



Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7253rd meeting

Thursday, 28 August 2014, 2 p.m.

New York

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| <i>President:</i> | Sir Mark Lyall Grant | (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) |
| | | |
| <i>Members:</i> | Argentina | Mrs. Perceval |
| | Australia | Mr. Bliss |
| | Chad | Mr. Gombo |
| | Chile | Mr. Barros Melet |
| | China | Mr. Wang Min |
| | France | Mr. Lamek |
| | Jordan | Mrs. Kawar |
| | Lithuania | Ms. Murmokaitė |
| | Luxembourg | Mr. Maes |
| | Nigeria | Mrs. Ogwu |
| | Republic of Korea | Mr. Oh Joon |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Churkin |
| | Rwanda | Mr. Nduhungirehe |
| | United States of America | Ms. Power |

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 2.00 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Once more, we meet today amid reports of a dangerous escalation of the crisis in Ukraine. The 26 August official meeting between President Putin and President Poroshenko, as well as a round of multilateral talks, have quickly been overshadowed by alarming new reports of intensified fighting in south-eastern Ukraine.

This morning, Ukrainian President Poroshenko asked the world "to pay attention to the sharply worsening situation in Ukraine". We are here because we are paying attention, but we must also find a constructive way to urgently address the crisis, the implications of which go far beyond Ukraine and the region.

Illegal armed groups operating in the Donetsk region have reportedly intensified their activities over the past two days, spreading violence along Ukraine's southern coast in the direction of the key strategic port of Mariupol. It has further been reported that several small towns and villages in the area are now in the midst of heavy fighting, while the town of Novoazovsk has been seized by the armed groups. The southward spread of fighting, along the border with the Russian Federation and the Sea of Azov, marks a dangerous escalation in the conflict. The battle for Luhansk continues, and hostilities in Donetsk in several key strategic areas have been spreading.

We cannot ignore the deeply alarming reports of Russian military involvement in this new wave of escalation. If confirmed, it would constitute a direct contravention of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations has no independent means of verifying that information, and the Russian Federation has staunchly rejected those reports.

Today we have been in touch with Ambassador Apakan, head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission. He informed us that there is currently no Special Monitoring Mission presence in Mariupol and Novoazovsk, although the OSCE is in the process of deploying a team to those areas. That will be critical as we seek factual information as to what precisely is unfolding on the ground.

The situation on and around the border between Ukraine and the Russian Federation is a particular concern and remains a key obstacle to the de-escalation of the situation on the ground, as arms and heavy weaponry reportedly continue to flow unabated into Ukraine from Russia. There is an urgent need to ensure a secure border between the two countries with international verification, as discussed in the Minsk talks. In that regard, we take note of the recent statement made by President Poroshenko that the first bilateral consultations between the border guards of Ukraine and the Russian Federation is scheduled for Saturday, 30 August.

It is also critical that the elections announced for 26 October can take place throughout Ukraine and become a unifying and reconciliatory mechanism that will ensure that people throughout the country feel represented in Kyiv.

Let me from quote the Secretary-General's statement of earlier today:

"The international community cannot allow the situation to escalate further, nor can a continuation be allowed of the violence and destruction that the conflict has wrought in eastern Ukraine".

The Secretary-General notes the recent multilateral talks in Minsk on 26 August, as well as the first official meeting between the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia. He calls for continuity of those talks, with a view to forging a peaceful way out of the conflict, based on President Poroshenko's peace plan. All must do their

part to contribute to the peaceful resolution of this conflict, in a manner that upholds Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We have to redouble our efforts to resolve the conflict in Ukraine. Lives have to be saved. Peace in Ukraine means peace in the region and beyond.

The Secretary-General remains committed to using his good offices to help resolve this crisis. We will keep the Council informed of the collective efforts of the Organization to help the Ukrainian people and Government restore peace and stability to their country.

Last week, the Secretary-General sent me to Kyiv to consult with Ukrainian officials on the way forward. Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, whose visit overlapped with mine, discussed how to bolster humanitarian efforts. In her field visit to eastern Ukraine, she reported on impressive efforts by the Ukrainian authorities to restore normalcy in areas regained by the Government from the armed groups. Currently, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović is in Ukraine, and the United Nations country team remains engaged in working with Ukrainian counterparts on humanitarian and development issues. And we continue to coordinate with other international partners, including the OSCE and the Netherlands, on the aftermath of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

But the immediate focus must be to find ways to reverse the dangerous escalation of the fighting that has occurred over the past 48 hours and to move quickly away from armed conflict and towards political solutions and dialogue.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this urgent meeting.

Lithuania condemns in the strongest terms the invasion of Ukraine's territory by the armed forces of the Russian Federation as an open and blatant violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and a serious blow to peace, security and stability across the entire region and well beyond. For months we have watched countless violations of Ukraine's unity and territorial integrity — first Crimea's annexation, then the war initiated by Russian-supported fringe separatist groups in eastern Ukraine,

then provocative manipulations of humanitarian aid with semi-empty humanitarian trucks, then soldiers lost on the other side of the border and now Russian forces on Ukraine's sovereign territory.

Within the past day, as reported, troops from the Russian 98th Guards Airborne Division from Ivanovo have taken over the Ukrainian city of Novoazovsk. New, previously safe areas of Ukraine have been affected, expanding the zone of conflict. "There are active soldiers fighting among us who preferred to spend their vacation not on the beach, but with us, among their brothers, who are fighting for their freedom", says Aleksandr Zakharchenko, a rebel commander and the self-proclaimed prime minister of a non-existent Donetsk People's Republic, boasting in an interview on Russian State-run television, adding that there were some 3,000 to 4,000 Russians among the separatist ranks.

A member of the Russian President's advisory council on human rights, Ella Polyakova, said on Thursday that she believed Russia was carrying out an invasion of Ukraine. "When masses of people, under commanders' orders, on tanks, armoured personnel carriers and using heavy weapons, are on the territory of another country, across the border, I consider this an invasion."

Such actions by the Russian Federation are in gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 2, paragraph 4, and other fundamental principles — as we have said in the Council many times before — and norms of international law, including the Helsinki Final Act, the 1997 Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, whereby Ukraine renounced its nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees. Specifically, Budapest Memorandum articles 1 and 2 impose clear-cut obligations on Russia to respect the political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its existing borders of 1994, and not threaten it or use force by any means.

By now the Council has held close to 30 meetings on Ukraine. We have heard numerous assurances by Russia, here and elsewhere, regarding its desire for a solution to the crisis in Ukraine. All of this time, however, instead of seeking that solution, Russia has been escalating the situation, as the flow of weapons, equipment, mercenaries and now troops has continued across Russia's borders into the territory of Ukraine.

Let us be clear: weapons do not fall into the hands of rebels out of the blue sky. Had it not been for Russia's continuous, active support, the illegal separatists — a clear minority in the region they claim to represent — would have long ago run out of steam and weaponry. Eastern Ukraine would have been getting back on its feet, flows of internally displaced persons (IDPs) would have stopped and reversed, and no more lives would have been lost.

This conflict has already claimed too many lives. Even moderate estimates show that over 2,000 have been killed since April. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has noted over 200,000 IDPs and about 3.9 million people affected by conflict as of 15 August. People are dying in Ukraine because of the criminal acts carried out by the illegal separatists and their Russian supporters. Soldiers who are citizens of Russia are also now losing their lives in this criminal war against the State of Ukraine. As reported by various sources, the mothers of Russian soldiers are seeking answers regarding their children, at least four hundred dead. Journalists who are trying to investigate and report on soldiers' graves in Pskov have been threatened and harassed.

How many more lives need to be lost and people maimed for Russia to realize its folly of aggression against Ukraine? Ukraine does not need any more Russian so-called humanitarian convoys. Ukraine does not need more Russian tanks, troops or rearmament of separatist bands. What Ukraine needs is a most urgent return by Russia to the internationally accepted norms of behaviour, compliance with international law and respect for the Charter of the United Nations — for which Russia, as a permanent member of the Council, bears a special responsibility.

Lithuania calls on Russia, in the strongest of terms, to return to its senses and to comply with the purposes and principles of the Charter, immediately withdraw its military forces, weaponry and equipment from the sovereign territory of Ukraine, secure its borders, cease the shelling of Ukraine from Russian territory, and urgently end all support to the illegal armed separatist groups in the east of Ukraine.

President Poroshenko's peace plan must be urgently implemented. As for the Geneva statement, whose non-implementation is so often lamented by Russia, that statement, as well as any ceasefire, must be implemented by all sides, including the illegal separatists and including Russia itself. Anything less

than that is equivalent to a cynical demand for Ukraine's unconditional surrender. Like any sovereign Member of the United Nations, Ukraine has the right to defend itself, as per Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. That right cannot be taken by anyone.

For too long now we have watched Russia's creeping attack against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. And because it was happening one step at a time, our response has been like that of the proverbial frog in boiling water.

Once international laws been brazenly broken, as they are vis-à-vis Ukraine, it would be naïve to think that such disregard for international norms of behaviour will stop at that and will not creep even further. Are we really ready to take such risks?

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

The information coming to the Council from the ground is quite disturbing. The actions carried out by the separatists and the intensification of fighting in urban areas have brought about serious humanitarian consequences. Today we call upon all parties for restraint, to protect the civilian population and to respect international humanitarian law, bearing in mind the hundreds of thousands of terrorized and displaced persons.

Russia's support for the separatists, in violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, is inadmissible. The presence of Russian soldiers on Ukrainian territory and their direct participation alongside separatists in the taking of lives in Novoazovsk must not be tolerated. As the President of the French Republic recalled this morning, Russia must respect Ukraine's sovereignty; it must halt its support to the separatists and call on them to accept a bilateral ceasefire. That is the framework in which a lasting political settlement must be sought, but Moscow must also agree to de-escalation measures. That presupposes the immediate halting of the delivery of military materiel to the separatists. It also assumes control along the Russian-Ukrainian border. On those issues we expect signs from Russia that will finally enable us to engage in a serious dialogue that benefits everyone. The prolongation or escalation of the conflict is not in the interests of Ukraine or Russia or the international community.

Although the face-to-face meeting in Minsk between Mr. Poroshenko and Mr. Putin on 26 August led to few concrete results, it was a positive step in

that it allowed for direct contacts between the two Presidents, after the 6 June meeting in Benouville.

The Ukrainian crisis is one of the worst crises in Europe since the end of the Cold War. Our objective is to ultimately achieve a lasting political solution to this crisis, which has lasted for far too long. As long as Russia pursues escalation, it will not take the opportunity to resume political dialogue. We will therefore maintain the pressure. That is why the European Union adopted a substantial package of economic sanctions against Russia on 29 July. The sanctions will be maintained and will increase if the escalation continues. We hope it will not reach that point, as that is not in the interest of Russia or of anyone else.

Mrs. Kawar (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We extend our thanks to Mr. Feltman for his briefing on the situation in Ukraine.

Jordan expresses its deep concern about the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine and the developing situation. Jordan reaffirms the need for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to refrain from any provocative action that could threaten peace and security. Such conduct will only complicate matters in eastern Ukraine and negatively impact international efforts towards peace. We call upon all parties to refrain from using military means and to cooperate in forging a peaceful solution based on the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of international law and all the efforts made in recent months, including agreements signed between the two parties.

Access for humanitarian assistance is urgently needed to enable the delivery of assistance by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian relief organizations. Such assistance must not be politicized. It must remain a humanitarian task to help those in need.

We also reiterate the need to translate the outcome of the Belarus summit into real progress in peace talks and the release of all hostages. In that regard, we call upon both parties, Russian and Ukrainian, to continue talking and consulting. Hopefully, that will lead to peace between the two parties. We also hope that peace can be linked to political and economic interests for the good of the peoples of both parties. Such cooperation would enable the increased risks that threaten the security of Russia and Ukraine and all of the region to be eliminated.

Jordan calls upon the United Nations and all of the parties to take steps in the correct direction to bolster political dialogue between Russian and Ukraine, and to build on the efforts made to protect the security and stability of Ukraine, including establishing mechanisms that would protect civilians and make sure that assistance reaches those who need it. Jordan believes that real peace between the two parties would require political will on the part of all parties, as well as goodwill and a realization that provocation, military or otherwise, will not lead to peace, but only to more escalation and a worsening of the situation.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I too would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing.

We are very concerned by the serious deterioration in the situation in the areas controlled by the separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions resulting from increased fighting in those regions. We are also very concerned by reports of renewed fighting in the south-east of Ukraine near the city of Mariupol, during which the separatists took control of the city of Novoazovsk.

For several days, there have been increasing numbers of reports of incursions by Russian regular troops and military vehicles into Ukrainian territory. We are also concerned by reports of bombings of Ukrainian territory from Russia and violations of Ukrainian air space. All unilateral military action by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, whatever the pretext, including humanitarian, would constitute a serious violation of international law and would be viewed as such by the international community. We cannot allow the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine to be violated.

The presence of Russian fighters among the separatists, including among their leaders, is quite unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest terms. That presence has been reported primarily in various reports of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in Ukraine. It has also been recently recognized by a separatist leader in Donetsk, who explained in a Russian television interview that the latest success of the separatists would not have been possible without the help of Russian servicemen.

Today we are witnessing a new, dangerous stage in the escalation of violence in Ukraine despite official Russian proclamations calling for dialogue

and de-escalation. We urge the Russian Federation to immediately cease all forms of hostile activity along the border, in particular the inflow of weapons, military advisers and military staff into the conflict zone, and to withdraw its forces from the border.

Given the ongoing deterioration on the ground, we need to find a lasting political solution to the crisis. That is becoming ever more urgent. In that regard, we welcome the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General to promote dialogue between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, in particular through the missions of Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman to the region.

The dialogue between Ukraine and Russia, initiated in Geneva and Berlin, must be pursued in order to restore the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We welcome the meeting held the day before yesterday in Minsk between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, in particular in the presence of the European Union. We hope that those talks will lead to concrete results, and especially to the establishment of a road map based on President Poroshenko's peace plan. We hope that consultations between Russia and Ukraine to ensure better control of the borders will be held soon and that the parties' discussions will lead to the release of prisoners held by illegal armed groups.

The trilateral talks initiated by the Chairperson in Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are key in that regard, as is the deployment of OSCE observers to the two border posts, Gukovo and Donetsk, along the Russian-Ukrainian border. We hope that the mandate of the mission will be expanded so that it can contribute to the effective, comprehensive and bilateral control of the Russian-Ukrainian border. Securing the border is key for the restoration of peace, as it will put an end to the flow of arms and weaponry to the separatists.

The solution to the Ukrainian crisis can only be political. The Russian Federation must be an integral part of the effort to find a political solution, rather than continue to fuel the crisis, which dates back to another era.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing and express our appreciation for the efforts that the Secretary-General has continued to undertake to end the current situation in Ukraine.

Chile would like once again to express its deep concern about the serious escalation of the crisis in eastern and southern Ukraine, especially in the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, and now in Novoazovsk. It is essential to reverse the escalation immediately to ensure that those regions return to peace and security, because the situation there is already very dangerous and unpredictable. For all those reasons, we call on the parties to exercise maximum restraint and moderation and to cease all fighting immediately.

Our country would like to reiterate once again, as we have done consistently since the start of the crisis in Ukraine, that there is an obligation to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as to observe the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the internal affairs of another State. That principle has also been enshrined, *inter alia*, in the Helsinki Final Act, which created the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), of which Ukraine and Russia are both signatories, as well as the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, both of which documents apply fully to both Russia and Ukraine, among other States.

In that connection, therefore, we would like to also state that the parties involved should refrain from carrying out actions that are incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. With that in mind, Chile would like to make an appeal for the immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops present on Ukrainian territory, unless they have been expressly authorized by the legitimate authorities of that country.

We are very concerned by the humanitarian and human rights situation in the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine, especially the growing number of internally displaced persons and the situation of ethnic minorities. We are also concerned about the increasing violations of human rights that have been recorded in those areas, which makes it essential to restore the rule of law in that region. In that connection, we would like to note that humanitarian aid initiatives should be implemented with full respect for the sovereignty of Ukraine and in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

We hope that the observation mission, in close cooperation with the special monitoring mission of

the OSCE, will continue to play a constructive role in mitigating the tensions on the ground.

As we have stated previously, we would like to reiterate that accountability should be ensured regarding all violations and abuses of human rights so as to ensure that those responsible, whoever they are, are brought to justice.

Once again, we would like call upon the parties to seek a peaceful solution to the crisis through direct political dialogue, to refrain from unilateral measures and to support international mediation efforts, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262. In that regard, we welcome the meeting between the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia in Minsk on 26 August, and we encourage them to continue those contacts and to intensify them in order to achieve a peaceful and rapid solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

We would also like to highlight the various initiatives of the Secretary-General and, overall, of the entire United Nations system. They have tried since the very beginning of the crisis to find a peaceful solution to it.

Chile believes that the time has come for constructive participation in an inclusive process that ensures the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights, as well as the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, in order to ensure conditions that will enable the Ukrainian people to determine its own future sovereignty in a peaceful and democratic way.

Mr. Bliss (Australia): I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing. We recognize the ongoing efforts that the Secretary-General, Mr. Feltman and other colleagues are making to resolve the crisis.

There is now overwhelming evidence that significant numbers of Russian troops, armoured personnel carriers, tanks and other equipment have moved into Ukrainian territory. There are credible reports that Russian combat soldiers equipped with sophisticated heavy weaponry are operating inside Ukraine. Large quantities of advanced weapons, including air-defence systems, artillery tanks and armoured personnel carriers, are being transferred to separatist forces in eastern Ukraine. Russian paratroopers have been captured in Ukraine, and there are reports of funerals being held in Russia for Russian troops killed in Ukraine. Yesterday there were reports of some 100 tanks, armoured vehicles and

rocket launchers travelling towards Telmanove, south of Donetsk.

In the past 48 hours, separatists have conducted operations to seize the coastal town of Novoazovsk and several villages inside Ukraine near the Russian border. Reports that regular Russian armed forces are involved are deeply concerning. The latest developments indicate a new and even more dangerous escalation of the crisis, which appears to be moving to a wider area of Ukraine, including the southern land route to Crimea. All of that points to the use of force by Russia against Ukraine. That would be a flagrant breach of Ukraine's sovereignty and a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

The latest developments come against a backdrop of other serious incidents, including the killing by separatists of the Lithuanian Honorary Consul in Luhansk, on 22 August; the parading by separatists of captured Ukrainian soldiers in Donetsk on 24 August, in blatant contravention of the prohibition on humiliating and degrading treatment of prisoners of war, the Geneva Conventions and customary international law; and a Russian helicopter attack on a border post in Luhansk oblast on 25 August, in which four border guards were killed. Despite claims by Russia of non-involvement in the conflict, we have the public statement of 28 August by separatist leader Zakharchenko claiming that some 3,000 to 4,000 Russians have fought in separatist ranks since the conflict began.

We are also deeply concerned about Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's announcement on 25 August that a second aid convoy would be sent to Ukraine this week, despite the fact that the first proceeded without the agreement of the Ukrainian Government or the participation of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Australian Foreign Minister Bishop described the aid convoy situation, on 24 August, as one in which Russia showed flagrant and reckless disregard for international norms and international law. Any further aid convoys must be sent only with the agreement of the Ukrainian Government.

The 26 August talks in Minsk had the potential to provide a useful forum for finding a diplomatic way to end the crisis, but at the same time that Russia was engaging in those talks further escalation was occurring in southern Ukraine.

Some immediate steps must be taken. Russia must immediately withdraw its military equipment and

personnel from Ukrainian territory. Russia should withdraw all support for the separatists and ask them to lay down their arms so that the conflict can be brought to an immediate end. Russia must also control its border. That is the only effective way to prevent troops and equipment from entering Ukraine and is key to establishing a ceasefire, as has been said by other speakers. Strenuous efforts must be made to engage in political dialogue. That depends on Russia.

While the focus of the discussion has been on developments in the past 48 hours, we must not lose sight of the need for the full implementation of resolution 2166 (2014). The Netherlands Mission has just circulated to Council members a letter on its response to the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17 crash. Significant progress has been made by the Netherlands in identifying the remains of the victims and repatriating them to their own countries. The letter also states that the independent investigation into the cause of the crash is ongoing and that the Netherlands remains fully committed to ensuring accountability for the perpetrators.

Australia is working closely with the Netherlands on the response to the crash and fully supports its efforts. In order for those efforts to succeed, it is imperative that all States fully implement the provisions of resolution 2166 (2014).

Mr. Gombo (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his readiness to give a briefing to the Council on the urgent situation in Ukraine.

Chad would like to express its serious concern with regard to the rapid deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, in particular in the Donetsk region. The meeting of the two Heads of State — Mr. Poroshenko and Mr. Putin — on Tuesday, 26 August in Minsk is, in our view, a new step towards de-escalating the tension. However, only two days later, reports indicate an intensification of the fighting in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions and the presence of 1,000 Russian volunteers who are supposedly fighting in the Ukrainian territory alongside pro-Russian separatists. The new escalation is a cause of concern for Chad.

As we have repeated many times, the solution to the crisis in Ukraine must be political and should be reached through an inclusive, direct dialogue on the basis of respect for the territorial integrity and

sovereignty of Ukraine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Power (United States of America): This is our twenty-fourth meeting to try to rein in Russia's aggressive acts in Ukraine. Every single one of those meetings has sent a straight-forward, unified message: Russia, stop this conflict. Russia is not listening.

We said it when Russia flagrantly violated international law by occupying Crimea. We said it after the shocking downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17, which took the lives of innocent men, women, children and infants from 11 countries. And we say it today, as Russia's soldiers, tanks, air defence and artillery support fight alongside separatists and open a new front in a crisis manufactured in and fuelled by Russia. But Russia is not listening.

Instead of listening, instead of heeding the demands of the international community and the rules of the international order, at every step Russia has come before the Council to say everything except the truth. It has manipulated. It has obfuscated. It has outright lied. We have therefore learned to measure Russia by its actions and not by its words.

In the last 48 hours, Russia's actions have spoken volumes. On 26 August — just this past Tuesday — after meeting with Ukrainian President Poroshenko in Minsk, President Putin spoke of the need to “end bloodshed as soon as possible”. Yet the same day satellite imagery showed Russian combat units south-east of Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine. That same day in Luhansk, Ukraine detained regular Russian army personnel from the 9th Brigade. In response, Russia claimed that the soldiers had wandered into Ukrainian territory by mistake. That, supposedly, in a time of conflict along one of the most carefully watched borders in the world.

The day after the Minsk talks, Russia fired Grad rockets from inside Russia at Ukrainian positions in Novoazovsk and then attacked with two columns of Russian armoured vehicles and tanks. Russian armoured vehicles and Uragan multiple rocket launchers are positioned on the outskirts of that town as we speak.

Russia's force along the border is the largest it has been since it began redeploying forces there in late May, and includes significant numbers of combat aircraft and helicopters. Russian unmanned aircraft routinely cross into Ukrainian airspace.

Other Russian deployments into Ukrainian territory include advanced artillery and air-defence systems not found in the Ukrainian inventory. Those artillery systems have shelled Ukrainian positions outside Luhansk city in conjunction with the recent separatist counteroffensive.

One of the separatist leaders that Russia has armed and backed said openly that 3,000 or 4,000 Russian soldiers had joined their cause. He was quick to clarify that those soldiers were on vacation. But a Russian soldier who chooses to fight in Ukraine on his summer break is still a Russian soldier, and the armoured Russian military vehicle he drives there is not his personal car.

Meanwhile, in Russia, family members of Russian soldiers are holding funerals for their loved ones who have been killed in the fighting in Ukraine. They are demanding answers about how their loved ones were killed. Journalists who try to cover the funerals are being harassed and threatened by armed men. Yet still, according to the Russian Government, the soldiers were never there. They were never in Crimea either, until Russia announced that those soldiers who were never there had annexed Crimea.

The last 48 hours fit into a well-established pattern for Russia. Each step has paved the way for the one that followed. And yet, in spite of all of those outrageous actions, Ukraine has repeatedly sought a political solution to the crisis. It has repeatedly sought a path to de-escalation. Despite the pattern, President Poroshenko showed up in Minsk to meet with President Putin. In contrast, President Putin was still unwilling to acknowledge the most basic facts, facts that we all know, namely, that Russia has armed, equipped and now joined illegal separatists fighting in Ukraine. Serious negotiations are needed — urgently needed — but Russia has to stop lying and has to stop fuelling the conflict.

The mask is coming off. In its recent acts, we see Russia's actions for what they are: a deliberate effort to support and now fight alongside illegal separatists in another sovereign country.

Russia has claimed that Ukraine is not interested in a ceasefire. But let us be clear: Ukraine has every interest in a ceasefire, as do we, as long as it is a real one. But Russian separatists not only have no interest in observing a ceasefire, they cynically use the time to rearm and wait for additional soldiers and supplies to flow across the border from Russia.

In the face of those deeply alarming actions, the most important question for us now is not what we should say to Russia; rather, the most important question is what we should do to make Russia listen. Throughout the crisis, the United States has, in close coordination with our European partners — the European Union and the group of seven (G-7), exerted targeted, effective pressure so that the message is heard, so that Russia begins to de-escalate rather than escalate and so that the reasonable peace plan put forward by President Poroshenko is adopted and implemented. In the face of Russia's continued aggression and blatant disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, we will continue to work closely with our G-7 and European partners to ratchet up the consequences on Russia.

I understand that there are real costs felt by citizens of countries when their Governments take such actions. It has costs for businesses that trade with Russia and sell to Russian markets, from small-scale farmers to big factories. Those costs are considerable, and nobody should take them lightly.

But let us be clear: if unchecked, the damage that Russia's blatant disregard for the international order poses is much, much greater. Those rules and principles have taken generations to build, with unparalleled investment — countless lives have been lost in the process of establishing and defending those principles, and every single one of us has a stake in defending them. A threat to the order — the international order — is a threat to the peace and security of all of us. Those are the rules that Russia is flouting when it illegally seizes territory and when it arms, equips and fights alongside illegal groups in neighbouring countries.

Ukraine is one of roughly a dozen countries that share a border with Russia. Let me conclude with a couple of questions. How can we tell those countries that border Russia that their peace and sovereignty is guaranteed, if we do not make our message heard on Ukraine? Why should they believe that it will be different, if tomorrow President Putin decides to start supporting armed separatists and allowing soldiers on vacation to fight in their countries? And, just as important, what message are we sending to other countries with similarly alarming ambitions around the world, when we let Russia violate the rules without sufficient consequences? In the face of that threat, the cost of inaction is unacceptable.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing. We take this opportunity to reiterate our full support for the Secretary-General's good offices, including Mr. Feltman's recent visit to Ukraine.

The Republic of Korea is closely monitoring the events in eastern Ukraine, and we are deeply concerned about the continuing escalation of tensions. We had hoped that the Minsk meeting between the two Presidents would be a turning point in finding a diplomatic solution to the crisis. But, on the contrary, the situation on the ground has further deteriorated. In particular, we are alarmed that the separatist armed groups have pushed their way into the southern city of Novoazovsk, opening a dangerous new front in the ongoing crisis.

We are also seriously concerned about the report that indicates the involvement of Russian troops in the latest round of fighting inside Ukraine. We hope that it is not true. We hope that Russia's explanation is true, that there are no Russian troops inside Ukraine. Otherwise, that would constitute a gross violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and would bring the crisis into a new dimension. We strongly oppose any outside military intervention in the situation in Ukraine.

In the light of the volatile situation, we stress that a genuine solution to the crisis can be found only with an immediate cessation of hostilities through dialogue between all the parties concerned. In that regard, we hope that President Poroshenko's plan for a road map towards a ceasefire with the armed groups can offer a sound basis for the de-escalation of tensions.

The stability and prosperity of Ukraine are critical not only to peace in Europe but also far beyond it. We once again reaffirm our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing on the situation in Ukraine. Argentina reiterates its concern at the continued deterioration in the security situation in the east and south of Ukraine and at the escalating violence.

It is especially imperative that all parties strictly conform, in their actions, to international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we recall the obligation of all States to settle

their international disputes by peaceful means, so as not to threaten international peace and security, while acting in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, upholding the principles set out in Chapter I, Article 2, and recognizing the significant role of the relevant regional organizations.

The only possible solution is one that is reached through dialogue and negotiation — we have said that before and we reaffirm it. Any confrontational rhetoric or any interference in matters that fall within the domestic jurisdiction of States, whether they be military, political or economic, must be avoided. In that regard, we welcome the meeting held on 26 August in Minsk between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine. We hope that it will lead to new meetings in order to resolve the differences politically. Similarly, we echo the Secretary-General's call for continuing discussions with a view to forging an solution to the conflict. We acknowledge the intense efforts and good offices of the Secretary-General. It is necessary for the parties to unconditionally observe human rights and international humanitarian law and ensure proper accountability with regard to the violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been committed.

Finally, as we have done in the past, Argentina emphasizes the Security Council's primary responsibility for ensuring the maintenance of peace and security, in accordance with the role assigned to it by the Charter. We regret that so far, despite the many times we have met to discuss the situation in Ukraine, the Council has not been able to overcome its division and play a positive role to help the parties find common points on which they can base a political and diplomatic solution. It is therefore crucial that we redouble our efforts to create conditions so that dialogue, which is so urgent, can begin in such a way that solutions can be found to the disagreements. In particular, the actors with the greatest influence should use constructive diplomacy. We reaffirm that the international community must focus its efforts on bringing the parties into a constructive dialogue and find a peaceful way out of the situation, with full respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and the rights of all minorities and while framing its actions strictly within international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

The current situation in eastern Ukraine is tantamount to a dangerous escalation of the conflict between separatists, rebels and Government forces. New fronts have been opened in the conflict, and it is now spreading to a wider geographical area. Needless to say, that further complicates what was already a very difficult and delicate situation with an ever-increasing array of actors. Reports of Russian troops and military equipment moving into Ukrainian territory are a major concern to all of us. We note, however, that the Russian representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Andrey Kelin, has emphatically denied the reports.

We therefore urge both Ukraine and Russia to resolve their differences peacefully and through genuine dialogue and negotiation. Existing, relatively credible frameworks such as the friendship treaty between the two countries and the 17 April Geneva statement are valid points of departure towards reconciliation. Indeed, President Putin and President Poroshenko must maintain their dialogue and build on it like a scaffold: it is the only valid path to a mutually acceptable diplomatic solution to the crisis. A military solution, in our view, is not a viable one. A ceasefire should be urgently negotiated and agreed as the first necessary step in ending the conflict, which has left 2,000 people dead, more than 3,000 wounded and tens of thousands displaced from their homes.

For its part, the Government of Ukraine must continue to accommodate the legitimate aspirations of all components of its citizenry and protect their interests. We are confident that strident efforts towards greater inclusiveness will foster the necessary national cohesion. That has the potential of reducing hostilities and acts of agitation and of establishing the foundations for building a peaceful, prosperous and united nation.

Throughout our engagement on this issue, we have consistently stressed the need to uphold universally agreed principles and the sanctity of international law. That of course begins with respect for the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, and those are the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all States. Those are the principles that guide Nigeria's position and have informed our stance. We believe that only a diplomatic solution, which is achievable by direct dialogue between the parties, can resolve the current conflict. We urge those with influence on the warring parties to exert that influence

and to bring it to bear on the situation in the interest of wider international peace and security.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his briefing.

China is deeply concerned and worried about the continued worsening of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, which has caused great loss of life and property. In the current situation, all the parties concerned must exercise restraint so as not to escalate it further.

China has stated on many occasions its principled position on the question of Ukraine. On this occasion, I will refrain from repeating it.

I wish to emphasize the following. The crisis in Ukraine can be resolved only by political means. The priority now is for all the parties concerned to achieve a prompt ceasefire, persevere in efforts to promote a political resolution of the crisis in Ukraine, fully accommodate the legitimate rights, interests and aspirations of all regions and ethnic groups of Ukraine and take into full consideration the legitimate concerns of all parties, thereby achieving a balance of their interests. The international community should urge the parties concerned to make good use of various mechanisms for dialogue and liaison, increase communications and act in a manner that is conducive to mutual trust.

China supports all efforts that would contribute to easing the situation, resolving the crisis and promoting a political solution.

Mr. Nduhugirehe (Rwanda): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this emergency meeting of the Security Council to address recent developments in eastern Ukraine. I thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his comprehensive briefing. We recognize the Secretary-General's good offices and the efforts by Mr. Feltman to find a solution to the crisis.

Rwanda, like all other members of the Security Council, is extremely alarmed at the rapidly deteriorating situation in eastern Ukraine. The regional summit held on 26 August in Minsk — where Presidents Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine and Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation met for the first time since the election of the former in May — had raised hope for a ceasefire and a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

Unfortunately, the past few days were marked by renewed fighting in eastern Ukraine, particularly in the Donetsk region, where the town of Novoazovsk has fallen into the hands of armed separatists who now threaten to take over the strategic port city of Mariupol. In that regard, we were troubled by the information provided by one of the leaders of the armed separatists that 3,000 to 4,000 Russian nationalists had joined their ranks. We are also concerned at the accusations of border crossings by Russian elements into Ukraine. It is clear that the rise of tension and rhetoric between Ukraine and the Russian Federation could, if not properly addressed, lead to a full-blown conflict between the two countries, thus further threatening international peace and security and worsening a very dire human rights and humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine and the wider region.

The situation in Ukraine has been on the agenda of the Security Council since the end of February. We have been constantly meeting on this crisis. We have held 24 meetings, as Ambassador Power of the United States informed us. But, unfortunately, we have been unable to take any meaningful decision, with the exception of our adoption of resolution 2166 (2014), on 21 July, on the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

In any case, given the division in the Council, it is unlikely that a solution will come from New York. Only a genuine dialogue among Ukrainians, coupled with diplomatic talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, with the support of the United Nations and regional organizations, can provide a sustainable solution to the crisis. We believe that President Poroshenko's peace plan and the Minsk process can be a viable framework for achieving that goal.

I will conclude by once again calling on all parties in Ukraine to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Armed groups must cease hostilities, lay down their weapons in order to de-escalate the situation and give peace a chance. In that regard, we urge all the original stakeholders to use their influence and to work towards peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The current escalating situation in south-eastern Ukraine is a direct consequence of Kyiv's reckless policy of waging war on its own people. With the support and under the influence of a number of well-known States, the Kyiv authorities have torpedoed all the political agreements for settling the crisis in

Ukraine arrived at in the Geneva declaration of 17 April and the Berlin declaration of 2 July. Not to mention the authorities' abandonment of their previous positions in the agreement of 21 February, which opened the door to a real possibility for a civilized way out of the crisis.

President Poroshenko's unilateral proposal for a so-called peace plan was also merely another step on the road to further escalation, since the truce was predicated on capitulation on the part of the insurgents. That is all against a backdrop with no real steps towards launching a political process or negotiating with representatives of the regions. Where is the inclusive national dialogue promised by Kyiv, the constitutional reform, the decentralization of authority and the special status for the Russian language? All we are seeing is a fight with dissenters and a situation in which political parties and media that do not toe the line are banned.

President Poroshenko has frequently made peaceful-sounding statements. Only yesterday he commented on the results of the high-level meeting in Minsk, saying that Kyiv's chief goal was peace, and that they sought decisive action capable of bringing peace to Ukraine. He also spoke of some new urgent plan for resolving the crisis. Where is that plan? Or is it yet another distracting manoeuvre while concealing an attempt to resolve things by force? We hope that the Kyiv leadership will not squander the positive opportunities presented by the Minsk meeting.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian armed forces, without consideration for any standard of international humanitarian law or simple moral precepts, have been indiscriminately attacking cities, residential neighbourhoods and infrastructure targets. They are using artillery, machine guns and air attacks, using phosphorous explosives banned under international conventions and ballistic rockets. In the so-called anti-terrorist operations area there are 4 million people. Hundreds of thousands of them have been sitting in cellars without water or electricity for weeks, and food and medicines are practically unobtainable. The overall number of deaths now exceeds 2,000, and it is growing exponentially. The number of people, including refugees, who have moved from Ukraine to Russia is now more than 814,000.

The media are reporting horrendous losses in the Ukrainian army, confirmed by mass protests in Ukraine against mobilization. Hundreds of Ukrainian servicemen are ending up on Russian territory for various reasons. We give them food, water and medical

treatment and send them back to Ukraine. We hope that the Kyiv authorities are treating the nine Russian paratroopers we have heard so much about in the past 24 hours just as humanely. However, it is reported that they were detained with their own documents and with unloaded weapons, which hardly resembles a diversion force in a conflict zone. Everyone knows that there are Russian volunteers in eastern Ukraine; no one conceals the fact. One could wish that there could be similar transparency in certain other countries. Let us hear what our American colleagues have to say about what dozens of American advisers are doing in the Ukrainian Defence Council building, or how many American mercenaries from so-called private military contractors are fighting thousands of kilometres from their shores. How come American weapon systems have shown up in the Ukrainian armed forces?

Our American colleague asked an eloquent question — what message can Russia's neighbours send? To my dear colleagues I say this. I would suggest that they send a message to Washington, D.C. : stop interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State. Stop stirring up objectionable regimes. Limit your geopolitical ambitions. Then not only Russia's neighbours but many other countries all over the world would breathe more easily. And another thing: stop speculating about the downed Malaysian plane. So far Russia alone has made a contribution to the conduct of a transparent and essential investigation of that tragedy. From everyone else we have heard no information, nothing but insinuations. For some reason, even the question of how the Ukrainians obtained recordings of their air traffic controllers' conversations is some kind of dreadful secret. Stop that speculation.

Russia has been attempting to send humanitarian aid to the residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions who so urgently need it. Not long ago, despite the desperate opposition of various intrigue-mongering members of the Security Council, the first Russian humanitarian convoy arrived in Luhansk under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Preparations are now being finalized for dispatching a second convoy. An agreement on that was confirmed today in a telephone conversation between Russia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, and Ukraine's Foreign Minister Klimkin.

We should remember that the Council does not exist in order to spread conjecture and exchange accusations, but to take decisions that might help to resolve crises.

Today we propose that Council members make the following statement to the press:

“The members of the Security Council expressed serious concern about the worsening situation in south-eastern Ukraine and called for a speedy and unconditional ceasefire. The members of the Security Council called for an inclusive political dialogue on Ukraine based on the Geneva declaration of 17 April 2014 and the joint Berlin declaration of 2 July 2014. In that context, the Council noted the role of the contact group and strongly urged that the process be resumed without delay within the framework of the contact group.

“The members of the Security Council urged the international community to step up its efforts to provide humanitarian aid to the people of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.”

That is the end of the draft statement by the Security Council to the press. We propose that we vote on this statement here and now around this table.

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

I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing. The United Kingdom is deeply alarmed by the escalation of Russian military intervention in eastern Ukraine over the past 72 hours. Formed units of the armed forces of the Russian Federation are now directly engaged in fighting inside Ukraine against the armed forces of Ukraine. Those units consist of well over 1,000 regular Russian troops equipped with armoured vehicles, artillery and air defence systems. That incursion is a clear violation of sovereign Ukrainian territory by the Russian Federation. It is a clear breach of international law and a contravention of the Charter of the United Nations.

Russian denials of that reality fit into the pattern of Russia's dishonest approach to Ukraine from the very beginning of the crisis. We all remember that Russia denied that it had any extra military personnel on the ground in Crimea right up until its illegal annexation with military force. Russia has denied providing military support to the separatists. In fact, Russia has been transferring significant quantities of advanced weapons, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery, to separatist groups for several months. As of today, the separatists' arsenal includes up to 100 main battle tanks, 80 armoured personnel carriers,

100 man-portable air defence systems, 500 anti-tank weapons and more than 100 artillery pieces. Almost all of those have been directly supplied by Russia since the conflict started.

In the past three weeks, that support has increased significantly, no doubt in response to Ukraine's success in liberating territory from the separatists. On 7 August, 50 vehicles, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers and BM-21 Grad multiple rocket launchers, crossed from Russia into Ukraine at the Chervono Partizansk border crossing. On 15 August, a convoy of 23 armoured personnel carriers crossed close to where the Russian humanitarian convoy was awaiting customs clearance. The following day, a further convoy of 84 military vehicles crossed the border. The evidence is overwhelming, and plenty of it comes from the Russian military itself. On 13 July, armoured vehicles flying Russian flags were photographed by a Russian serviceman crossing the Ukrainian border at Izvaryne, Donetsk. On 31 July, a Russian soldier posted photographs of himself operating military hardware inside Ukraine. His photographs included images of himself inside an SA-11 missile launch system — the very weapon that appears to have been used to shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight MH-17.

Russia has also denied that it has shelled Ukrainian territory. In fact, over just five days, between 14 and 19 August, Ukrainian armed forces were fired upon from positions inside Russian territory on at least 21 separate occasions, with weapons systems ranging from heavy mortars to Grad rockets. Now we see irrefutable evidence of regular Russian forces operating inside Ukraine. For some months, Russia has deployed small groups of its special forces operating under the command of the main intelligence directorate of the Russian armed forces in support of the separatists. Those forces have been responsible for coordinating attacks and facilitating communications and transfers of equipment and personnel. Their presence is clear from their communications. Over a single 24-hour period from 29 to 30 July alone, there were 45 separate instances of Russian secure military radio transmissions originating from inside Ukrainian territory.

Today, NATO has released satellite imagery, taken on 21 and 23 August, of Russian self-propelled artillery units inside Ukraine in the vicinity of Krasnodon, Luhansk province. On Monday, 10 Russian paratroopers belonging to the 331st Regiment of the 98th Svirsk Airborne Division were captured near the village of

Dzerkalne, 20 kilometres inside Ukrainian territory. We have satellite imagery confirming the deployment of Russian armoured vehicles supported by artillery south of Donetsk close to that location. Today, another Russian soldier, Petr Khokhlov, serving with the 9th Motor Rifle Brigade, was captured in Luhansk.

It is simply not credible for Russia and its proxies in Donetsk and Luhansk to keep claiming that those serving members of the Russian armed forces are in Ukraine by accident or on holiday. Nor is it credible for Russia to continue claiming to the whole world, including to the Russian people, that Russian soldiers are not present on Ukrainian territory. The increasing number of Russian casualties and captured soldiers gives the lie to that. Russia can no longer pretend that it is not a direct party to this conflict. Indeed, this conflict would no longer exist without direct Russian military involvement in support of the separatists.

President Putin has said that Russia is willing to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Those words have little value against this clear pattern of escalating Russian military involvement in eastern Ukraine. Violating international law and the Charter of the United Nations in such a brazen manner is not compatible with Russia's responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council. We again call on Russia to immediately withdraw its military forces from Ukraine, stop its flow of weapons to the separatists and instead help to secure a political solution to the crisis.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): I would like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his briefing earlier today.

It has already been half a year since the Council, on 28 February, first took up the issue of Russia's aggression against Ukraine (see S/PV.7123). The aggression started through the military occupation and annexation of a huge part of Ukrainian sovereign territory, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. It then proceeded by means of a hybrid war against Ukraine, the sponsorship of terrorism and the supply of arms and mercenaries to illegal armed groups in the eastern region of our State, along with intensive artillery shelling from Russian territory and regular violations of Ukrainian air space by military aircraft, helicopters and drones. That was followed by the downing of a civilian aircraft

by terrorist groups using Russian-supplied surface-to-air missile systems, killing all 298 passengers and crew on board. The next red line was the illegal crossing of the Ukrainian State border by a so-called humanitarian convoy dispatched by Russia without authorization from the Ukrainian Government and in violation of international agreements and procedures.

Russia has been putting its troops along the border with Ukraine. As of now, over 45,000 military, about 160 tanks, 1,360 armoured battle vehicles, 390 artillery systems, 150 Grad missile systems, 192 military aircraft and 137 helicopters are deployed in the vicinity of our border.

The situation has dramatically changed now. Russia has launched a direct military invasion of Ukraine with its regular armed forces. Last night, two military convoys crossed the Ukrainian State border and advanced towards the village of Telmanove with seven tanks, one BMP-2 and a truck with soldiers, and towards the town of Novoazovsk with five T-64 tanks, two BMP-2s, and two trucks with soldiers. After shelling the positions of Ukrainian forces from Russian territory and from the district of Sjedove, Russian troops seized Novoazovsk.

More than 10,000 civilians have been held hostage by the Russian invaders. Psychological pressure is exerted against the citizens of Ukraine, and threats of psychological violence are heard.

On 24 August, two battalion tactical groups from the armed forces of the Russian Federation, reinforced by tank units, crossed the State border of Ukraine near the village of Berestovo in the Donetsk region, just 500 metres from the Ukrainian State border. It was reported that none of the Russian military equipment bore license plates and that some combat vehicles were painted with two white stripes to resemble Ukrainian combat vehicles in a counter-terrorism operation zone. The troops wore Russian army combat uniforms without insignia. Currently, the combat units I have mentioned occupy several villages in the Donetsk region, including Pobeda, Glinka, Amvrosiivka, Telmanovo, Granitny and Sontseve, and are constructing fortified strongholds.

On 25 August, Ukrainian armed forces detained 10 soldiers near the town of Dzerkalne from the 331st Regiment of the 98th Sibirsk Airborne Division of the armed forces of the Russian Federation. All their identities were revealed. We have serious doubts that

fully armed Russian troops could have lost their way and penetrated 25 kilometres into Ukraine. We possess abundant evidence, including video footage of troops and Russian soldiers now in detention, as well as Russian armoured vehicles and tanks with full documentation proving that they belong to the Russian military. That leaves absolutely no doubt about the direct Russian invasion of Ukraine.

We consider the Russian Federation fully responsible for the daily death toll among Ukrainian civilians and military as well as for the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Donbas. We demand that the Russian Federation immediately withdraw all its troops from Ukrainian territory to save the lives of both Ukrainians and Russians. We demand that the Russian Federation establish effective control over the Ukrainian-Russian border under the control of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which would exclude illegal supplies of military equipment, weapons and militants to Ukraine. We demand that Russia release all Ukrainians who are being held hostage. We have been open to all diplomatic initiatives and have participated in every negotiation format. The President of Ukraine has offered his peace plan for deescalation, which Russia has deliberately undermined.

While demonstrating his full readiness for peace negotiations with Russia during their meeting in Minsk, President Poroshenko made it clear that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as the European aspirations of the Ukrainian people, were not negotiable. In view of the open Russian military aggression, Ukraine reserves its right to act in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, which empowers every State Member of the United Nations with the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations. We call upon the international community to provide effective assistance to Ukraine to resist Russian aggression.

Will the international community keep witnessing silently as the fundamental principles of international law are being grossly disrespected? The entire democratic world is being challenged, and the actual world order is being destroyed. Or will it finally speak with one voice and act? The choice is not tactical; the choice is fundamental. The world is challenged by a military nuclear might that is ignoring universal principles and craves absolute power. How many more

red lines have to be crossed before this challenge is addressed?

We call upon the Council to fulfil its Charter responsibility and take urgent measures to stop the aggression against a sovereign State Member of the United Nations.

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

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): We note the request by the Russian Federation. I am also very well aware of certain labels that my delegations has been given. In spite of that fact, since those labels have been repeated on various occasions — “killer amendments” and things of the kind — we appreciate the drafting of the statement referred to by the representative of the Russian Federation. However, we would like to have a little bit more time to look into the text seriously.

In our opinion, some of aspects are not reflected in that text. For one, we are very well aware of the information that separatists have been preventing the provision of humanitarian assistance to the population. Humanitarian assistance has been offered by the Government of Ukraine. A call to the separatists not to prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance is something that we should like to see in the text, as well as some other amendments that we might come up with.

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

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to say a few words to our Ukrainian colleagues.

First, as he did in a previous statement, hinting at Russia, the representative of Ukraine — just as the representative of the United States did — mentioned the Malaysia Airlines flight. Could he please tell the Council why Ukraine has not published the transcripts of the air traffic controllers’ conversations? Could he at least tell us if they have provided them to the Dutch authorities.

Secondly, I should like to make a more substantial comment — and I understand that perhaps in Washington, D.C., or in Brussels they might not know about this, because for them it does not really matter whether it is Ukraine or some country in Latin America or Africa or wherever. But I am trying to understand.

When they announced the so-called Poroshenko peace plan, which mentioned the need for insurgents to capitulate, did the politicians in Kyiv not understand the kind of consequences that could lead to? I do not understand this. I mean: we know our region. We know how close our ties are. That was an obvious step towards escalation and disaster, which is what we are seeing. Could they not understand that insurgents could not simply lay down their weapons, give up and leave for Russia and have Ukrainian tanks enter Luhansk and Donetsk?

I do not understand. If someone had advised them to do this, then that person either did not understand what he was doing or was simply trying to provoke, trying to completely destabilize the situation in Ukraine and make life difficult for Russia. If the representative of Ukraine could provide an explanation for this, I would be very grateful.

The President: The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now call on him.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his questions. With regard to his first question, I can tell him decisively that Ukraine is participating actively in the work of the intergovernmental commission investigating the incident. My Government is cooperating in good faith with its international partners. I believe that a report on the Commission’s work and the initial findings of the investigation is to be published in the near future.

As for the Russian representative’s second question, I would like to say the following. Our President, including at the meeting with the Russian President in Minsk, has spoken clearly of our readiness for further dialogue in resolving the situation in eastern Ukraine. It was clearly stated that we are ready to engage in negotiations on a whole range of issues. The only topic that cannot be discussed is the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and our European integration, which is what our people desire and have decided upon.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 3:30 p.m.