



Security Council

Eightieth year

9926th meeting

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New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Stamatekos	(Greece)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria.	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang/Mr. Teng Fei
	Denmark	Ms. Landi
	France	Mrs. Meyer
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. June Byoung Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Swallow
	Slovenia	Mr. Ponikvar
	Somalia	Mr. Ibrahim
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
	United States of America.	Mr. Jongeneel

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

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

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Yesterday we gathered in this Chamber (see S/PV.9924) solely so that the European States could keep our attention artificially focused on the Ukrainian issue. Yet today we do not see in the Chamber those delegations that always attend the meetings on Ukraine convened by Western States. But that is precisely what we expected. What we propose today is focusing not on meaningless rhetoric and accusations, but rather on a constructive discussion of real progress with regard to the peaceful settlement of the Ukrainian crisis, including on the objective obstacles that continue to stand in the way of lasting peace.

The logic behind what is happening with the Ukrainian settlement process is very simple. Sensible forces in Ukraine, Russia, the new United States Administration and the countries of the global South are taking serious steps to ensure that the hostilities in Ukraine end and never resume. But a simple ceasefire is not enough to achieve that; we already reached that point previously in the context of the Minsk agreements, which were systematically violated by the West and Ukraine. In order to achieve a sustainable and lasting settlement of the Ukrainian crisis we need to address its root causes. To that end, Russia proposed resuming direct talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul, Türkiye, which Kyiv suspended in April 2022 at the behest of Boris Johnson and other Western leaders. Now we are proposing a second round of talks in Istanbul, next Monday, on 2 June, at which we will be able to exchange memoranda on the approaches of both sides to the negotiation process.

However, there is a whole host of forces who are not interested in such a scenario, for various reasons. The overstaying Ukrainian President does not want to stop the hostilities because he is afraid of losing his grip on power. If that were to happen, he would have to hold elections and answer to his electorate for what he has turned Ukraine into over the past six years. He would also have to account for the hundreds of billions of dollars in State funds and aid from the West, primarily from the United States, that has been embezzled.

European warmongers are also not interested in putting an end to the hostilities. They have been implementing their anti-Russia project in Ukraine since at least 2014, and they are not ready to give up on it to and allow the cessation of hostilities until Russia is defeated or at least bled dry. Having lost millions of its citizens, Ukraine is on the verge of total defeat; therefore, the European sponsors of the so-called private military company Ukraine are ordering Zelenskyy and his clique to continue fighting until the last Ukrainian, which is compelling the Kyiv regime to grab the remaining Ukrainian men off the streets and throw them into the senseless meat grinder.

Needless to say, London, Brussels, Paris and Berlin have been somewhat discouraged by the fact that the main stakeholder in the Ukraine project — the United States — decided to withdraw from that pointless and disastrous game after a new realistic Administration came into power in Washington. However, they are

not losing hope in bringing the Americans back into their ranks. Thus, they have no scruples about resorting to any provocations or any lies about Russia and its actions to change the mind of the United States President. Indeed, all the statements by the Western politicians involved in the Ukrainian conflict are intended to capture the attention of the United States President. They are hoping that blatant manipulation and obfuscation will prevent him from repairing relations with Russia. For example, we know Mr. Trump regularly receives reports of Russian strikes on the Ukrainian military-industrial complex, and those strikes are being presented, contrary to the facts, as targeted attacks on civilian objects. At the same time, there is an intentional silencing of the fact that those strikes are targeting exclusively military objects and enterprises related to Ukraine's military-industrial complex and that we are launching those strikes, among other things, in response to the unprecedented escalation of attacks by the Kyiv regime on peaceful Russian cities. We provided the relevant statistics about that yesterday.

In order to thwart efforts to establish peace, European States have recently taken a number of steps to increase tensions and escalate the situation. Therefore, the new German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, recently announced the lifting of restrictions on the range of weapons supplied to Ukraine by the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the United States. He even specified that this had already begun a few months ago. Experts directly linked his words to the supply of Taurus missiles to Ukraine, which is something that the Kyiv regime has been begging for since we began our special military operation.

Afterwards, the German leader tried to backtrack, saying that he actually meant that Germany would help Ukraine to independently manufacture long-range missiles. Without a doubt, that clumsy manoeuvring did not fool anyone. Furthermore, the assembly of Taurus missiles or uncrewed British vessels does not make them Ukrainian. Germany therefore will only be drawn deeper into the war with Russia, which will give us the right to consider all options in properly responding to that unfriendly move. If there is a shred of common sense left in Berlin and there are still people there who have not forgotten history, they must understand what those new aggressive actions by Germany against Russia will result in for that country. Less than a month ago we celebrated the eightieth anniversary of the inglorious end of Germany's previous similar misadventure. Europe, which also suffered a great deal at the hands of German militarism and recklessness, would do well to remember that.

Overall, Germany's actions are simply part of a campaign launched by Europe to sabotage the peace process and provoke our country into taking some kind of retaliatory action, which they could subsequently portray to the United States Administration as evidence of Moscow's unwillingness to negotiate.

Despite their own resources running low, European Union member States are persistently seeking ways to step up military support for the neo-Nazi regime in Kyiv, which only serves to further exacerbate tensions on the European continent. On 26 May, the European Council endorsed the establishment of a new financial instrument to allocate €150 billion for purchases of weapons and ammunition. We already know that this new instrument, referred to as Security Action for Europe, will also finance so-called urgent and large-scale investment in the Ukrainian defence industry.

Furthermore, European countries are shamelessly continuing their proxy war against Russia, hoping that they will get off scot-free. They are providing Kyiv with satellite intelligence, training Ukrainian soldiers at NATO military bases and sending their military advisers to Ukraine. Undoubtedly, the United Kingdom is largely behind that. The involvement of British special services in the hostilities is on such a large scale that it is becoming increasingly difficult to sweep such obvious facts under the rug.

At the end of March, British journalists published an investigative report on the matter. In particular, the report reveals that the British collaborated with Ukrainian servicemen to prepare the operation to blow up the Crimean bridge, and that since at least the middle of last year, British and American officers have been overseeing every aspect of operations — from determining the coordinates of targets to calculating missile flight paths.

Do our colleagues really think that we fail to notice all that and that we have no detailed information about the involvement of each and all of their countries in military actions against Russia? Do they really believe that they will face no consequences for that?

Yet it is not Russia they have been punishing — we have adapted perfectly to living under sanctions; they have been punishing themselves. Let us compare the state of their countries today with their situation three years ago — it is clear how their reckless policy is affecting the sponsors of the Kyiv regime. Until they stop seeing what is happening exclusively as a zero-sum game, the situation for Europe and its satellites will only worsen. Furthermore, it is high time they realized that there is no magic bullet that can turn the tide of the military campaign, which is currently going poorly for Kyiv.

I have no doubt that today we will yet again hear the same cookie-cutter narratives from the Western sponsors of the Zelenskyy regime: allegations against Russia, assertions about Ukraine's right to self-defence using any means and calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, or at least a 30-day truce, as if that were the only proof of one's readiness for peace. However, if we take away that rhetoric, which serves as shiny wrapping paper to confuse the countries of the global South, we can see what is behind such initiatives, which are only an attempt to mislead us once again, to force us into a new unilateral gesture of goodwill that will later be used as an opportunity for Kyiv to regroup forces and obtain more weapons. That is not a path to peace, but rather an attempt to take a break in order to continue the confrontation later.

But our colleagues must not count on that; they will not get another Minsk. In principle, we are ready to consider the possibility of establishing a ceasefire, which would subsequently pave the way for definitively addressing the root causes of the conflict. But for that to happen, we need to see reciprocal steps taken by the other side. We have repeatedly voiced our concerns. During the truce, it is necessary — at the very least — for Western countries to stop supplying weapons to the Kyiv regime and for Ukraine to stop its mobilization. However, all their statements indicate that they cannot agree to such a scenario, whereas we cannot agree to a situation that would allow the Kyiv regime to catch its breath, lick its wounds and stop the collapse of the eastern front.

If we are serious when talking about peace, we need to discuss parameters and conditions, and only then decide on a ceasefire. That is precisely the intention of the direct Russian-Ukrainian talks in Istanbul. Those talks will serve as the litmus test for the parties' real, rather than declared, aspirations for peace. All the more so given that Russia has already unilaterally respected the 30-day moratorium on strikes against energy infrastructure, as well as the Easter truce and the Victory Day truce. The Kyiv regime simply ignored all of those opportunities to demonstrate its readiness to pursue peace. What is expected of us now?

We have already said on numerous occasions, and would like to reiterate now, that the objectives of our special operation can be achieved through either peaceful or military means. Our armed forces stand ready to continue and step up their combat activities for as long as it takes. Just look at any military report, even those that are most biased against Russia — they clearly show that Russian troops are successfully

making headway along virtually the entire front line. On a daily basis, the Russian Ministry of Defence provides information about the liberation of settlements and the destruction of foreign equipment. Despite all that, we have always emphasized that we are committed to a political and diplomatic settlement of the crisis.

It is fundamental for us that the root causes of the conflict be addressed once and for all. The year 2014 witnessed an unconstitutional coup d'état in Ukraine, which was supported and sponsored by the United States and the European Union. That coup brought to power a new regime that set out to destroy all things Russian. During all those years, it has trampled on the rights of the people in the east and the south of Ukraine, and in other regions as well. All that happened right before the eyes of the Council's members. We cannot and will not stand idly by and watch as millions of Russian-speaking people remain under a regime that pursues policies that flagrantly violate their fundamental rights and freedoms.

If the neo-Nazi authorities in Kyiv believe that they can achieve a cessation of hostilities while maintaining the institutionalized oppression and discrimination of a significant portion of the population in the rest of Ukraine, they are deeply mistaken. Maintaining the status quo means deliberately ignoring the norms of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. Let me remind members of the Council that Article 1 of the Charter clearly stipulates the need to respect human rights without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. What we see in Ukraine today is the exact opposite. In fact, the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine is being persecuted, the activities of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church are restricted, and the rights of other national minorities are being severely violated.

In that regard, we call on our European colleagues, who so actively advocate democratic values, to demand that Kyiv repeal discriminatory laws that directly contradict international law. By doing so, Council members would prove the integrity of their position. So far, we have heard bombastic statements about human rights, but we have not seen any tangible steps to protect the millions of people whose rights have been systematically violated in Ukraine. Political expediency is leaving our Western colleagues deaf and dumb when it comes to such things as the rights of the Russian-speaking population, the Russian language, canonical Orthodoxy, the glorification of Hitler's henchmen and the spread of neo-Nazism in Ukraine. If those colleagues truly want lasting and sustainable peace in Ukraine, the current situation cannot continue.

The time has come for everyone to make a choice. We made ours back in 2022, and we will not abandon our compatriots, the Russian people, in their time of need. If necessary, we will continue fighting for as long as it takes. We will no longer tolerate any threats to our borders or any anti-Russian neo-Nazi entities in our neighbourhood. Now it is up to those who were behind the anti-Russian project in Ukraine. Do they understand the mistakes that they made and the futility of their attempts to vanquish and isolate Russia? If they are driven solely by Russophobia, then we probably have nothing to talk about. However, if they are ready to discuss potential options for us to coexist and perhaps even to cooperate, then we can talk. We have never rejected dialogue, nor do we reject it now. The choice is theirs.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The war between Russia and Ukraine continues, and the logic of confrontation and escalation, along with regional and international tensions and polarization, continues to be imposed on the course of that conflict, despite the recent diplomatic efforts that managed to bring the two parties together in the Turkish city of Istanbul, for the first time in more than three years.

Unfortunately, the death toll in innocent human lives, including children, women and the elderly, has been steadily rising since the beginning of this conflict, with an

attendant increase in the suffering of wounded and displaced civilians, who have no choice but to abandon their homes and flee conflict zones. In addition, the economic effects of this conflict continue to spread not only in the region, but throughout the entire world, especially in developing countries, whose people have been severely affected by the energy and food crises.

Algeria has repeatedly warned of the danger of the influx of arms and ammunition into conflict zones, which usually increases the ferocity of the war and distances us from any peaceful political process that could lead to a peaceful solution to the conflict. The escalation of tensions will only lead to further hostilities that could drag the entire region into a quagmire of endless conflicts and crises. Accordingly, today we would like to reiterate the following points.

First, the continued escalation and bloody armed clashes between the two parties remain a source of grave concern to Algeria, which reiterates its condemnation of violations of international law, including international humanitarian law. We once again call on both parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate, respect their international obligations and prioritize the protection of civilians. Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is unacceptable under any circumstances and is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Secondly, we reiterate our deep concern about the use of lethal and destructive weapons and munitions in conflict zones. We call on the parties to ensure that those weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorist and criminal groups or of extremist groups, which often use them in hostile acts against unarmed civilians to extend their hegemony.

Thirdly, we reiterate our call on the two parties to favour the language of dialogue, to reap the benefits of diplomacy and to focus their efforts on the need to find consensual ground through the current direct negotiations, with a view to halting hostilities and achieving a just and lasting peace in the region based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with due consideration given to their security concerns.

Finally, Algeria reiterates its permanent and unwavering commitment to supporting any comprehensive diplomatic efforts aimed at putting an end to the war and finding a just and lasting solution that satisfies both parties. It also calls on the international community to redouble diplomatic efforts at all levels to create conditions conducive to facilitating negotiations between the two parties and achieving peace and security in the region.

Mr. Jongeneel (United States of America): The Security Council met as recently as yesterday to discuss the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9924). In that meeting, the United States called on the Russian Federation to demonstrate a sincere interest in peace and accept a ceasefire. We have little to add to that statement.

The Russian Federation called today's meeting to advance the claim that European countries, by providing assistance to Ukraine, are undermining efforts to restore peace. That is not the case. As a sovereign country, Ukraine has the right to defend itself from aggression. Ukraine's fellow Member States have a right to provide Ukraine with the means to do so. Moreover, every member of the Council understands that Ukraine is not the obstacle to a ceasefire that could lead to peace. Ukraine has repeatedly affirmed that it is ready to accept an immediate, unconditional and comprehensive ceasefire. It is Russia that has rejected that call. We share the concern expressed by other members of the Council that Russia could be uninterested in peace and instead bent on achieving a military victory.

Today the United States calls on those countries supporting Russia's war industrial base to work towards peace instead of fuelling war. We urge China to

reconsider supplying dual-use goods to Russia's war industrial base. Drones made by Chinese companies using Chinese technology are destroying Ukraine's cities and Ukrainian families. China's policies are enabling the killing and prolonging the war. Russia's reliance on weapons and troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its training of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are particularly troubling, considering the many Security Council resolutions that they violate and the risk Pyongyang could use whatever rewards it receives from Russia to further threaten peace and security in its own region.

The United States continues to stand for peace. It is not too late for both Russia and Ukraine to stop the fighting. We urge both sides to do so.

Ms. Landi (Denmark): The Charter of the United Nations emphasizes respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States. We have all pledged to uphold the principles of the Charter, but Russia has blatantly violated that commitment with its brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine, for which it must be held fully accountable.

Multiple resolutions of the General Assembly have demanded that Russia withdraw its forces from Ukraine, confirming that Russia is the aggressor and Ukraine the victim. Ukraine has the right, under Article 51 of the Charter, to defend itself in the face of Russia's illegal, unjustified and unprovoked full-scale invasion, launched more than three years ago. It also has the right to acquire weapons to defend itself.

Instead of discussing Ukraine's entirely legitimate effort to acquire arms for the defence of its territorial integrity and sovereignty, the Council should focus on credible reports, notably those from the Multilateral Sanctions Monitoring Team. Such reports say that Russia has imported 4 million artillery shells and more than 100 ballistic missiles from North Korea, a clear violation of the United Nations sanctions regime that Russia itself agreed to. There are also a reported 12,000 North Korean troops fighting against Ukraine in Russia's illegal war of aggression. In addition, Russia has reportedly received huge quantities of drones from Iran, in addition to related components and know-how, which are used to attack civilians across Ukraine, in violation of international humanitarian law.

Those are the international arms transfers that must stop. Night after night, we see waves of drones and missiles raining down on Ukraine's cities. Thousands of Ukrainian civilians, including hundreds of children, have been indiscriminately killed in the war, and many more injured. Russia continues to escalate its attacks, twice in recent days breaking its own grisly record for the number of drones launched on Ukraine's cities in a single day. And just two days ago, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine concluded that Russian armed forces had committed crimes against humanity of murder through a month-long pattern of drone attacks against civilians in areas of Kherson province.

Denmark underlines that Ukraine has accepted an immediate, comprehensive and unconditional 30-day ceasefire. Russia, in contrast, has not. Russia could end the war today if it would only stop attacking Ukraine. We could have a ceasefire today if the Russian President wanted peace. It is now high time for Russia to stop attacking Ukraine and to engage seriously in the peace talks that the United States is trying to broker. Russia must stop insisting on unserious conditions, which would, in practice, end the existence of an independent Ukraine.

Mr. Ponikvar (Slovenia): We met on the topic of Ukraine only yesterday (see S/PV.9924), when we thoroughly expressed our position about the war and the need to end it. Let me therefore repeat that while Ukraine has shown a firm commitment to engaging in a peace process, Russia is committing the largest aerial attacks since the war began — attacks that are causing a steep rise in civilian casualties. That must

stop. And this is where a constructive approach starts. Ukraine wants peace; Europe wants peace — not war, but peace.

Let me make a couple of additional points in this regard.

First, we do not accept any attempts at making inroads into the right of every country to defend itself, which is an inalienable right enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. What is more, a country defending itself can also develop or procure the means to do so. Such acquisitions must happen against the backdrop of the international legal framework, which includes resolutions adopted by the Council. What is not allowed, on the other hand, is the procurement of weapons from a country sanctioned by this very body, which seems to be the case, given the reported weapons transfers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Russia. That must stop immediately. And this, again, is where a constructive approach starts.

Secondly, we need peace. Ukraine needs it. Europe needs it. My country has been advocating for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine since the beginning of the war. We have been calling for the immediate return of forcibly transferred children and civilian prisoners for years. We have been pushing for a ceasefire for months. All we heard in return, however, were excuses and ultimatums. Russia continues to respond to offers of peace with drones and ballistic missiles. We want the war to end, and we will not condone any justification for continuing the bloodshed.

Sitting at this table is not just a privilege. First and foremost, it comes with a great responsibility — a responsibility to maintain international peace and security. This body has been failing Ukrainians for years. It is time to step up and act towards a peace anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and its principles.

Mr. June Byoung Park (Republic of Korea): Following the Security Council's meeting held just yesterday on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9924), I would like to briefly highlight the following key points.

First, the Republic of Korea reiterates its firm position that all hostilities must cease fully and immediately. The indiscriminate use of large-scale drone and missile attacks, including Russia's largest aerial assault of the war in recent days, involving hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles, only increases civilian suffering and erodes trust. Such deadly and destructive actions are fundamentally incompatible with any sincere efforts towards a ceasefire and peace.

Secondly, rather than merely attributing the prolongation of the war to western military support for Ukraine, we expect the Russian Federation to demonstrate actual political will and engage constructively in negotiations. In that regard, we note Russia's recent proposal for a new round of talks in Istanbul and express our hopes for their success. However, we are particularly concerned about recent reports of Russian force build-ups near the Sumy region. We hope that Russia, instead of preparing for a summer offensive, will take genuine steps towards dialogue.

Thirdly, we reiterate our concern that ongoing military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is what is prolonging the war. Despite repeated condemnation by the international community, Russia and North Korea continue to engage in a series of unlawful activities that are explicitly prohibited under multiple Security Council resolutions. Those include the large-scale transfer of arms and related materials and the training by Russian forces of North Korean troops deployed to Russia for direct support in Russia's war against Ukraine. No matter how hard the two parties attempt to obfuscate those illicit exchanges and cooperation, the Council must not turn a blind eye to such flagrant violations. Only through persistent efforts to elucidate the illegality of their actions and call for their immediate cessation can we prevent further collusion, which threatens peace

and security in the region and beyond. Indeed, the Council must not overlook those blatant violations. Continued efforts to expose and halt such illicit activities are essential for preventing further collusion, which threatens local, regional and global peace and civilian livelihoods.

In conclusion, it is essential that the Council remain united and resolute in supporting all efforts to bring the war to an end and forge peace. The Republic of Korea remains fully committed to working in close cooperation with the international community to help to restore peace and support Ukraine's post-war reconstruction.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Council discussed Ukraine just yesterday (see S/PV.9924). I have set out China's position and so will refrain from repeating myself today.

Since the outbreak of the war, China has been calling on the parties to the conflict to immediately agree to a ceasefire, end the fighting, start negotiations and restore peace. Regrettably, however, the Ukraine crisis continues to drag on, with mounting civilian casualties. That is deeply distressing and profoundly concerning. We have repeatedly underscored that every passing day of war brings another day of suffering and destruction, another day of instability and insecurity. With direct negotiations now under way between Russia and Ukraine, there has been an increasing number of weapons of greater lethality and destructive power being deployed on the battlefield. That will only escalate the confrontation and prolong the fighting. It is not conducive to achieving a ceasefire and ending the war and runs counter to the shared expectations of the international community. We urge all parties to actively forge a climate conducive to peace talks by fostering conditions to that end and providing support. We also call on the parties to the conflict to work collectively towards de-escalation and a political settlement, rather than pursuing military confrontation and attacks.

The Ukraine crisis reminds us that security must be mutual and equal. China advocates and upholds a shared, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable vision of global security. We believe that the legitimate security concerns of all countries must be taken seriously. We support all efforts for peace and stress the importance of addressing the root causes of the crisis. We look forward to an early conclusion of a fair, lasting and binding peace agreement acceptable for all the parties concerned. China stands ready to work alongside fellow members of the Group of Friends for Peace and countries in the global South to continue to forge consensus for peace and support peace efforts, so as to contribute vigorously to a political settlement of the crisis.

Just now, the representative of the United States once again spread misinformation, smearing and besmirching China. That is utterly unacceptable. If I recall correctly, the last time the United States, on the same topic, used the same narrative to blame China in the Council was back in January, during the previous United States Administration (see S/PV.9839). In the past four months, the Council has deliberated on the Ukraine issue multiple times. The United States has not mentioned such scenarios, and the United States has not shown any concern or interest. Why, four months later, is the United States once again beating a dead horse and making groundless accusations against China? The behaviour of the United States in the Council once again proves that its attacks against China are not based on facts at all and are not based on any solution at all. Rather, that behaviour is based on its own political agenda. It is utter political manipulation.

I wish to reiterate two points.

First, China has never provided any lethal weapons to any party to the conflict. We have strictly controlled dual-use items.

Secondly, China is firmly opposed to groundless accusation and political manipulation. The United States bears major responsibility for the outbreak and continuation of the war. And of course, it has a responsibility to make efforts and play its part to bring about an early end to the conflict. We urge the United States to concentrate on the ongoing diplomatic efforts and stop this rather boring blame game.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): Allow me to start by expressing appreciation for the exceptional leadership and professionalism that you, Mr. President, your Permanent Representative and your team demonstrated in steering the work of the Council during the term of Greece's presidency this month.

Pakistan remains deeply concerned about the continuing conflict in Ukraine. Yesterday, in this very Chamber, we met to discuss the devastating humanitarian and security consequences of this conflict (see S/PV.9924). The use of advanced weaponry in this conflict has intensified human suffering exponentially.

I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, all parties should prioritize the protection of civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The targeting of civilians under any pretext and the characterization thereof as collateral damage are neither acceptable nor justified.

Secondly, the sovereign right to self-defence is enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. However, it must be exercised within the confines of international law, especially the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, namely, distinction, proportionality and military necessity.

Thirdly, the transfer of arms and ammunition must remain within the bounds of international legal frameworks. As a matter of principle, we remain concerned about the unregulated flow of arms into conflict zones, which contributes to destabilization and imperils regional and global security. Pakistan has suffered and continues to suffer the consequences of small arms proliferation from past conflicts in our neighbourhood. All parties should ensure scrupulous adherence to the end-user monitoring mechanisms to prevent the diversion and misuse of those weapons and the unintended consequences of them falling into the wrong hands, including those of terrorist organizations.

My delegation remains deeply perturbed by the fact that, despite diplomatic initiatives aimed at bringing an end to this conflict, hostilities persist. We firmly believe that military means cannot resolve this conflict, and we reiterate that only dialogue and diplomacy can deliver sustainable peace. We encourage both sides to continue exploring the path of negotiations to bring an end to this conflict. We welcome the negotiations facilitated by the United States, Saudi Arabia and now Türkiye, leading to direct talks between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. We sincerely hope that they will bear fruit.

Pakistan's position on the Ukraine conflict has remained clear and consistent. From the outset, we have advocated for immediate de-escalation and a comprehensive ceasefire, the holding of meaningful negotiations for lasting peace, addressing mutual security concerns within the framework of the Charter; and 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 and stands ready to back all efforts to that end.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I echo the words of my colleague from Pakistan in congratulating Greece on its distinguished presidency this month.

Less than 24 hours have passed since the identical meeting that we held yesterday, addressing the same topic, namely the situation of the conflict in Ukraine (see S/PV.9924). At the risk of repeating ourselves, as we stated yesterday at that meeting, we strongly reiterate our concern about the escalation of the war, which directly affects the civilian population. In the current context of welcome peace talks, missile and drone attacks targeting the civilian population and infrastructure persist. That contradiction between diplomatic language and the reality of the battlefield forces us to raise our voices.

Panama urges the parties to immediately cease hostilities and to protect the civilian population. In this complex context, it is more important than ever to reaffirm the importance of international humanitarian law and of compliance with its fundamental principles of proportionality, distinction and precaution. We make an unequivocal call for restraint and the proportional use of armaments, and we condemn all rhetoric pertaining to the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We are concerned about the transformative impact of new and emerging technologies on conflict dynamics, affecting civilians in particular. From the increasing sophistication and proliferation of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles to the growing use of next-generation missiles on the battlefield and the expansion of artificial intelligence applications in the military, the very nature of warfare is changing. New and emerging technologies must be used, with the right intent and in the right direction, to protect civilians and critical infrastructure. That arms race in an already volatile environment further destabilizes international peace and security.

Secondly, the transfer of arms and ammunition must be in accordance with the international legal framework, including the relevant Security Council resolutions. From its own history, Panama, having been a victim of aggression and knowing its tragic consequences, rejects all aggression, regardless of its geopolitical motivations. Exhaustion should not lead the international community to fall silent just as the law of “might makes right” is making a comeback. To defend the rights set forth in the Charter of the United Nations is to affirm that no State should be compelled by force or under threat to renounce its sovereignty, its integrity or its will to live in peace under its own flag.

Panama reiterates its call for negotiations towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, to be conducted within the framework of dialogue, in order to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Mr. Ibrahim (Somalia): The current developments serve as a reminder of the ongoing volatility in the region and the far-reaching consequences for the civilian population and infrastructure. Recent incidents underscore the urgent need for renewed efforts to reduce tensions and prevent further escalations of the situation.

We must acknowledge that there is no military solution to the conflict in Ukraine. My delegation welcomes all constructive engagement aimed at fostering mutual understanding and facilitating substantive negotiations. We take note of the upcoming meeting between the representatives of Russia and Ukraine, planned for next week, in Istanbul. That initiative represents a significant opportunity to advance dialogue and build momentum towards a peaceful settlement. We believe that every opportunity for peace, however brief, must be seized and built upon. The only sustainable solution is to work together so as to strengthen diplomatic engagement and create conditions conducive to a just and lasting peace.

We call for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire by all parties and urge restraint to prevent further escalations of the situation. The path to peace begins with a ceasefire, continues with respect for international law and ends with justice. My delegation affirms our commitment to supporting initiatives that uphold international

law, protect civilians and infrastructure and advance diplomatic solutions. The Council's continued support will be vital in facilitating progress and in encouraging all parties to remain engaged in meaningful dialogue.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its call for a comprehensive de-escalation, renewed diplomatic engagement and the pursuit of a negotiated and lasting peace in Ukraine. We stand ready to work with all Council members to support all genuine efforts towards diplomacy aimed at bringing about a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): We have listened very carefully to the Russian delegation, including to their attacks on the United Kingdom. Let me say one thing: let us all hope that Russia engages with more seriousness and more sincerity in the peace talks than we have heard it do here today. Russia has just blamed the United Kingdom and other European countries for somehow sabotaging peace. They are trying to complicate things and confuse us, but the reality is quite simple. Let me restate a few basic facts.

First, Russia invaded Ukraine — twice, in fact, in recent years. Secondly, Russia violated the Charter of the United Nations. Thirdly, Russia is, as we speak, trying to annex Ukrainian land. Fourthly, Russia appears, from its public statements, to be seeking to overthrow the Government in Kyiv and impose limits on Ukraine's independence. Fifthly, Russia has rejected an unconditional ceasefire. Sixthly, Russia continues to bomb cities across Ukraine, with 900 drone and missile attacks in just three days last week.

There is plenty more about which we could talk, including Russia's use of sophisticated weaponry in urban areas, which is killing civilians, or its reckless seizure of the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. We could talk about the enablers of Russia's war, such as weapons flows from Iran, its military partnership with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in violation of Council resolutions and weaponized dual-use goods from other third parties. But, in the end, we do not really need to look beyond the most essential facts about Russia's invasion to understand the situation and what needs to happen next.

Ukraine, on the other hand, first, is defending its territory; secondly, is defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; and, thirdly, has agreed to an unconditional ceasefire. President Zelenskyy has even offered direct talks with President Putin, which President Putin rejected. So, yes, the United Kingdom stands proudly with Ukraine, as it seeks a just and lasting peace. Supporting Ukraine in defending itself from Russian attacks is not the cause of this war; it is a necessary response to it. The onus really is on Russia and President Putin to show that they are serious about ending the war that they started. Let us hope that they do that very soon.

Mrs. Meyer (France) (*spoke in French*): After a hiatus lasting several months, Russia is resuming its meetings about arms supplies, as it does whenever it impedes a cessation of hostilities. I suggest that we get back to the facts.

On 24 February 2022, Russia made the choice to start this war of aggression. Every day since, it has made the choice to sustain and intensify it. The strikes of 24 and 25 May are the most extensive drone and missile strikes since the war began and have claimed 25 lives. Numerous appeals to Russia for an end to the war are coming from States of all regions of the world. European States, gathered in Kyiv on 10 May, joined Ukraine in appealing for an immediate, full and unconditional ceasefire to allow for peace talks. I refer to their joint statement, calling for a comprehensive ceasefire in the air, at sea and on land and that should last for at least 30 days so as to leave space for diplomacy.

What Russia wants is for a disarmed Ukraine to no longer be in a position to exercise its right to self-defence under the Charter, for it to have no choice but to capitulate and accept the territorial annexations and other demands from Russia and for it to relinquish its territorial integrity and, with it, its sovereignty. Russia is demanding an end to arms supplies to Ukraine. In the meantime, what is it doing? It is continuing to stock up on missiles and to step up drone production. It is undermining the foundations of the international non-proliferation architecture. It is sourcing drones and ballistic missiles from Iran. It is obtaining munitions and ballistic missiles from North Korea. It is doing so in flagrant violation of the Security Council resolutions that it nonetheless had supported.

On 28 April, Russia and North Korea acknowledged the participation of North Korean soldiers in the Russian army's operations against Ukraine. France condemns that illegal cooperation, which has direct consequences for European security interests. Support for Russia entails complicity in its aggression and acts of violence in Ukraine. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry was clear in its report published on 28 May: drone attacks against Ukrainian civilians are crimes against humanity. France urges all States to refrain from supplying Russia with military hardware, dual-use items and any components that fuel the war of aggression. France will continue to provide Ukraine with the military support vital to defending its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Russia is attacking Ukraine in the border regions, from military sites located behind the Russian border. Ukraine must be in a position to neutralize the military targets involved in the operations directed against it. That is Ukraine's exercise of its right to self-defence.

France will continue to call on Russia to agree to an immediate, full and unconditional ceasefire. That is the first step to be taken by whoever genuinely wishes to embark on the path to peace. Ukraine took that step almost three months ago, and it is high time for Russia to follow suit.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): When the Council met yesterday to discuss the ongoing war in Ukraine (see S/PV.9924), many members, including Guyana, called for a lasting ceasefire and for the conflicting parties to prioritize dialogue and take concrete steps towards ending the war. We reiterate that call today.

The civilian toll in this war continues to mount, with ongoing violations of international humanitarian law. That is made possible by the diversity of weapons being used, including those with advanced technologies, and their indiscriminate use, particularly in populated areas. The recent report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine documented drone attacks that systematically struck civilians and civilian objects, including ambulances, which are afforded special protection under international humanitarian law.

Meanwhile, the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine continues to document high rates of civilian casualties, due to the use of missile and loitering munitions. The Council's attention has been drawn on many occasions to the use of powerful explosive weapons in urban areas. Recent reports indicate the use of missiles of greater intensity with fragmentation warheads that scatter fragments across large open areas, killing and injuring many civilians at once. In addition, the use of landmines, including anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, has also been reported, along with other weapons that are indiscriminate by nature and the effects of which cannot be limited as required under international humanitarian law. Many of those weapons not only present an immediate threat to civilians during the conflict but also pose a danger to lives and livelihoods long after it ends.

Guyana once again calls upon the parties transferring weapons into this or any armed conflict to comply fully with international disarmament instruments

and obligations and to ensure that all transfers are conducted within the existing international legal framework, including Security Council resolutions, and with adequate controls in place to prevent their irregular transfers. Guyana further recalls that all parties to an armed conflict bear the primary responsibility of ensuring the protection of civilians. We demand that the parties to this conflict uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by taking constant care to prevent harm to civilians and civilian objects and to grant safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for all those in need. The failure to protect civilians in an armed conflict or to ensure that parties to conflict uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law undermines the very foundations of peace and security and the mandate of the Council.

In conclusion, Guyana once again urges the parties to commit in good faith to a diplomatic process that will lead to a lasting ceasefire and ultimately to an end to this conflict.

Ms. Swallow (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone is deeply concerned about the worsening impact of the conflict in Ukraine on civilians and civilian infrastructure, which continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. We note with grave concern the increased use of long-range drones and ballistic missiles and the intensification of aerial strikes in heavily populated areas. Those actions continue to inflict severe harm on civilians, in particular in Ukraine, with rising numbers of civilian deaths, injuries and displacements.

We reiterate our principled position that all transfers of weapons in conflict situations must be conducted in accordance with the applicable international legal framework and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Such transfers must include pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification mechanisms to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition.

At the briefing held by the Council yesterday afternoon on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9924), both Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Director Doughten emphasized the importance of the parties committing to a ceasefire agreement that could bring an end to the killing and destruction. The figures referenced yesterday concerning the dead and injured represent not just statistics but lives, hopes and futures lost during more than three years of continuous fighting.

The humanitarian impact of this prolonged war is undeniable and underscores the urgent need for concerted efforts by the parties to the conflict and by regional and international partners to immediately end hostilities and work towards a lasting peace. With approximately 45,000 civilian casualties since February 2022, even one more death or injury is one too many.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 40 per cent of Ukraine's population requires some form of humanitarian assistance, including life-saving emergency aid. Entire neighbourhoods and villages have been decimated, resulting in the largest displacement of people in Europe since the Second World War. We also note with concern reports of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure within the territory of the Russian Federation.

Sierra Leone is fully aware that negotiating a ceasefire and reaching a peace agreement in this conflict remains deeply challenging, given the diverging priorities and positions presented by both parties. Over the past three years, several efforts have unfortunately fallen short of achieving even a temporary cessation of hostilities. Nevertheless, the Council and all relevant stakeholders must continue to urge the parties to put the interests of their citizens first and work towards an immediate cessation of hostilities and a durable peace. In that regard, allow me to make three points.

First, the evolution of diplomatic engagement from indirect to direct talks between the parties in Istanbul signals a willingness to pursue a political solution. While those talks have not yet produced a ceasefire agreement, the recent exchange of 2,000 prisoners of war, including civilian detainees, represents a significant confidence-building measure that should be strengthened and expanded.

Secondly, the ongoing negotiations should fully take into account the legitimate concerns of both parties, including their long-term security needs. It is essential that both countries are represented at the highest political levels during those negotiations. A durable peace agreement must be underpinned by a road map with clear objectives and actions, rooted in the principles of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and in accordance with internationally recognized borders.

Thirdly, we emphasize the critical role of the Security Council in supporting practical steps towards lasting peace that are consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and guided by the decisions of the General Assembly and the Council's own resolutions. The monitoring of ceasefires and peace agreements will be essential to sustaining peace and stability in the region.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone underscores the urgent need for all parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of civilians, refrain from further escalation and abandon any strategy aimed at achieving victory through prolonged military confrontation. We call on all parties to engage in genuine, good-faith diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict.

The President: The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Jongeneel (United States of America): I want to briefly respond to the question by the representative of China.

For the past four months the United States has been using its voice and influence with both Russia and Ukraine to find a path to peace. We have been willing to use that influence, even with our friends. China's dual-use goods contribute to and sustain Russia's war effort. We invite China to also use its voice and influence with its friends to advance the path to peace and to consider restricting dual-use goods to Russia.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Teng Fei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I do not want to take up more of the Council's and members' valuable time. However, I felt compelled to respond to the remarks of the representative of the United States.

China firmly rejects the baseless accusations and political manipulation by the United States. We urge the United States to focus on the current diplomatic efforts and stop its senseless blame game.

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

Russia requested this meeting to address alleged attempts by European countries to undermine the peace process for what it calls "the Ukrainian crisis". Yet our reading of the situation is quite different. I would like to emphasize a few key points.

First, let us be clear: the war, which has been raging for well more than three years in Ukraine, is the product of Russia's invasion of the country, in violation of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Ukraine has the legitimate, inherent right to defend its people and territories against

that violation, as enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. That right includes the procurement of the necessary means for self-defence, as long as it fully complies with the relevant international legal framework. It is clear that, should Russia decide to heed the calls of the overwhelming majority of the international community and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, the war would stop immediately.

Secondly, as United Nations briefers at previous Security Council meetings have stressed, transfers of weapons to Ukraine from various Governments have been widely documented through open sources. On the contrary, reports of transfers of weapons to Russia only came out last month, when Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea admitted the extent of their military cooperation, which includes the deployment of thousands of Democratic People's Republic of Korea soldiers on Russian territory. We underline that the presence of Democratic People's Republic of Korea troops in the theatre of war, in violation of multiple, unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions, endangers international peace and security on a regional scale, with potentially far-reaching consequences for global security, including its nuclear dimension.

Thirdly, while the peace initiative of the United States is already in its fourth month, and Ukraine has accepted the United States proposal for the 30-day unconditional ceasefire, deadly aerial attacks, with record numbers of long-range missiles and drones, against residential areas of Ukraine have continued unabated, with April bearing witness to the highest number of civilian casualties in recent months. It is evident that those actions are in violation of international humanitarian law and not conducive to good-faith negotiations.

Lastly, Greece reiterates that a full, immediate and unconditional ceasefire should be the first step towards the overarching goal of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, achieved through inclusive diplomacy, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and that upholds Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.