Nations reporting on the widespread abuse and torture conducted in the revived Russian Gulag prison network. We therefore urge Russia to respect international law and the Geneva Conventions, stop the torture, starvation and ill-treatment of prisoners of war and ensure their access to adequate medical assistance.

Finally, we continue to stand by Ukraine and reiterate our collective efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): At the outset let me thank the Greek presidency for convening this important meeting and for accepting our request to participate in it. I would also like to thank the briefers for their insights.

We meet on the 1,191st day of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. From the very first day, Poland, along with other United Nations Members, has been appealing for the Russian war against Ukraine to be brought to an end. All we wish for is a just and lasting peace at our borders. There have been 1,191 opportunities to end the aggression by introducing an immediate, full and unconditional ceasefire that could open way to genuine peace negotiations based on the full realization of international law. Unfortunately, for 1,191 days, President Putin has remained deaf to the demands of the world. He pretends to be open to negotiations, while in reality, he is simply playing for time in order to attain a stronger position on the battlefield, no matter how many human lives it will cost. Russia has consistently and bluntly rebuffed any attempts to find a way to initiate real peace talks offered by various entities.

The best illustration of Russia's lack of commitment to de-escalation was provided by the largest drone attack against Ukrainian cities since the beginning of the war, in parallel to last weekend's Russian-Ukrainian exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war. We welcome the exchange as a positive development. We condemn the latest Russian missile attacks on cities in Ukraine. Right after this organ — the Security

Council — finished debating on the absolute necessity to protect civilians in times of armed conflict (see S/PV.9921), many innocent Ukrainians died or were wounded, including defenceless children. As per recent reports, April 2025 was the deadliest month for children in Ukraine since June 2022 — at least 19 children were killed and 78 injured. We continue to call for Russia to be held fully accountable for its violations of international law and human rights, war crimes and the crime of aggression, both at State level and the level of the individual.

Poland actively supports the United States-led diplomatic efforts towards peace. To be sustainable, peace must be just, comprehensive and based on the Charter of the United Nations and its provisions for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and equality of States. And it must be accompanied by security guarantees, not for Russia but for a future without Russian attacks, not only against Ukraine but also other European countries.

In conclusion, Poland will remain determined to continue its multifaceted support for Ukraine, including through financial, economic, humanitarian, military and diplomatic means, for as long as it takes to help Ukraine to exercise its inherent right to self-defence. Such resolve in the face of the unprovoked and illegal invasion remains a joint obligation of the international community.

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

Ms. Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Iceland.

Let me thank the briefers today for their substantive and solemn briefings.

The Nordics have been stalwart supporters of the United Nations since its foundation. We are, and will always be, friends of the Charter of the United Nations, and we will continue to stand by it. Our common security depends on it. The General Assembly has repeatedly condemned Russia's blatant violations of international law, including the Charter. Russia will be held to account.

No one wants an end to this war more than Ukrainians. We have joined Ukraine and international partners, including the United States, in calling for a full, unconditional ceasefire, to which Ukraine already committed more than two months ago. A ceasefire would end the suffering and allow for meaningful talks. It is now for Russia to reciprocate. Instead, it prevaricates. Instead, it continues to launch waves of attacks on Ukrainian cities, which, in the past five days, have caused at least 160 casualties. Yet again, innocent children are paying the price for Russia's brutal war. The Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine has said that no place is safe. That is on top of many months of targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure, residential neighbourhoods and energy facilities, all at an enormous cost in lives and the destruction of property and with total disregard for Russia's obligations under international humanitarian law. Russia could end the war tomorrow. Instead, it continues to pursue maximalist aims. Russia has consistently claimed that there are so-called root causes behind its war against Ukraine, as if it were somehow forced to act. But that is a false narrative. Russia made a deliberate choice to invade a sovereign nation — an unprovoked act in blatant violation of international law.

Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have shown themselves to have extraordinary reserves of courage to provide resistance. They have prevailed for more than three years and three months. All peace-loving countries that value the rule of law and international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, must unite to support Ukraine's struggle. And there can be no justification for continuing material or political support for Russia. It must stop now. This war must end. Not only is Ukraine's freedom and independence at stake, so too are the credibility and integrity

of the international system and this very institution. The neo-imperial and colonial ambitions of Russia have no place in the twenty-first century. We reaffirm our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes as we hopefully move closer to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

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

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

The European Union (EU) reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations. I would like to thank the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their clear statements on the consequences of this war of aggression against Ukraine and for their critical efforts in leading the United Nations political and humanitarian engagement in Ukraine.

After countless Council meetings to address Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, where we have each repeated our core concerns and messages time and again, we should all be able to agree on at least one thing now: that a full and unconditional ceasefire is what is needed now as a necessary condition for meaningful peace discussions.

Many of us — many here today — have called repeatedly for a ceasefire on several occasions and in different formats. Many have done so while stressing the importance of an end to this war grounded in the United Nations Charter, international law and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as applicable to all United Nations Member States. Now is the time to make that a reality. End this illegal war and suffering and achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with the United Nations Charter and international law. We welcome all efforts towards achieving such a peace. We, as Europeans, together with Ukraine, have been working tirelessly to that end.

The European Union joins Ukraine, the United States and other international partners in calling for a full, unconditional ceasefire of at least 30 days. This pause in hostilities would serve as a vital step towards reducing civilian suffering and allow for further exchanges of prisoners and the return of abducted children. It would also provide space for meaningful talks aimed at ending Russia's war of aggression and achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

Ukraine has repeatedly demonstrated its readiness to accept a comprehensive and immediate ceasefire without preconditions, committing to such a step months ago. President Zelenskyy travelled to Türkiye for direct talks with Russia's President, which, unfortunately, never materialized.

As has been the case from the beginning of this war, it is now up to Russia to show its own willingness to achieve peace. To date, it has not done so. Last weekend, it launched its largest attack on Ukraine's cities since the 2022 invasion, reportedly firing 355 drones and killing 13 people. The human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine has noted the increase in civilian casualties resulting from Russia's aggression over the past months. In April, at least 209 civilians were killed and 1,146 injured. Russia's campaign of systematic air strikes against Ukraine's civilians and civilian critical infrastructure has not only not stopped — it has intensified. It violates international humanitarian law, undermines efforts for peace and must finally stop now.

We must all reiterate this message. We must all reiterate our continued support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, under the Charter. The EU will continue to support Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes.

The Council must exert full, principled and effective diplomatic pressure for a full and unconditional ceasefire and for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in line with the United Nations Charter. We implore one and all to do so immediately.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.