



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

## 8998<sup>th</sup> meeting

Thursday, 17 March 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Abushahab . . . . . (United Arab Emirates)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Nanga
Ghana . . . . .	Mrs. Hackman
India . . . . .	Mr. Tirumurti
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya . . . . .	Mrs. Toroitich
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Threats to international peace and security**

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Mr. Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization.

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

**Ms. DiCarlo:** Daily attacks continue to batter Ukrainian cities. Many are reportedly indiscriminate, resulting in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. Between 24 February and 15 March, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 1,900 civilian casualties. The total consists of 726 people killed, including 52 children, and 1,174 injured, including 63 children. The actual number is likely much higher. Most of the casualties were caused by the use in populated areas of explosive weapons with a wide impact area. Hundreds of residential buildings have been damaged or destroyed, as have hospitals and schools.

OHCHR continues to monitor reports of civilian casualties in the whole country, including in territory controlled by the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics. Members of OHCHR staff in Donetsk are closely following developments regarding the 14 March incident in which 20 civilians were reportedly killed by a Tochka-U missile that may have contained cluster munitions. All such instances must be properly investigated. It is the responsibility of all sides to fully abide by their obligations to protect the lives of all civilians everywhere. OHCHR is gravely concerned about reports of arbitrary arrests and

enforced disappearances of civilians, local authorities and civil society activists in Russian-controlled areas. We call for their immediate release.

This week, there were positive signals reported with regard to the ongoing direct talks between Ukrainian and Russian representatives. We welcome all such engagements. However, we note that those signals have so far not translated into the cessation of hostilities that is so desperately needed. The situation in the south-eastern port city of Mariupol is particularly alarming. Many of the Mariupol residents who have not been able to safely evacuate lack food, water, electricity and medical care. Uncollected corpses lie on city streets. Yesterday's strike on the Mariupol theatre, which reportedly served as a bomb shelter for displaced civilians, adds to the list of attacks against civilian structures. While early reports indicate that the worst may have been avoided, ongoing fighting is hampering the rescue work and assessment of the situation.

The devastation and suffering in Mariupol and Kharkiv raises grave fears about the fate of millions of residents of Kyiv and other cities facing intensifying attacks. International humanitarian law is crystal clear: civilians are entitled to protection against the dangers arising from military operations; direct attacks against civilians are prohibited. Yet the magnitude of civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Ukraine cannot be denied. That demands a thorough investigation and accountability.

The priority for the United Nations and its partners is to reach the people trapped by the ongoing shelling, including in eastern Ukraine. To that end, we continue to scale-up our operations on the ground, as circumstances permit. The needs of the population are growing by the day. The United Nations calls for safe passage for civilians from, and humanitarian supplies into, encircled areas.

We are grateful to neighbouring Governments for their generosity in receiving refugees and enabling the provision of assistance to Ukraine. The United Nations is requesting all donors to fast-track funding against pledges made towards the Ukraine flash appeal. The appeal, which seeks \$1.1 billion to help 12 million people in need, is 36 per cent funded.

The United Nations Development Programme projects that 90 per cent of the Ukrainian population could be facing poverty and extreme economic vulnerability should the war continue, setting the

country and the region back decades and leaving deep social and economic scars. As the Secretary-General highlighted, dangerous ripple effects of the conflict are already being felt across the globe. Russia and Ukraine represent more than half of the world's supply of sunflower oil and 30 per cent of the world's wheat. Food, fuel and fertilizer prices are skyrocketing. Supply chains are being disrupted. All of that is hitting the poorest the hardest and potentially creating instability around the globe.

On 14 March, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of a Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to lead an effort with Member States to deal with the complex fallout of the war. The Deputy Secretary-General will lead an inter-agency steering committee with partners to oversee that effort.

The Secretary-General welcomes all ongoing diplomatic contacts. He remains actively engaged with leaders who are trying to bring about an end to the war. There will be no winners to this senseless conflict. On the other hand, the tremendous loss it is causing is heartbreakingly clear. It will become increasingly worse the longer the fighting continues.

The Secretary-General urges intensified and coordinated political efforts for an immediate cessation of hostilities. There must be a meaningful, sustained political process to enable a peaceful settlement. The lives of millions of Ukrainians and the peace and security of the entire region, and possibly beyond, depend on it.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Mazou.

**Mr. Mazou**: It has been fewer than three weeks since High Commissioner Grandi addressed the Security Council (see S/PV.8983). Within that short timespan, the number of refugees from Ukraine in neighbouring countries has risen exponentially, from the then 520,000 to more than 3.1 million today, in what has become the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

With close to 2 million refugees from Ukraine, in a matter of a few weeks, Poland has become one of the largest refugee-hosting countries in the world. Some 490,000 people have fled to Romania, 350,000 to Moldova, 280,000 to Hungary and 228,000 to Slovakia. Hundreds of thousands have now reached other

European countries. A sizable number of people have also moved to the Russian Federation and, to a lesser extent, Belarus.

We are humbled by the remarkable resilience of the refugees, many of whom left their homes with next to nothing, and by the extraordinary hospitality of host authorities and host communities. That solidarity illustrates the very foundation of the international refugee protection architecture and the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees. The acts of compassion, humanity and kindness we now witness daily bring hope and brighten an otherwise very grim reality.

We strongly commend the Governments of receiving countries for keeping their borders open to all those fleeing Ukraine, including third-country nationals, who must continue to be received without discrimination. The robust response that those countries have mounted from scratch in an extremely short period of time is truly impressive. We are heartened by the bilateral and other support extended to the principal refugee-hosting countries, the funding committed to us so far in support of the \$1.1 billion flash appeal for the response inside Ukraine and the \$550.6 million to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)-led regional refugee response plan, both launched on 1 March.

The outpouring of support from the private sector and individuals, who have jointly provided some two thirds of the funds raised for the response so far, must be lauded. All international support to the response is coordinated under the Refugee Coordination Model, led by UNHCR, which has been established in Poland, Moldova, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia, as well as in other countries in the region.

The sum of collective expertise and support will be critical in helping the refugee population and supporting host countries with shelter, emergency relief items and cash assistance, as well as mental health and psychosocial support. UNHCR has scaled up its response by deploying more than 200 experts and established a field presence in all countries. UNHCR staff on the ground undertakes regular protection monitoring at the main border crossing points, reception centres and other locations where refugees transit or gather. However, with the current pace of refugee outflows, the capacity of neighbouring countries is being tested and stretched. We can and must do more to support, and we must do it now.

As the situation evolves, UNHCR, in coordination with host Governments and partners, will assess the needs, as necessary, and is currently adjusting the regional refugee response plan. While some refugees transit through Ukraine's neighbouring countries, many also join families that have been settled for quite some time in those countries. That is particularly the case in Poland, where, with the passage of time and ever-reducing resources, the number of refugees needing integration will increase. They and the State that hosts them will need support to ensure their inclusion in all sectors of public life, health and education and access to labour and other services.

With European Union (EU) host countries receiving support from the rest of the Union, we are particularly concerned about the situation in Moldova, where more than 350,000 people have arrived. The refugee crisis comes on top of pre-existing challenges. It is therefore crucial that sufficient resources be made available quickly to support the Government's response.

As critical as it is, funding is only one of the many forms of support urgently needed. We commend the recent launch of the EU Solidarity Platform, designed to ease the pressure on Ukraine's neighbouring countries, through transfers of vulnerable refugees to other EU member States. We are grateful to those member States that have already made concrete pledges to transfer refugees from Moldova, and we encourage others to join that initiative, which constitutes a remarkable and innovative example of responsibility-sharing, in line with the key tenets of the Global Compact on Refugees.

In addition, for the first time in its history, the EU activated the Temporary Protection Directive, which enables refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons arriving from Ukraine to quickly regularize their legal status, thereby alleviating pressure on asylum systems. It will also enable refugees to find work, access services and benefit from social protection. Such temporary protection has also been announced by the Governments of the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Brazil and others.

I wish to further highlight that 90 per cent of the refugees fleeing Ukraine are women and children, indicating the heightened risk of gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking. As the Secretary-General said, for predators and human traffickers, war is not a tragedy; it is an opportunity. We are deeply concerned about

media reports of incidents of gender-based violence and trafficking, and we support the efforts of Governments to scale up prevention and risk-mitigation measures, including through the stay safe campaign, aimed at awareness-raising and the provision of information to refugees.

As part of UNHCR's leading role in coordinating the United Nations refugee response, we have also deployed experts and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse coordinators to support the Government's response in several refugee-hosting countries.

Since the early days of the crisis, UNHCR committed to staying and delivering in Ukraine — and that is what it has done. Allow me to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and admiration for our colleagues who have remained in Ukraine, but also to the whole humanitarian community.

We believe that at least 2 million people have been forced to flee within Ukraine. Close to 13 million people have been affected in the areas hit hardest by the war in Ukraine. Many people remain trapped in areas where the conflict is escalating and, with essential services disrupted, are unable to meet even the most basic of their needs. In many locations, such as Mariupol, residents face a critical and potentially fatal shortage of food, water and medicines. People living with disabilities or serious medical conditions are particularly impacted. UNHCR is closely tracking negotiations for their safe passage and is preparing to send humanitarian supplies as soon as conditions allow.

To facilitate the provision of life-saving assistance to the populations most in need in Ukraine, we have adjusted our operational presence, relocating offices and warehouses to the western and central parts of the country. Together with partners, we have been able to deliver critical supplies for displaced and conflict-affected populations, including core relief items and shelter materials.

We are working closely with local authorities to establish and expand reception capacity in the main locations where internally displaced people are arriving. We coordinate the provision of key protection services such as legal aid, social accompaniment, psychosocial support, child protection and gender-based violence case management. Where conditions allow, we distribute multi-purpose cash to help people make the choices best suitable to their needs. Flexible forms of assistance are crucial, as are innovative

approaches. Despite all efforts, we are unable to respond to the sheer scale of the rapidly growing needs of the Ukrainian people and systematically deliver much-needed life-saving assistance.

We cannot overemphasize the urgent call repeatedly made by the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Emergency Relief Coordinator Griffiths that civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected. International humanitarian law must be upheld and safe passage for civilians — in any direction they choose — must be enabled. Safe humanitarian access to those in need and the unhindered delivery of aid, including through a functioning humanitarian notification system, remains of paramount importance.

In conclusion, allow me to paraphrase High Commissioner Grandi, who is in Tajikistan today after having left Afghanistan yesterday. On numerous occasions, he has stressed that, as we respond to the crisis in Ukraine, we cannot abandon or forget the other recent and protracted humanitarian crises in many regions of Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Mazou for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ghebreyesus.

**Mr. Ghebreyesus**: I thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address the Council today.

The war in Ukraine is having devastating consequences for the health of Ukraine's people — consequences that will reverberate for years or decades to come. There is severe disruption to health services and access to basic commodities as a result of the widespread destruction of infrastructure, including health facilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) has verified 43 attacks on health care facilities, with 12 people killed and 34 injured, including health workers. In any conflict, attacks on health care are a violation of international humanitarian law. They deprive people of urgently needed care and break already strained health systems.

The disruption to services and supplies in Ukraine is posing an extreme risk to people with cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, HIV and tuberculosis, which are among the leading causes of mortality in Ukraine. Displacement, poor shelter and overcrowded living conditions caused by the conflict are likely to increase

the risk of diseases such as measles, pneumonia and polio.

Services for mental health and psychosocial support are urgently needed to help people cope with the effects of the war. There are more than 35,000 mental health patients in Ukrainian psychiatric hospitals and long-term care facilities, which are facing severe shortages of medicines, food, heating, blankets and more.

The war is also exacerbating the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in Ukraine. With just one-third of the adult population fully vaccinated, that increases the risk of large numbers of people developing severe disease. Critical shortages of oxygen will have an impact on the ability to treat patients with COVID-19 and many other conditions. At least eight facilities for producing and storing liquid oxygen have now closed. We are seeking ways to access oxygen from neighbouring countries and to deliver it safely to where it is needed.

The WHO is on the ground, working with the Ministry of Health and partners to support health workers and the health system to provide care to meet immediate health needs. So far, we have sent about 100 metric tons of medical supplies, including oxygen, insulin, surgical supplies, anaesthetics and blood transfusion kits — enough for 4,500 trauma patients and 450,000 primary health-care patients for one month. Other equipment, including oxygen generators, electrical generators and defibrillators, have also been delivered and we are preparing to send a further 108 metric tons.

We have now established supply lines from our warehouse in Lviv to many cities in Ukraine, but access-related challenges remain. We need unfettered access. We have critical supplies ready for United Nations joint convoys to enter difficult areas, but so far we have not been successful. Today, for example, the United Nations convoy to Sumy, which included a WHO truck carrying critical medical supplies, was unable to enter. Loads ready for Mariupol remain in staging areas and cannot proceed. Access to those and other areas is now critical.

To support Ukraine's health system, the WHO is coordinating the deployment of 20 emergency medical teams, consisting of experts from many countries, to deliver care across a range of disciplines in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, which have been generous in welcoming refugees but are struggling to meet their needs, as my colleagues mentioned earlier. Those needs

are immense and include continuity of care for basic illnesses, as well as more complex issues like cancer and renal dialysis, maternal and child health, HIV and tuberculosis, sexual and reproductive health and mental health. Refugees and many of those who remain in Ukraine are already very vulnerable, especially women and girls. Protecting them from abuse and exploitation of all kinds must be a top priority for hosting Governments and for all international organizations.

Today I have three urgent requests.

First, we urge the Security Council to work for an immediate ceasefire and a political solution. Prolonged conflict is in nobody's interests and will only prolong the suffering of the most vulnerable. The life-saving medicine we need right now is peace.

Secondly, we urge all donors to support the response to humanitarian needs in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, which are immense and escalating every day. Thanks to donors that front-loaded the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies, we were able to respond immediately, deploying more than \$10 million to address immediate health needs. These funds were supplemented by additional funding from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund. However, to sustain the response, we call on donors to fully fund the United Nations emergency appeal. As the Under-Secretary-General said, only 36 per cent has so far been funded. We thank those donors that have already pledged funding to meet the needs of the people in Ukraine.

And thirdly, although Ukraine is rightly the focus of the world's attention, I urge Council members not to lose sight of the many other crises in which people are suffering. In Afghanistan, more than half the population is in need, with widespread malnutrition and a surge in measles, among many other challenges. In Ethiopia, the blockade of 6 million people in Tigray for almost 500 days has created a catastrophic food and health crisis. In the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 12 million people are in need of health assistance, almost half of them children. And in Yemen, roughly two-thirds of the population — more than 20 million people — is estimated to be in need of health assistance.

In every case, the only solution is peace. I repeat — in every case, the only solution is peace. And our world needs peace more than ever. As if the coronavirus disease were not enough, to have a devastating war like this is dangerous for the world.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Dr. Ghebreyesus for his briefing.

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I thank the briefers for their briefings today.

Just three weeks ago, Russia launched its unprovoked, unjustified, unconscionable full-scale invasion into Ukraine and assault on democracy. Now, over 3 million refugees have fled the country, creating a devastating humanitarian crisis felt around the world. These refugees are mostly women and children. They stuffed their lives into backpacks and left their homes and everything they knew behind. Today, many of them know that their apartment buildings and streets have been bombed to rubble.

And the horrors continue for those who remain in Ukraine. We have just heard from the Director-General of the World Health Organization that 43 hospitals have been attacked by Russia — 43 hospitals and health facilities. Associated Press reporters on the ground showed the world a mass grave in Mariupol — a narrow trench filled with the bodies of children. Yesterday, Russian forces dropped a powerful bomb that hit a Mariupol theatre where hundreds of civilians were hiding. The Russian word for “children” was written outside the theatre, both front and back, in large white letters that could have been seen from the sky. Yet Russian forces bombed it anyway. Local officials have told families to leave their dead relatives lying outside on the streets — exposed to the world — because it is simply too dangerous with the bombs and shelling to hold funerals.

I have just met with Ukrainian civil society leaders. They reported that people standing in a bread line, trying to get food to feed their families, were shot dead by Russian soldiers. They reported terror — the terror that Russia is inflicting across Ukraine on the Ukrainian people.

Russia will be held accountable for its atrocities. There is only one way — one way — to end this madness. President Putin must stop the killing, withdraw his forces and leave Ukraine once and for all.

Yesterday I listened to President Zelenskyy's speech to the United States Congress and I was so moved by his words, his bravery and his calls for help and for peace. Immediately afterward, President Biden

announced another \$800 million in security assistance to help Ukraine defend itself. That is more than \$1 billion in the past week alone.

We are not doing this by ourselves. Our allies and partners are fully committed to surging assistance to the Ukrainians. And we are grateful to all of our allies and partners who have opened their borders and their hearts and welcomed Ukrainian refugees. We are also going to continue to provide humanitarian relief to support people within Ukraine and those who have been forced to flee, including the \$186 million in additional assistance that Secretary Blinken announced on Tuesday.

Here at the United Nations, we believe that the best way to address the humanitarian crisis is through a resolution of the General Assembly. The resolution of the General Assembly will reflect the views of the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States and Ukraine itself.

The International Court of Justice issued a profound and important order yesterday to the Russian Federation, and we call on Russia to comply immediately. Russia has clearly violated international law by violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Russia's brutal tactics have killed civilians, medics and some of the journalists who have been showing us all the truth of this war. Russia has attacked so much of what we hold sacred and everything — everything — the United Nations stands for. Russia's actions must be condemned in no uncertain terms.

As President Biden said, Ukraine will never be a victory for Putin. No matter what advances he makes, no matter whom he kills or what cities he destroys, Ukraine will never be a victory for him. The United States stands with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, and we will do everything — everything — in our power to end this tragic, unnecessary war.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I thank Rosemary DiCarlo for her clarity and the very valuable information she provides every time she comes to brief the Council. I thank Mr. Mazou and Director-General Ghebreyesus for their sobering information.

Three weeks into this unprovoked, unjustified, illegal and deadly aggression by Russia, the terrible facts are hardly surprising since they were anticipated nearly to the detail: massive casualties among civilians; mass graves; widespread destruction of civilian

infrastructure; ruined homes, schools and hospitals; lives blown away by bombardments; and children's dreams up in smoke.

There is no need to describe this devastating situation. Yet what we just heard from top United Nations representatives — not from the so-called Western hysteria — is soul-wrenching and coincides with the shocking media reports on the horrors of the war and the misery unleashed upon Ukraine for no reason.

I will perhaps just recall the summarizing words of the Secretary-General when he said two days ago:

“Ukraine is on fire. The country is being decimated.”

I ask colleagues to guess by whom.

There are more than 3 million refugees in only three weeks — more than the entire population of my country; some 2 million people displaced internally; and some 12 million people affected in the areas hardest hit by the war.

UNICEF has evidenced that since the start of the war, forced by this brutal aggression, every second a child has crossed the border of Ukraine. Special Representative of the Secretary-General Patten warns that abuse and the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as trafficking, continue to mount amid wide-scale displacement.

Several appeals for humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians went unheeded. Many people remain trapped in areas of conflict and, with essential services disrupted, are unable to meet their basic needs, including for food, water and medicines.

For the estimated hundreds of thousands who remain, there is simply nowhere to go. They can be killed, even for queuing for bread, as happened. That is the angry and true face of the Russian aggression.

The Director-General of the World Health Organization, whose briefing we just heard, confirmed that there have been 43 attacks on Ukrainian health-care facilities, infrastructure and workers since the beginning of the invasion — in other words, two every day. Unfortunately, there are nearly a dozen conflicts in the world today. Out of 89 attacks on health systems around the world so far this year, 43 were in Ukraine alone. Attacking health-care facilities and workers is therefore becoming a tactic of war in Ukraine.

Nothing is being spared. First, there was the maternity ward in Mariupol. Then there was a mosque. Yesterday Russians bombed the Drama Theatre in Mariupol, a shelter for nearly 1,000 citizens who were not able to flee the city. As was mentioned, the word “children” in large Russian script was painted on the ground outside the theatre. Everything must be bombed.

Despite that gruelling picture, the main news is not just what I said. The main news is that Ukraine is holding out, Ukraine is resisting, Ukraine is winning and Russia is deep in the mud on the ground, morally, legally and internationally.

We now know that for Russia to win this war of choice, it has to do to the entire Ukraine what it did to Grozny; it has to do to all Ukraine’s cities what it did to Aleppo; and it has to do to everything there what it did to Mariupol. Even after that, we will again be told here that it is not its fault.

*(spoke in French)*

It’s Voltaire’s fault.

*(spoke in English)*

Yesterday Ukraine won the first legal victory at the International Court of Justice. The International Court of Justice, the guardian of international law, ruled that there was no evidence to support Russian claims that Ukraine was committing genocide in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. The Court called for the immediate suspension of any kind of military operations by Russia and entities, organizations or persons under its control. The question is: Will Russia respect the Court’s order, or will it unplug and cancel itself completely and entirely from international law?

Beyond the human toll, the deliberate infrastructure and residential destruction and the large-scale humanitarian crisis, there is another major crisis: the economic impact of the aggression. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has warned that every day of delayed peace will accelerate a freefall into poverty in Ukraine. UNDP projected yesterday that 90 per cent of the Ukrainian population could be facing poverty and extreme economic vulnerability, should the war deepen. In the event of a continuing, protracted war in Ukraine, almost one third of the population will fall below the poverty line and a further 62 per cent will be at extreme risk of falling into poverty within the next 12 months. Again, UNDP warned that 18 years of socioeconomic achievement could be lost. That would

set the country and the entire region back decades, leaving deep social and economic scars for generations to come.

Who in this Chamber or outside it then believes a single word from Russia about the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, because those terrible effects will be felt not only in Ukraine, but also in the entire world?

Russia has proposed a text for the humanitarian draft resolution S/2022/231. We think that it is wrong. It is worse — it is a mockery of proportions, a move worthy of the Guinness record for hypocrisy.

Russia cannot shoot first and then come disguised as a doctor. The only way to minimize humanitarian consequences for the Ukrainian population is simple: Russia has to stop the war, withdraw its troops and go home. No one should become confused by a text just because it is called a humanitarian text when the only aim is to provide cover for the war. We therefore urge colleagues not to fall for the emperor’s new clothes. The Russian aggression is naked out there.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I join other speakers in thanking our briefers today.

As we heard, it is three weeks since we met in this Chamber to make one final effort to avert a Russian invasion of Ukraine (see S/PV.8974). It is three weeks since we were interrupted by the news that President Putin had abandoned diplomacy and chosen war. These have been three devastatingly long weeks for the people of Ukraine, for the 3 million people who have fled and for those who have stayed.

As we heard from the United Nations, Russian forces are laying siege to populated cities and towns and indiscriminately shelling residential areas with high-impact weaponry, including cluster munitions. A total of 43 health-care facilities, including a maternity hospital, have been attacked, killing the most vulnerable and depriving civilians of access to medical assistance.

President Putin’s war is causing suffering well beyond Ukraine’s borders. Thousands of students, many from nations around this table, have been caught up in the violence. The war is spiking food and energy prices, bringing further pain to countries in the developing world already suffering from the impact of the coronavirus disease, famine, conflict and climate change. Millions of refugees have been taken in by countries across Europe.

Three weeks since the start of Russia's invasion, one point should be clear in our minds. This is an unprovoked war of aggression, waged by Russia. Russia is responsible for the suffering that it has inflicted on Ukraine and beyond. Russia alone can end this war.

One hundred and forty-one States Members of the United Nations have unequivocally condemned Russia's illegal invasion. The International Court of Justice has issued a legally binding order, requiring Russia to suspend military action in Ukraine immediately.

This week, perversely, Russia submitted draft resolution S/2022/231, which, among other things, calls for the protection of civilians, including women and children. This is cynical game playing in the face of human suffering.

Just yesterday, in Mariupol, Russian forces reportedly targeted civilians taking cover from the onslaught, despite the word "children" written on the ground where they sheltered. If Russia really wanted to protect women and children, it would withdraw its troops from Ukraine and end this illegal invasion today.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Director-General of the World Health Organization for their briefings.

Their presentations demonstrate, with the impartiality and rigour that characterize the work of the United Nations, the reality of the war waged by Russia over the past three weeks. That reality is the death of innocent civilians, as well as journalists and medical personnel. It is the chaos created throughout the country and well beyond, with heightened food insecurity around the world. It is the millions of shattered lives of all those who are forced to flee their homes and who find no respite in hospitals or schools. With its European partners, France will continue to mobilize to welcome those refugees. It will continue to support the Ukrainians and has released €100 million for that purpose.

France calls on Russia to immediately stop its bloody war and to comply with the order of the International Court of Justice, issued yesterday.

France condemns in the strongest terms the siege of several Ukrainian cities and the indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations. We call on Russia to

comply with international humanitarian law, to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to allow the delivery of aid. Attacks on hospitals are war crimes. France also condemns actions that have targeted journalists and recall the obligation of armed forces to protect them. We are particularly concerned about reports of the use of cluster bombs by Russia.

France reiterates its condemnation of the Belarusian regime's support for this deadly war. We also condemn Russia's use of mercenaries, particularly Syrian ones. That cannot absolve Russia of its responsibility in that regard. Russia will be held accountable for its crimes. In that respect, we welcome the opening of an investigation by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Finally, France denounces the cynicism of Russia, which claims in New York to be concerned about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, when Russia is entirely responsible for it. No one is fooled by the Russian draft resolution. It should not be supported, for to support it is to give Russia a blank cheque to continue the war.

Despite the destruction and suffering, the war in Ukraine has revealed another reality — the Ukrainian people are showing admirable resistance. We salute their courage and that of the Ukrainian authorities.

The international community is united in its condemnation of this aggression. Many countries, including France, immediately took measures aimed at the Russian authorities and the economic circles close to power in order to deprive them of resources and prevent them from continuing this war. Those sanctions have already proved effective and will continue to be reinforced so as to increase the cost of the war until the Russian authorities renounce violence.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I also would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Assistant High Commissioner Mazou and Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus for their very sobering briefings. Their messages are very grim. We commend all humanitarian organizations working to alleviate the human-made catastrophe being visited upon Ukraine.

The cause of that catastrophe is clear. Three short weeks ago, as we sat in this very Chamber, while the Secretary-General pleaded for peace, the Russian Federation invaded Ukraine. Since then, we have witnessed wanton devastation in a sovereign

independent nation, with no regard for human life. To date, more than 3 million people have had to flee Ukraine, becoming refugees in neighbouring countries. We heard today that 90 per cent of those forced out of their homes and into uncertainty are women and children.

Families have been torn apart. At least 2 million people are internally displaced, increasingly vulnerable and in need of immediate support. Ordinary people are being traumatized by a cruel and reckless war. Women and girls face heightened risk of being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, including rape and trafficking. Their right to protection is being ignored.

The destruction of the basic services all of us here at this table take for granted — food, water, sanitary systems, health and education — is having a devastating effect in Ukraine. We know that civilian casualties are in the thousands. Irish journalist Pierre Zakrzewski was tragically killed alongside Ukrainian journalist Oleksandra Kuvshynova. They were both working to shine a light on Ukraine's plight. Our thoughts are with their families and every grieving and suffering Ukrainian family. Courageous journalists are showing the horrific impact of Russian aggression. I salute the free media putting their lives on the line to show us the truth.

The humanitarian impact of this war is being felt around the world. It will affect the food security of countries heavily reliant on Ukrainian agricultural products, including in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It will cause severe harm far beyond the borders of Ukraine.

I find it a damning indictment that the Council has to plead with the Russian Federation not to deprive civilian populations of food and water, not to deny them the basic infrastructure they need for daily existence, for survival. It is a damning indictment that we in the Council have not been able to speak with a united voice to save innocent lives in this war.

The images from a besieged Mariupol are shocking. We see once again that urban warfare takes the heaviest toll on civilians. We deplore the targeting of health-care facilities, doctors taken hostage, life-saving care interfered with by military forces. Last week's attack by Russian forces on a maternity hospital in Mariupol plumbed new depths, resulting in the death of a mother and her newborn baby — a baby that never had a chance. We have to ask — how many more?

The residents of Mariupol are now melting snow or siphoning water from heating systems in order to quench their thirst. They are cutting down trees for firewood for cooking and to stay warm in the freezing night temperatures. The city's supermarkets have been emptied because the basic necessities of life cannot be safely brought into the city. It is chilling to think that the suffering forced on Mariupol may be visited on other Ukrainian cities. There can be no justification for this brutal aggression. It should never have been perpetrated. It must be stopped.

Ireland calls on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations to protect civilian health-care facilities and medical and humanitarian personnel. It must facilitate the safe passage and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance, including medical and food supplies. Whatever is agreed or not agreed, on humanitarian corridors or other measures, civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected under international humanitarian law. That applies both to those who choose to leave and those who choose to remain. Surely the most basic respect for human life must mean something to the aggressor, even now.

Let us be clear: the provision of humanitarian assistance is not dependent on a ceasefire; it is dependent on those bombing cities doing the right thing in accordance with their obligations.

Attacks directed against civilians and civilian objects, indiscriminate attacks and disproportionate attacks are all prohibited under international humanitarian law. Ireland remains gravely concerned by the humanitarian harm arising from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in Ukraine. There have been reports of the use of cluster munitions and thermobaric weapons by Russian military forces. Those weapons cause mass casualties. They pose great risk for civilians when deployed in urban areas, including long after the fighting has ceased. Their use is unconscionable. Equally, any use of white phosphorus against civilians or civilian infrastructure is abhorrent and contrary to international law.

Russia's war in Ukraine is not only morally wrong; it is illegal. Yesterday, in granting Ukraine's request for provisional measures against the Russian Federation, the International Court of Justice was clear and emphatic: Russia must immediately suspend military operations in Ukraine.

In the light of the Court's decision, which is binding on the Russian Federation and which it cannot ignore, Ireland once again calls on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under international law and immediately end its aggression, unconditionally withdraw its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine and refrain from further threat or use of force of any kind against Ukraine or any other Member State.

For three long weeks diplomacy has proved unavailing, for three long weeks the world has watched this war with horror; yet we believe that there is still a chance for peace. We urge the Russian Federation to do the right thing and commit to the diplomatic path in good faith. It is never too late to do the right thing.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I join others in thanking the briefers for their sobering presentations.

Three weeks ago, Russia launched its military aggression and invaded Ukraine. Since the start of the war, almost every second a Ukrainian child has become a refugee. More than 3 million civilians have crossed the border into neighbouring countries seeking protection, and more than 2 million people are displaced inside Ukraine. They are fleeing from the horrors of Russia's unjust and illegal war against Ukraine; from the destructive power of one of the world's biggest war machines; from Russia's shelling of homes, schools and hospitals; and from Russia's indiscriminate use of explosive weapons and its deplorable use of cluster bombs, weapons that destroy cities, killing civilians even as they are fleeing or hiding. The human suffering is unacceptable.

We encourage countries to keep their borders open to all those seeking safety outside Ukraine, without discrimination, and we commend the generosity of the neighbouring countries and their solidarity with those fleeing the war.

Many of those fleeing are in a vulnerable situation, as we heard from Dr. Ghebreyesus. They are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and other forms of exploitation — traumatized children and adults in need of mental and psychosocial support. We encourage humanitarian organizations to give priority to those issues in their response.

Civilians must be protected at all times, and humanitarian and medical workers must also be protected and allowed safe, rapid and unhindered access to people in need. The protection of civilians and

humanitarian access are not a matter of choice. They are legal obligations under international humanitarian law, obligations that must be respected. Those responsible for violations must be held accountable.

Russia's war is causing despair and suffering with global implications. Russia is responsible for the increased food prices and higher risk of food insecurity that many countries now face. Russia's war against Ukraine will further exacerbate humanitarian crises, death and disaster for people across continents.

Russia, and Russia alone, bears sole responsibility for the war and humanitarian crisis. Russia must stop its military aggression against Ukraine. Russia must comply with the order by the International Court of Justice to immediately suspend its military operations in Ukraine. If Russia cares about the humanitarian suffering that this war is causing, then Russia should stop its senseless and illegal war.

The Russian draft resolution has no credibility; it will not stop the war and the suffering. We echo the call of the Secretary-General to the effect that political dialogue, negotiation and mediation are the only way forward. We need to see genuine talks that translate into concrete results on the ground, and they must be inclusive. We need to see women included meaningfully in all talks, negotiations and mediation efforts. For the sake of humanity, this war must stop.

**Mr. Tirumurti** (India): Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Raouf Mazou; and World Health Organization Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for their respective briefings on the security and humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

India remains deeply concerned at the ongoing situation, which has progressively deteriorated since the beginning of the hostilities. The conflict has resulted in the deaths of civilians; the displacement of thousands of people internally; and the outflow of more than 3 million refugees to neighbouring countries. The humanitarian situation has worsened, particularly in the conflict zones.

It is urgent, therefore, to address the humanitarian needs of the affected population. In that regard, we support the initiatives of the United Nations and its

agencies, which have mobilized whatever is possible in the shortest possible time frame.

We hope that the international community will continue to respond positively to the humanitarian needs of the people of Ukraine, including through extending generous support to the Secretary-General's flash appeal and the regional refugee response plan on Ukraine.

Keeping in view the dire humanitarian situation unfolding in Ukraine, India has already sent more than 90 tonnes of humanitarian supplies to Ukraine and its neighbours as part of the nine separate tranches of humanitarian assistance delivered thus far. Those supplies have included medicines and other essential relief materials. We are in the process of identifying other such requirements and sending further supplies in the coming days.

India has ensured the safe return of about 22,500 Indians from Ukraine. We have also assisted nationals from 18 other countries in that process. We are deeply appreciative of the facilitation rendered by the authorities of Ukraine and its neighbouring countries in ensuring their safe return.

Allow me to underscore that it is important that humanitarian action always be guided by the principles of humanitarian assistance, that is, humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Those measures should not be politicized.

We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of hostilities across Ukraine. Our Prime Minister has reiterated this on several occasions, called for an immediate ceasefire and emphasized that there is no option but the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

We stand ready to continue to engage on these objectives in the Security Council, as well as with the parties, in the coming days. We continue to underline the need to respect the United Nations Charter, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

**Mrs. Hackman** (Ghana): I thank the President for convening this meeting and also thank the briefers for the updated information they have shared on the prevailing situation in Ukraine. I also welcome the participation in this meeting of the representatives of Poland and Ukraine.

Ghana reiterates once more the call on the Russian Federation for an unconditional and immediate ceasefire and for the withdrawal of all its invading troops from within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine. The cessation of hostilities is critical to saving lives and preventing further devastation to the Ukrainian people. It remains fundamental to addressing the worsening humanitarian conditions.

We remain deeply concerned about the military escalations and the disproportionate use of unconventional munitions in bombarding the cities and civilian populated areas of Ukraine, and we are disheartened by the trauma that the situation has caused, especially to the elderly, women and children. The parties to the conflict must urgently commit to a humanitarian pause to enable the evacuation and safe passage of civilians and facilitate the delivery of food, medicine and other essential services to those in critical need and those who have been caught up in cities under siege. We also deplore the attacks on medical facilities and call for the protection of humanitarian workers and medical personnel. We urge the parties to comply with their commitments under international law and international humanitarian law, in particular the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

We continue to urge the parties to accept the path of diplomacy and dialogue in resolving their security concerns. We believe that the good offices of the Secretary-General should be leveraged to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the interest and safety of the Ukrainian people should be prioritized and must be at the forefront of the actions of the Security Council and all other international actors.

**Mr. Nanga** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. DiCarlo, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and Mr. Raouf Mazou for their briefings on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

The intensification of the fighting and the resulting mass exodus of civilians, the deterioration of the living conditions and health conditions of those who have decided to stay, and the risks of disease owing to the disruption of basic public services are all matters of concern. We again urge all parties to respect the provisions of international humanitarian law and ensure respect for and protection of the population,

including African nationals, as well as civilian infrastructure, medical personnel and humanitarian workers. We reiterate the urgency of opening safe humanitarian corridors and call for an immediate cessation of hostilities. Saving lives must transcend all political considerations.

The parties to the conflict must seize every opportunity that diplomacy offers to reach a negotiated settlement through dialogue and avoid a stalemate.

**Mrs. Toroitich** (Kenya) I thank the briefers for their briefings this afternoon.

Kenya is gravely concerned that three weeks on, the armed conflict in Ukraine has continued unabated. The continuing reports of loss of life, displacement and separation of loved ones including through millions of refugees in just three weeks are deeply disturbing. Kenya extends its condolences to the families who have lost loved ones to the conflict and stands in solidarity with all the affected.

We commend Ukraine's neighbours for opening their borders to refugees of multiple nationalities and we urge them to continue to ensure that the protections sought are offered without discrimination of any kind, and particularly on the basis of race or religion.

Kenya condemns the targeting and destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure, particularly residential homes, hospitals and shelters. The parties are obligated to comply with international humanitarian law. We remind the Security Council that civilians, including foreign nationals in Ukraine, are not party to the conflict and must not be a target. In this regard, all actors, including the parties, must consider and prioritize the safety and interest of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The imperative to ensure that humanitarian passages are open and functioning at all times cannot be overstated. We believe there is an urgent need for a humanitarian resolution that reflects the unity and resolve of the Security Council to assist the people of Ukraine.

Ultimately, the only way out of this crisis is an immediate and unconditional cessation of the military campaign. We urge the parties to do this to allow humanitarian assistance to flow and create room for diplomacy and constructive dialogue, including through the good offices of the Secretary-General, towards a sustainable political solution.

We underscore the need for an urgent resolution of this armed conflict. Its impact is already being felt by multiple countries in the form of increased prices of food products, fertilizer, oil and other essentials. If it is not quickly prevented, this trend, including the added effects of unilateral sanctions, will exacerbate State fragilities and fuel ongoing conflicts across the world, especially in the global South.

In closing, Kenya restates its recognition of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho** (Brazil): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), and Mr. Raouf Mazou, Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for their briefings.

As the conflict in Ukraine lingers on, the dire humanitarian situation in the region is further deteriorating. Brazil is deeply concerned with the growing number of civilian casualties, including children, as well as the increasing flows of refugees and internally displaced people. According to some estimates, the number of people impacted by the conflict is around 18 million, of which more than 6 million are internally displaced, and nearly 3 million have fled Ukraine. The destruction of infrastructure has caused food shortages, energy outages and intermittent communications.

Under these circumstances, supply chains have been disrupted. The access to medical facilities is impaired. Medical supplies are running low, their distribution is uncertain, and some stockpiles are out of reach owing to military operations. Hospitals and medical personnel are struggling to provide care to the sick and wounded. In response to the most pressing needs for humanitarian assistance, the Brazilian Government last week sent a donation consisting of water purifiers, around nine tons of food and half a ton of medical items, totalling approximately 20,000 items donated by the Brazilian Ministry of Health. With the assistance of the Embassy of Brazil in Warsaw, the supplies landed at the capital and were delivered to Ukraine in coordination with the country's authorities.

The international community must come to the assistance of the people most in need, not only those

directly afflicted by the hostilities in Ukrainian territory but also the refugees in neighbouring countries. We commend the World Health Organization for its work to ensure the delivery of health supplies to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. The availability of medical personnel, medicines and health equipment is crucial to meet the urgent needs of the sick and wounded. Currently, Ukraine's health system is under critical pressure to cope with the demands for assistance from the many victims of the conflict.

It is distressing to know that, as of 12 March, the World Health Organization verified 31 attacks against health-care facilities in Ukraine, resulting in dozens of deaths and injuries, including among health workers. The attacks against health-care facilities are particularly worrisome, as they deprive people of life-saving services. Attacks against health-care infrastructure are violations of international humanitarian law.

We reiterate our position that the immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine is the main condition to guarantee the passage of civilians from conflict zones to safe areas. Moreover, only with a comprehensive and effective ceasefire can there be rapid, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russia*): We listened very carefully to the briefers, and we share the concerns voiced by United Nations about the humanitarian crisis that is unfolding in a number of regions in Ukraine. It is also rightly pointed out by our colleagues in the Security Council. The difference, however, is that the assessments of some, in particular Western States, go above and beyond the refugee situation with the campaign of disinformation in Ukraine — which started at the beginning of the special military operation — reaching greater and greater heights. Today we heard a whole slew of such information from our colleagues, including the accusation of the shelling of the now infamous maternity hospital in Mariupol and the Mariupol theatre; that Russia is not allowing refugees to leave; that Russia shelled the Sultan Suleiman Mosque; that Russia used automatic weapons to shoot at a breadline in Chernihiv. All these fakes have been refuted on multiple occasions.

The American colleague referred to the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), who allegedly said that 33 hospitals were allegedly bombed

by Russia. I would like to inform her that the Director-General of WHO — one should ask him — did not say that. To our knowledge, it is not within acceptable norms of the WHO to attribute the responsibility for a strike on a medical facility to anyone. Concerning the issue of attribution and who is responsible for the destruction of medical facilities in Ukraine, we have many questions and will return to this topic later.

Concerning the breadline in Chernihiv, that has been refuted many times. There is no Russian military presence in Chernihiv. It was a consequence of distributing weapons to whoever wanted them in Ukraine. At the time, in addition to other types of weapons, 25,000 automatic weapons were distributed to the population at large.

With regard to the Sultan Suleiman Mosque in Mariupol, the Mosque's treasurer refuted the allegation that the Turkish mosque, in which there were 80 people, was shelled by Russia from the east. I do not know who will wind up holding the record on cynicism in the *Guinness World Records* book, but I know who will hold the record on fakes uttered during one single Security Council meeting in that book.

As I said, the situation in and around Mariupol is a kind of symbol for the Western and Ukrainian fake factory. To those who do not know, I want to explain what is special about that city. During the events from 2014 to 2015, when the Ukrainian military machine pitted planes and tanks against residents who disagreed with the new Maidan Government in the east, Mariupol was one of the main centres of resistance in the Donetsk People's Republic. Its residents almost unanimously supported the independence of the Republic in a referendum and actively opposed the nationalist regime in Kyiv. The Ukrainian Nazis have not forgotten that. They soaked the city in blood and turned it into a kind of headquarters and stronghold of the volunteer Nazi battalions, primarily the Azov Battalion, as well as the Right Sector.

At the airport in Mariupol there was the infamous prison, with all the trappings of a torture centre, including ditches containing the bodies of the tortured, solitary-confinement cells and chainsaws. That is representative not of the Middle Ages, but of neo-Nazism. That is exactly why Ukrainian radicals are desperately holding on to that city. First, it hides much evidence of their crimes, and, secondly, they understand that they will have to answer for them.

That is why they are ready to drag all the people of Mariupol to their graves. Just as the Nazis did when Berlin was besieged in 1945, they are using the residents as human shields, while not allowing them to evacuate and placing heavy weapons next to residential buildings, in violation of international humanitarian law. Both our Western partners and, unfortunately, the representatives of the Secretariat stubbornly refuse to see that. However, it is difficult to hide the truth. We call attention to the statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which sheds light on such facts.

In a situation like the current one, it is not surprising that Mariupol has become almost the leader in terms of the number and sophistication of fakes, the manufacture of which has become the main task of the Ukrainian regime. I will highlight three of the most shocking.

The first is, of course, the former maternity hospital in Mariupol, allegedly destroyed by a Russian missile. I will not dwell on it in detail. I will simply say that we covered that earlier and included the relevant information in a letter to the Secretary-General.

It is difficult to find a reasonable explanation for the fact that our Western colleagues chose to ignore not only our advance-warning that the maternity hospital had long since been turned into military firing post for the Ukrainian nationalists, but also the irrefutable evidence pointing to the staged nature of the White-Helmets-style photo shoot there, as well as the opinions of reputable ballistic experts, who say that the building was not hit from the outside but that there was an explosion from the inside. They also ignore the opinion of ballistic experts, who say that nothing hit the building but that there was an explosion.

The second piece of false information was mentioned today by our Western colleagues: Russia allegedly hit the Mariupol theatre, where more than 1,000 people had sought refuge. In fact, on 13 March, public information was already widely available, provided by individuals in Mariupol, who had miraculously managed to escape the city. They said that the Azov Battalion was holding a huge number of people hostage in the building and was preparing for a bloody provocation. We are not surprised by the fact that the world “children” is written on the ground in front of the building.

The Russian armed forces were informed about the situation and the building that houses the theatre had never been considered a target for a strike anyway.

However, Western reporters are quick to report certain information about provocations. That has become a tragic hallmark of provocations in Ukraine, as they cover up abuses conducted by nationalist battalions and Ukrainian armed forces.

Following Western propaganda efforts to ensure that the mass media throughout the world showed the image of a man who had lost his wife due to a Ukrainian strike conducted using a Tochka-U missile with cluster munitions in the centre of Donetsk — which was reported as an incident that had occurred in Kyiv — it is very difficult for us to ask members to be objective in their assessments. Once again, let me recall that none of the members present or the Western mass media made any mention of the tragedy in Donetsk, which resulted in the death of 20 deaths of civilians.

The third false piece of information is that Russia is allegedly forcing people from Mariupol and other Ukrainian towns into Russia, and, as such, only humanitarian corridors into Ukraine should be opened. That is a barefaced lie. Since the beginning of the special military operation, the Russian Ministry of Defence hotline has received more than 2.5 million requests for evacuation into Russia. Regrettably, we must underscore that we have been unable to evacuate everyone thus far. That is because Ukrainian authorities are preventing people from leaving.

Nonetheless, over the past 24 hours alone, we managed to ensure the evacuation from Mariupol, which we had finally managed to unblock, of more than 31,000 civilians, including 89 foreign nationals, including 71 staff members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, nine Greek nationals and nine Pakistani nationals. Of the 31,000 evacuees, only 36 people moved to Kyiv-controlled territories in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast. The remainder opted for Russia and areas of the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson oblasts, under the control of Russian armed forces, and categorically refused to move to territories under Kyiv control.

The entire humanitarian operation was conducted by the Donetsk People’s Republic forces and Russian armed forces, without any participation from the Ukrainian side. I would like to draw the attention of the Council to the fact that the car jam at the exit of Mariupol moving towards Berdiansk and Melitopol, liberated from Ukrainian Nazis, is 10 kilometres long. Until Russian forces entered the city, that was not seen.

It is not surprising, as peaceful civilians were needed by the Nazis as human shields. Those who escaped Mariupol described the mass atrocities and crimes committed by the territorial defence battalions and abuses against the elderly, women and children. All of those people are now being provided with medical and psychological assistance. The situation in other areas is different.

Yesterday we fully complied with the silence regime along humanitarian corridors, proposed by the Ukrainian side, in the direction of Kyiv, Zaporizhzhya, Zhytomir, Sumy, Kharkiv and Poltava. That has been confirmed several times by means of objective control, including with the use of drones.

With regard to the issue of humanitarian corridors into Russia, neo-Nazis refused to allow people to leave and threatened them. Those who managed to break through were ruthlessly shot at. Yesterday, in the Kharkiv direction, once again there was a line of buses, full of refugees, being shot at as they moved along the humanitarian corridor towards Russia. As a result, four people died and others sustained injuries.

Despite all of the challenges and obstacles, yesterday alone, without the participation of Kyiv, we managed to evacuate from dangerous areas 12,440 people, including 2,242 children. Overall, since the beginning of the special military operation, 271,231 people, including 58,422 children, have already been evacuated. They crossed the border into Russia. That includes 31,000 individual cars. We stand ready to receive even more people.

We have more than 9,500 points of temporary housing in the Russian Federation. In territories that have been liberated, we create the necessary conditions to ensure that those who want to can receive humanitarian assistance, which, in many places, remains the only possible means of survival. The medicine, clothing and food, received from international organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross, is resold by the mayors of Ukrainian cities to local entrepreneurs. That has been confirmed in Zhytomir, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia, Rovno, Lutsk, Dubno, Vladimir-Volynsky and Lviv.

Some 6,910 foreign nationals from 22 States are essentially being held hostage by the territorial defence battalions. In addition, the crews of 70 foreign ships are blocked in the seaports of Ukraine due to a high level of mine-related risks. That situation was created by

Kyiv authorities in their internal waters and territorial sea and related to possible provocations by Ukrainian armed forces from the shore.

We continue sending humanitarian assistance to those in need in Ukraine. Mariupol alone received more than 450 tons of food, medicine and basic necessities. Overall, since 2 March, our Ministry of Emergencies and Ministry of Defence have provided approximately 3,000 tons of humanitarian cargo, as well as construction materials, to certain regions of Ukraine, including Donbas. Another issue is that in several cases, local administrations threaten those who receive Russian humanitarian assistance with punishment. Every day, Western capitals claim to be providing Kyiv with weaponry of all kinds.

Yesterday Washington announced that, this week, Ukraine will receive defence assistance valued at \$1 billion. They are fuelling the conflict. The kind of tragedy that results from the indiscriminate distribution of light weapons to anyone who wants them is quite clear. I wonder whether or not Western voters and taxpayers know about the risk of such weaponry — including portable air defence weapons, for example — ending up in the hands of terrorist groups in Europe. Do they not understand how dangerous it is to fuel the situation in Ukraine and how dangerous it is for their own security? Everyone has heard about the drone that flew from Ukraine and landed in Croatia. It was filled with explosives. By the way, it went unnoticed as it flew over several countries from Ukraine to Zagreb, and the distance between the westernmost point of Ukraine and Zagreb more than 700 kilometres.

We note with regret that Ukraine has always been a pawn in the geopolitical struggle against Russia, and it remains a pawn. Western politicians could not have cared less about the people in Donbas, including women, children and the elderly, who had been suffering and dying from Ukrainian shelling throughout all these years. If that were not the case, we would not now be dealing with the salacious uproar surrounding the humanitarian draft resolution on Ukraine. After the text was developed by France and Mexico, it immediately ceased to be humanitarian and was instead filled with political formulations that have nothing to do with humanitarian issues. As we were clearly told, the Western countries do not need the draft resolution without such formulations. In order to obtain an anti-Russian product, they were ready to submit it not to the Security Council, but to the General

Assembly, ignoring the fact that such a document will not help humanitarian workers in any way whatsoever.

Russia submitted its own draft resolution (S/2022/231) to the Council containing everything that the humanitarian workers need. It does not contain any political assessments, which are not found in any other humanitarian resolutions of the Council. The document is open for co-sponsorship by all United Nations States Members. However, we are being told that the humanitarian draft resolution Russia submitted does not satisfy Western countries, thereby demonstrating the true goal of the co-sponsors of the first so-called humanitarian Council draft resolution. That is true hypocrisy and cynicism.

Another example of cynicism is the fact that many colleagues from various delegations have come to us to complain about relentless pressure and arm-twisting from Western partners, up to and including economic blackmail and threats. The United States and Albania have issued a letter in which States Members are called upon to refrain from sponsoring our draft resolution.

We understand how difficult it is for Member States to withstand that kind of onslaught. For that reason, we have decided not to ask for a vote on our draft resolution for the time being, but we are not withdrawing it. Instead, we will call for an urgent meeting tomorrow morning to once again discuss the issue of United States biological laboratories in Ukraine, taking into account the new documents that came into our possession during the special military operation. We will be sending a letter to the Emirati presidency on that issue promptly.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Director-General Ghebreyesus and Assistant High Commissioner Mazou for their briefings.

China is deeply worried about the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine and deplores the reported increase in civilian casualties and refugees. The pressing task now is to call for maximum restraint by all parties and to ensure the safety and security of all civilians, including women and children, while meeting their basic humanitarian needs so as to prevent the occurrence of a larger-scale humanitarian crisis.

China supports the work by the relevant parties in maintaining communication, ensuring a safe and unimpeded humanitarian corridor and further facilitating personnel evacuations and humanitarian

assistance. The number of refugees and displaced persons caused by the conflict is still on the rise, hugely impacting Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. China supports the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Health Organization, among others, in actively conducting operations and mobilizing the international community to assist all those in need.

Recently, we have seen how some people of African or Middle Eastern descent have encountered difficulties during the evacuation process. That should be taken seriously and addressed properly. All refugees, regardless of their colour, race or religion, should be afforded the necessary protection under international refugee law.

China is paying close attention to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and has put forward a six-point proposal. The Red Cross Society of China has provided Ukraine with three batches of humanitarian supplies, the third of which contains milk powder and quilts for children — specifically helping the Red Cross Society of Ukraine assist displaced children affected by the conflict.

We welcome any initiative or proposal from any party that contributes to alleviating or resolving the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The Security Council bears the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and it should therefore play a positive role in easing the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. China hopes that the Council can remain united on the humanitarian issue and demonstrate a constructive attitude.

The international community shares a common aspiration for a ceasefire at an early date to alleviate the situation on the ground and to prevent civilian casualties — an aspiration that China shares. To date, Russia and Ukraine have held four rounds of negotiations. Keeping the negotiations going means that there is a chance for a ceasefire, and therefore a chance for a peaceful future. China remains committed to promoting peace through negotiations. We support the United Nations and the parties concerned in vigorously carrying out good offices. We also hope that all parties will do more to facilitate peace talks and not add fuel to the fire.

The facts have proven that relying on sanctions alone will solve nothing, and will instead create new

problems. In the light of the global economy's sluggish recovery, ever-escalating sanctions are undermining stability in international industrial and supply chains, thereby exacerbating food and energy crises, damaging people's livelihoods in all countries — especially developing ones — and triggering new humanitarian consequences. That is also an issue to which the Security Council should pay attention when addressing the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary General DiCarlo, Assistant High Commissioner Mazou and Director-General Ghebreyesus for their briefings.

Three weeks have passed since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, and the toll is truly devastating. We have heard tragic figures, with more than 3 million refugees and nearly 1.8 million internally displaced persons. Those are exorbitant numbers, especially if we remember that, exactly one month ago, we were sitting in this very Chamber evaluating the implementation of the Minsk agreements, when we were told that what was happening on the ground were only military exercises (see S/PV.8968). What, then, will the humanitarian perspective be if the pattern that has prevailed so far continues?

I want to begin by acknowledging the solidarity of all the countries that have received refugees, especially those that have taken on the largest flows. But the needs of people who have not been able to get out or have not been able to be evacuated from besieged urban areas have continued to grow, and will continue to do so, especially for those who do not have access to basic services such as drinking water, food and medicine. It is therefore imperative to ensure safe and unrestricted access for humanitarian and health personnel, who are the only ones able to provide those basic services to the civilian population.

As we have heard, the World Health Organization has recorded 43 attacks on medical facilities in Ukraine. The indisputable fact is that attacking health facilities is expressly prohibited by international humanitarian law. There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that the more than 300 medical facilities along or within the lines of conflict are respected.

We condemn attacks on medical personnel, their means of transport and the equipment they need to do their work. The short- and long-term consequences of these actions on civilians and health-care systems

can be irreversible and are therefore unacceptable. We reiterate our call for compliance with resolutions addressing this issue: resolution 2286 (2016), which includes specific references to the protection of medical personnel and humanitarian personnel, and resolution 2573 (2021), which refers to civilian objects considered indispensable.

In the same vein, we welcome the decision issued yesterday by the International Court of Justice, ordering the immediate suspension of military operations that began on 24 February. As we have repeatedly stated in the Security Council, the fundamental premise for humanitarian assistance is the cessation of hostilities.

While the United Nations and various humanitarian actors are focusing their efforts on providing the urgent assistance that the population needs, it is also appropriate to reiterate that a solution to this conflict will be achieved only through dialogue and diplomacy. We recognize the initiatives under way, including the recent meeting in the framework of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. Any genuine attempt at negotiation should be welcomed.

We therefore regret that, despite the genuine good faith efforts in which we have been engaged these past two weeks, together with France and other States, whose constructive participation we are grateful for, the Security Council has yet to issue an unequivocal call for a cessation of hostilities. Such a call from the Council would be the most significant humanitarian assistance that the civilian population in Ukraine could receive.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Mr. Raouf Mazou and Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus for their comprehensive briefings.

What we have heard today reflects the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation as a result of the continued conflict in Ukraine. The number of refugees is increasing at an alarming rate. Civilians throughout Ukraine continue to suffer owing to the obstacles hindering the delivery of humanitarian assistance, such as food, medical equipment and other basic needs. At the same time, the damage to the civilian infrastructure will aggravate the humanitarian situation in major Ukrainian cities, especially Mariupol.

In this context, my country would like to focus on four main points.

First, we look positively at the ongoing negotiations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. We hope that these negotiations will pave the way for calm to allow humanitarian organizations to carry out their tasks and meet the needs of civilians. In this context, there is an urgent need to take concrete steps aimed at de-escalating the situation on the ground and building trust between the two parties, including by concluding agreements that enable humanitarian organizations to deliver aid safely to those in need, establish corridors for exiting civilians and reach an agreement on ensuring their protection.

Secondly, my country values the essential role of neighbouring countries, especially Poland, Romania and Moldova, and others in responding to the humanitarian crisis by receiving refugees and expanding social safety networks to meet their needs. At the same time, and drawing from our experiences in the Middle East, we recognize the importance of supporting these countries in order to provide full care to refugees, especially as the prolongation of the conflict will entail continued waves of displaced persons.

Thirdly, in parallel to the ongoing rounds of negotiations, my country stresses the importance of adhering to international law, in particular international humanitarian law, the violation of which constitutes a threat not only to the rights of civilians, but also to the international order. In this regard, we reiterate our call on all parties concerned to respect their international obligations and to stop targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Fourthly, and in conclusion, the United Arab Emirates believes that the Council's response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict in Ukraine should focus on humanitarian action in a practical and meaningful manner, in coordination with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other relevant humanitarian actors. We emphasize that a solution to the crisis can be achieved only by intensifying diplomatic efforts, immediately ceasing hostilities throughout Ukraine and seeking a sustainable peace that preserves Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in addition to enhancing regional and international security and stability.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): I was momentarily pleased to hear that the Russians were pulling down the vote on their farcical humanitarian draft resolution S/2022/231, which was doomed to fail. We know that if Russia truly cared about the humanitarian crisis — the one that it created — it could simply stop its attacks on the people of Ukraine. But instead, it wants to call for another Security Council meeting to use the Council as a venue for its disinformation and for promoting its propaganda.

Let us not forget that Russia is the aggressor in this situation. It is the one that is creating the pretext for attacks on its own people, and we cannot be fooled by its efforts in that regard. It has troops inside Ukraine. It is killing people inside Ukraine. That is the reason for us being at this meeting today. It is not to deal with its propaganda.

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya** (Ukraine): I recognize Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, Director-General Ghebreyesus and Assistant High Commissioner for Operations Mazou. I also recognize the representative of the aggressor State present here in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

Let me begin with a quote:

“The operation is developing successfully and in strict accordance with plans that have been previously approved.”

Putin said that yesterday, three weeks after the unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion of Ukraine had started.

Over these weeks, the international community has wrestled with the question why. Why has the Russian Federation decided to cosplay the Nazi Third Reich by attacking a peaceful neighbouring State and plunging the region into war? What are the reasons and what is the plan? Yesterday we got the answer: killing Ukrainian children — 108 innocent souls so far. “Success ... in strict accordance with plans ... previously approved”, according to Putin.

Children are a deliberate target, given yesterday's bombardment of the Mariupol Drama Theatre — a shelter for hundreds of local residents, mostly women and children. Despite the big signs “children” painted on the road on both sides of the building being clearly visible, Russian pilots dropped an aerial bomb. The building was completely damaged but the shelter fortunately withstood. It did not turn into one more mass grave, as Putin's plan, previously approved, probably envisaged.

Of course, Putin's plan does not limit murders only to children. All civilian Ukrainians and foreign citizens are under threat. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has recorded 726 confirmed cases of the killing of civilians, while believing that the real figures are considerably higher.

Indeed, they are. Just yesterday, in the city of Chernihiv, 53 civilian residents were killed by Russian bombs and shells. On the same day in Meref, Kharkiv region, 21 people were killed following Russian shelling that destroyed the local school and residential buildings.

The plan is also to raze Ukrainian cities to the ground: Kharkiv, Sumy, Volnovakha, Okhtyrka, Izyum and Mariupol — pain for Ukraine and the entire world and an eternal shame for Russia. There are almost 2,400 confirmed victims among the civilian population. Ninety per cent of the city's infrastructure has been destroyed. Russian troops seized one of the hospitals, gathered 400 civilians there and use the building as a military position, hiding behind civilians as a human shield. “The suffering in Mariupol must not become the future of Ukraine.” That was said by Peter Mauer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who is currently in Ukraine.

Putin's plan is to violate the agreements on a ceasefire and safe passage for the civilian population from the temporarily occupied territories. Yesterday Russian troops shelled a convoy of civilian vehicles headed from Mariupol to Zaporizhzhya. Five people were killed, and many were injured, including children.

The plan, previously approved, is to terrorize local residents who remain in the territories seized by Russian troops. Small villages, where the Russian soldiers stay, suffer the most. Russians break into houses, throw people out into the streets and take their food. Eyewitness reports of torture, abductions of local officials and even extrajudicial killings come from across the occupied territories. Forcing Ukrainians to

flee their homes as refugees has also been a part of that Barbarossa-style plan. Almost 3.2 million refugees have left Ukraine so far.

Against the backdrop of the increasingly aggravated humanitarian situation, Russia has dared to submit the humanitarian draft resolution S/2022/231. An appeal by a serial killer to United Nations Members to co-sponsor that most egregious hypocrisy is outrageous. They may like to think twice before they dive into the blood of children and adults executed by the Russian military in Ukraine. Let me quote Saint Patrick in that regard: “Never trust a dog to watch your food”.

At the same time, there is no doubt that action on the humanitarian front in the United Nations is urgently required, and I encourage all responsible nations to support the relevant efforts in the General Assembly. I also encourage all to join the group of friends of accountability following the aggression against Ukraine, co-founded by Albania, Colombia, Denmark, the Marshall Islands, the Netherlands and Ukraine. That group will act as a forum among States Members of the United Nations for the discussion and promotion of accountability measures in Ukraine following the Russian military aggression.

Yesterday the International Court of Justice delivered its order on provisional measures in the case concerning *Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Ukraine v. Russian Federation). The Court ordered that the Russian Federation shall immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine.

Despite the order being binding on Russia under the Charter of the United Nations, today the Kremlin openly and blatantly disregarded it, stating that it “cannot take this order into account” because there is no “agreement between the sides”. Should that be surprising to us? I do not think so, as from the very first instance of Russia's presence in the United Nations it was in contempt of the United Nations Charter. That was the case when Russia was allowed to occupy the Soviet seat at the United Nations and the Security Council. That was the case in Georgia and in Syria, as well as in Ukraine's Crimea and Donbas in 2014.

I encourage the Security Council members to exercise their duty, envisaged by Article 94, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter, to make

recommendations or decide upon measures to be taken in the case of Russia's failure to comply with the obligations incumbent upon it under the judgment rendered by the Court.

Perpetration-induced traumatic stress (PITS) is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Its symptoms are caused by being an active participant in causing trauma. Sufferers of PITS may be found in many roles, such as among soldiers and executioners, where they are expected to cause trauma, including death, but among diplomats, especially here at the United Nations and especially here in the Security Council?

Compared to the better known and understood PTSD, there appears to be greater severity and different symptom patterns for those affected by PITS.

The case of the military aggression of Russia against Ukraine and the mass atrocities perpetrated by the Russian army, ordered by Putin and defended by Russian diplomats, will be examined by scholars and scientists, including in the areas of sociology, history, philosophy, psychiatry and theology.

Today, however, I would like to quote from *Into the Abyss*, a documentary about executioners who carry out the death penalty. One guard began crying and shaking uncontrollably when "the eyes of all the inmates he had executed began flashing before him".

Do the eyes of Ukrainian children, women and the elderly killed by the Russians flash before the Russian Ambassador? If they do, we may consider how to sponsor a decision to help him deal with perpetration-induced traumatic stress. But now, have some decency and stop the egregious manipulation of the Security Council. It is obscene.

It would be too dignifying for the Russian delegation if I ended right here, like this. Instead, I would like to quote a tweet by Dario Franceschini, a member of the Italian Government. Today he tweeted:

"Italy is ready to rebuild the Theatre of Mariupol. The Cabinet of Ministers has approved my proposal to offer Ukraine the resources and means to rebuild it as soon as possible. Theatres of all countries belong to the whole humanity."

**The President** (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

**Mr. Szczerski** (Poland): I would like to thank the Under-Secretary-General and the briefers for their

important interventions today. I shall start by paying tribute to the fearless Ukrainian soldiers and civilians alike who are defending their homeland, freedom and the Charter of the United Nations. They are also fighting for those who were forced to flee. I would also like to express my gratitude for the work done by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Health Organization and their partners for maintaining their presence across Ukraine and continuing the delivery of assistance.

The Security Council has gathered here today to discuss the fastest-growing humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War — the consequence of the Russian aggression on Ukraine. In that connection, I would like to stress the following points.

First, this is 100 per cent a war of choice, and the methods of waging it are also a matter of choice. It is Russia that decided to resort to brutal force, indiscriminate weapons and brutal siege tactics. Now Russia is going as far as targeting journalists and kidnapping mayors of Ukrainian cities. In other words, the aggressor decided to change the nature of this conflict. It is a clear manifestation that Russia deliberately chose to create a humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine and blatantly disregards all the principles of international humanitarian law. This should worry us all. In truth, disregarding international law is a pattern that Russia has pursued in Syria and other places. To underpin that approach, earlier today the Kremlin rejected an order by the International Court of Justice — the highest court of the United Nations — to cease its attack on Ukraine.

Secondly, without resolving the dire humanitarian situation there will be no peace. Therefore, we urge Russia to change its military modus operandi and allow full and unimpeded humanitarian access and relief to those in need. The safe passage of civilians from the various cities affected by the conflict must be allowed. Take the situation in Mariupol, where around 350,000 residents still remain trapped in the city, as food, water and medicines continue to dry up. Those people require urgent humanitarian assistance and are exposed to safety and security risks. We therefore call for an immediate ceasefire and humanitarian access to the most affected areas.

Thirdly, the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing war are not limited to Ukrainians in their own

home territory; those who have fled are also affected. Already, more than 3 million have been forced to leave Ukraine as a result of Russia's military aggression. We have already reached the number of over 1.9 million people who crossed our border since 24 February. Most of them found shelter in Poland. We have already registered 170 nationalities on our border. That means that this concerns us all, and we are all the victims of that aggression.

As a neighbour and close friend of Ukraine, we see first-hand the dramatic humanitarian consequences of this war. Every day, on the Polish-Ukrainian border, we are witnessing a growing number of people crossing the border severely traumatized. We believe that the involvement of United Nations bodies and agencies experienced in dealing with these kinds of needs, together with the continued efforts of Polish authorities, will bring about rapid and appropriate solutions.

In the spirit of solidarity, Poland will continue to admit and provide shelter, food, health care and safety to every person in need, regardless of nationality, race or religious creed. Aside from institutional care, thousands of Polish people are organizing bottom-up, showing their solidarity with Ukraine, opening their homes to refugees and volunteering at reception centres.

As I deliver this speech, the First Lady of Poland, Agata Kornhauser-Duda, is building an international coalition of First Ladies, Highnesses and all people of goodwill in order to effectively protect those in vulnerable situations, namely, women, children, elderly

persons and persons with disabilities — many of them with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Polish Government has urgently implemented new immigration measures for Ukrainian citizens fleeing their country. The new law, which took effect on Monday, legalizes the stay of citizens of Ukraine in order to enable them to take up employment and in order to provide them with health care, education and accommodations in Poland. It also offers temporary financial help to Polish citizens who welcomed refugees into their homes. Ukrainian citizens may apply for a one-time subsidy to meet their basic needs. The Government will allocate funds for the schooling of Ukrainian students. Every Ukrainian citizen fleeing the war has been guaranteed the same access to the public health-care system that Polish citizens have. We will continue to provide assistance to Ukrainian citizens fleeing the horrors of war brought on them by Russia. I can tell the Council that we already have 45,000 pupils from Ukraine enrolled in Polish schools.

But we and the other countries of the region — some of whose Ambassadors I see today in the Chamber — all urgently need international assistance to help us carry out these good deeds.

Today Ukraine is paying a high price for defending its independence, territorial integrity, democracy and the Charter of the United Nations. The determination and courage of the Ukrainian people inspires the world. We cannot fail them. It is crucial to show our solidarity with Ukraine and its people by acting now.

*The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.*