



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

8992nd meeting
Monday, 14 March 2022, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

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. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
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	Mr. Mills

Agenda

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Zbigniew Rau, Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland; and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Rau.

Mr. Rau: Let me start by stressing how much I value the continued dialogue between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations. The OSCE, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, stands ready to continue its cooperation and coordination with the United Nations. Our organizations share the same goal of strengthening international peace and security and promoting respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the universal rules-based order.

Such close cooperation is even more needed today, when the basic principles of the Charter and international law are being flagrantly violated in the very heart of Europe. I am addressing the Security Council today with a sense of urgency and moral imperative to make every possible effort to stop the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

The OSCE was designed as a platform to defuse tensions, facilitate dialogue, reduce the risk of military escalation and prevent conflicts. Since the very beginning of the Polish chairmanship, my goal has been to seek compromise and facilitate dialogue between parties to conflict. We took over our role in the

context of growing tensions stemming from Moscow's unilateral demands of security guarantees. The basic premise of those demands was fundamentally flawed. The transatlantic community is neither the enemy of nor a threat to Russia or its people. On the contrary, the West has always sought to establish an effective framework of cooperation with Moscow.

Despite our reservations, we offered Russia a forum to discuss within the OSCE all its possible concerns related to European security. We were ready to consider in good faith new avenues of cooperation on one condition — that they would contribute to stability and security in the OSCE area. That initiative complemented the bilateral track of the United States-Russia dialogue and the discussions in the NATO-Russia Council. Russia had a full spectrum of options for engaging peacefully and diplomatically to address its concerns.

But Russia was just buying time. Its continued military build-up on the Ukrainian borders cast serious doubts about Moscow's real intentions. On the morning of 24 February, the worst-case scenario became a reality. The unprovoked, unjustified and premediated full-scale aggression shattered our convictions that the horror of war in Europe belonged to the past.

The perverse attempts by the Russian side to justify the military operation against a sovereign and peaceful country made a cruel joke of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. That operation, poorly prepared and executed, turned out to be a strategic and tactical failure.

But instead of preventing further unnecessary deaths in its own ranks, the Kremlin changed its tactics. The invading force started to target the civilian population and infrastructure in an attempt to break the spirit of the Ukrainian people. That is deplorable and shameful and amounts to state terrorism. Schools, hospitals and kindergartens are deliberately being targeted with internationally banned weapons. The reports of women and children killed and wounded are devastating. It is as if Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law never existed.

Make no mistake about it — the international community has the instruments and means to hold responsible those who commit and are complicit in war crimes.

I have been recently accused by Russian officials of a lack of impartiality in conducting my job as the OSCE Chairman-in-Office. I have only one response to such allegations — impartiality ends where blatant violations of international and humanitarian law start. In moments like these, it is our moral obligation to maintain decency and integrity. The perpetrators will be judged by their deeds, but we will be judged by the way we respond to these horrors. We cannot stay indifferent.

Let me quote Elie Wiesel, who at the turn of the new millennium famously said:

“... indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor — never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees — not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.”

It is Russia, supported by the Belarusian regime, that has decided to act outside the parameters and boundaries of international law. And unfortunately, it is the Russian leadership that provokes the growing isolation of the country and the Russian people from the world.

The international community has rightly condemned Russia's invasion and called on Moscow to withdraw its forces from Ukraine. The world is not looking away. It is hard to ignore 141 countries assembled in the General Assembly asking Mr. Putin to stop this war.

We are also sending a strong signal to Minsk not to participate in this cruel endeavour. The war is against the interest of the Russian and Belarusian people and leads only to isolation. We expect the Russian side to honour its international obligations and commitments. Any sustainable, political solution must fully respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The door to diplomacy is still open and I call on Russia to engage in a meaningful and substantial dialogue to seek a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

Russia's aggression threatens the very existence of the OSCE. Its non-compliance with OSCE principles and commitments poses questions not only about the future of the organization but also about the stability of

the rules-based order. How effective can we be if one of the major stakeholders has repeatedly justified the use of force to win territorial and political concessions? That logic fundamentally clashes with the norms that we all have agreed to abide by.

The OSCE is not a treaty-based international organization, but it is very much embedded in the context of multilateral diplomacy. For almost 50 years, it has been an instrument to advance peaceful cooperation based on comprehensive security. Given the inclusive character of the organization, I still believe that it is the right platform for dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The OSCE has become more than just a talk shop between East and West. It has a solid work record and a multilayered outreach. Its presence plays a stabilizing role in diverse regions, such as the Western Balkans and Central Asia.

In my capacity as OSCE Chair, I will pay visits to Moldova and the South Caucasus, as well as the Western Balkans and Central Asia, to prove the OSCE's engagement with participating States. That legacy is still relevant in today's world. However, the future of the organization depends on how effectively we will be able to revive cooperation among all participating States. The question is: How do we reach consensus around the main priorities and create a proper *modus operandi* to fulfil the OSCE mandate?

I have to admit that this non-compliance with OSCE principles is forcing us to put on hold or delay some of the issues that are important for the daily operation of the organization. Will we be able to achieve progress on regional and protracted conflicts when trust has been shattered? I very much hope so, but it will require all parties, including Russia, to act in good faith.

The same applies to the Renewed European Security Dialogue, which the Polish Chair initiated in response to growing tensions. Supported by an overwhelming majority of the participating States, it was meant to develop new measures of trust, transparency and confidence. Unfortunately, despite initial interest, the Russian side has chosen the most destructive path in confronting its concerns, fears and misgivings.

The changing situation on the ground will probably determine the scope and character of the future engagement of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine. Acknowledging the Mission's eight years of operation and its expertise, I will work with OSCE structures and participating States to utilize

its potential in the future. I hope that the Mission's dedicated staff, as well as the team of the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine, will be able to continue their important mission.

During the Polish chairmanship, we will initiate and actively support efforts to advance the OSCE goals. We do not want to alter the fundamental premise of OSCE cooperation, which is based on agreement by all participating States. However, we would like to increase the effectiveness of the organization, provided that there is broader interest and support from the majority of stakeholders.

The recent events in Ukraine have once again shone a spotlight on the situation of the civilian population in conflict-affected areas. We will continue to call on all sides to military conflicts to abide by humanitarian law and refrain from activities directed against the civilian population and civilian infrastructure.

The OSCE stands ready to cooperate closely with United Nations humanitarian agencies to facilitate and provide the necessary assistance. That must also include creating effective evacuation routes for the civilian population.

Whenever there are reliable accounts of humanitarian law abuse, we should be ready to react swiftly. Therefore, we welcome the decision of the Permanent Council of 3 March to invoke the Moscow Mechanism to create a group of independent experts to investigate reported violations of humanitarian law, within the context of the hostilities in Ukraine.

I am convinced that the OSCE needs strong and effective leadership now more than ever before. The dramatic events in Ukraine have opened our eyes to the need for a renewed commitment to OSCE principles and commitments. It is true that the OSCE may evolve as a result of the current experience. The celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act could turn out to be dedicated to finding a solution to the deep crisis of multilateralism.

Peace and security, like freedom and democracy, cannot be taken for granted. We have learned that lesson the hard way. However, it is also true that those who choose to embark on the path of military confrontation receive very little in return. Between war and peace, life and destruction, we should always be able to look beyond our narrow narcissistic instincts. What alternative do we have?

The smouldering ashes of Kyiv, Kharkiv and Mariupol and the thousands of innocent lives lost are a stark reminder of the heavy price we pay for indifference in the face of brute force. It is therefore high time for the international community, the United Nations and the OSCE to reinforce our efforts to restore peace and revert to our principles and values. The integrity of international law and stability of the world order are at stake. Mindful of the immense challenges that we face, let us work together on the most effective ways to save lives and prevent future conflicts.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: I thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to join His Excellency Foreign Minister Rau to brief the Council on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

The tragic conflict in Ukraine, which, over the weekend, further worsened, vividly illustrates the importance of mechanisms to maintain and strengthen European and international peace and security. Born out of the Cold War, the OSCE has been at the centre of efforts to bring its unique membership, spanning from Vancouver to Vladivostok, around one overarching goal — to resolve differences peacefully.

In line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the OSCE works in complement to the United Nations, including to resolve conflicts in the region. In 1993, the United Nations and the OSCE established a Framework for Cooperation. Since then, our partnership has grown in scope and substance to help address acute crises and find solutions to common peace and security challenges.

Our shared commitment to preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacebuilding and the women and peace and security agenda was reaffirmed through the Joint Declaration between the Secretary-General and the Chairperson-in-Office in 2019.

The coordination and complementarity guiding our efforts translate into action in various ways. We work together in Central Asia, most recently to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; in the Western Balkans, to advance reconciliation; and in the Caucasus, where the United Nations co-chairs the Geneva International Discussions on Georgia,

along with the OSCE and the European Union. Further, the United Nations has sought to complement the OSCE's leading role in addressing protracted conflicts regarding Nagorno Karabakh and Moldova.

Regarding Ukraine and pursuant to resolution 2202 (2015), on the Minsk agreements, the United Nations has consistently supported the work of the OSCE, especially the Special Monitoring Mission and the OSCE-led Trilateral Contact Group, while carrying out our humanitarian and human rights mandates on the ground.

I wish to pay tribute here to all OSCE staff for their important work accomplished under very challenging circumstances.

The war in Ukraine is the most severe test that the OSCE and related regional frameworks have faced since their creation. The Russian invasion has shaken the foundations of the European security architecture to its core. As we meet, the bloodshed continues to worsen. Russian forces have now launched daily, deadly air strikes in the west of Ukraine. Ukrainian cities are under unrelenting shelling and bombardment, with many civilians killed daily.

As I said three days ago in this very Chamber (see S/PV.8991), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has received credible reports of Russian forces using cluster munitions, including in populated areas. Indiscriminate attacks, including those using cluster munitions, that are of a nature to strike military objectives and civilians or civilian objects without distinction are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

We are deeply disturbed by reports that Ukrainian municipal officials in Russian-controlled parts of the country have been abducted. There are also reports of civilians, including journalists, being targeted, allegedly by Russian forces.

We must not allow any questioning of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Such questioning would be inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

Amid those dire conditions, the United Nations continues to scale up not only its humanitarian support to the people of Ukraine but also its engagement

with key partners such as the OSCE in support of an immediate ceasefire and a lasting diplomatic solution.

When the Secretary-General addressed the Council on the topic of conflicts in Europe in 2017 (see S/PV.7886), he warned that despite the achievements of the last 70 years, we should not take peace and prosperity in Europe for granted. He cautioned that as serious conflicts persisted in Europe, new threats and risks made it even more pressing for multilateral institutions and regional organizations to address dangerous challenges to the international order.

The Secretary-General's warnings then were informed in large part by the crises in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014, which demonstrated how real the risks of new outbreaks of conflict were. Today, a devastating war is being waged on a continent that should be equipped to prevent such catastrophes.

We are concerned at the dismantling of long-standing confidence-building measures, arms-control treaties and other frameworks that were designed and agreed to sustain regional security. That includes the persistent use of regional mediation mechanisms as tools not to solve conflicts but to manage them, which only helps ensure that those same conflicts continue.

OSCE-led processes supported by the international community are now openly questioned by parties involved in them. It is more important than ever for all parties to recommit to the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris and other landmark agreements that form the bedrock of the European security architecture.

In that context, we take good note of the efforts by the Polish Chairperson-in-Office under Minister Rau's leadership to initiate a renewed OSCE European security dialogue.

How the OSCE and other regional actors choose to secure the future of European security cooperation will have an impact beyond Europe. The United Nations supports all efforts to restore mutual trust and respect among regional stakeholders, which is essential to preserving the continent from new conflict and the world from further instability. We therefore all have a stake in the outcome.

For almost 50 years, the United Nations and the OSCE have partnered to promote European peace and stability. The challenges we face today, and those

potentially ahead, demand that we work even more closely together.

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

I now give the floor to those members of the Council wishing to make statements.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me start by warmly welcoming the Chairperson-in-Office, Minister Rau, to the Security Council and thanking him for his briefing on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I thank him also for his personal initiatives to reinvigorate the OSCE as a platform for dialogue on issues of European security. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

With an inclusive mandate and participation, the OSCE has a rich toolbox for increasing transparency, building trust and reducing tensions. Using the organization's full potential to solve the crises of today is essential, but the necessary political is also required.

We commend the OSCE for now turning the focus of its work in Ukraine towards mitigating the growing humanitarian crisis. Good use should be made of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine and national staff on the ground, as well as the OSCE premises, its fleet of vehicles and the SMM's long experience as an intermediary facilitating localized ceasefires. The OSCE can also provide valuable competence on border management and human trafficking.

We again reiterate our condemnation of Russia's illegal and unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine. That makes this expertise once again necessary in Europe.

The Russian aggression is a serious violation of international law and of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory and cease all threats and military actions.

Russia's warfare in urban and populated areas and the use of heavy explosive weapons is causing terrible, long-term harm to civilians. Russia must fulfil its obligations to protect civilians, including children, and civilian infrastructure.

We are appalled by the lack of respect for international humanitarian law and the worsening humanitarian crisis across Ukraine, for which Russia alone bears sole responsibility. Humanitarian actors in Ukraine must be allowed to stay and deliver.

In addition, we are concerned about the steadily increasing strain on neighbouring countries, as people flee the fighting. Nevertheless, let me use this opportunity to commend Poland, the Polish people and other OSCE neighbours on their response to the humanitarian crisis. The warm welcome and the protection they offer all refugees is a strong symbol of international solidarity.

While the crisis in Ukraine demands most of our attention currently, Minister Rau has stated that the broad priority for Poland's Chairpersonship-in-Office is also to contribute to finding peaceful solutions to regional and protracted conflicts. The OSCE continues to support reconciliation and conflict prevention efforts in such other parts of the region as the South Caucasus, Moldova, the Western Balkans and Central Asia. The field missions, autonomous institutions and the secretariat are important assets unique to the OSCE, which we must continue to recognize and support. Both the United Nations and the OSCE share a vision. Our common duty is to work to strengthen security at the regional level, end violent conflict and ensure that human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality can be enjoyed by all.

In closing, especially in the light of the current unstable European climate, let me underline Norway's strong support for the important role the OSCE plays in promoting stability, peace and democracy for more than a billion people.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Zbigniew Rau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the Security Council. I thank him for his briefing on the OSCE and note that Poland has assumed the leadership of this important organization at a time when the security situation and the political environment in Europe is fast deteriorating. We therefore look forward to the OSCE's continued engagement and Foreign Minister Rau's leadership in helping to address the prevailing security challenges in Europe. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo

for her briefing and welcome the participation of the representative of Ukraine at this meeting.

Ghana takes note of the issues outlined by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, in particular the commitment to paying special attention to finding peaceful solutions to the conflicts in the OSCE area. We encourage all efforts aimed at resolving the protracted situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the alarming situation in Ukraine following the Russian Federation's unjustified aggression against its neighbour. We also look forward to the additional efforts that will be made to respond effectively to the complex challenges of increased fragmentation, terrorism, anti-Semitism, transboundary crimes and violations of human rights and freedoms, with which Europe is presently grappling.

Against this backdrop, I would like to make the following additional points. First, Ghana welcomes the Polish commitment to upholding the concept of comprehensive and indivisible security based on the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, as well as other decisions of the OSCE that also embody the very principles and purposes of the United Nations. Ensuring security on the European continent today requires of the participating States of the OSCE a renewed commitment to upholding and respecting the long-established principles for relations between States.

The principles of sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, non-aggression and the prohibition of the use or threat of the use of force remain the foundational principles upon which national and global aspirations for economic and social development can be built. Any attempts to redefine and renegotiate these bulwarks of stability will not only undermine the European security architecture but also the rules-based international order and multilateralism. The OSCE must therefore undertake the difficult but necessary task of fostering the political role and the recommitment of its Member States to the implementation of the international obligations towards the peace, security and stability of Europe and of the wider United Nations membership beyond Europe. Persistence and confidence in security-building measures among the participating States of the OSCE will therefore have to be sustained.

Secondly, the OSCE's role as an important forum for dialogue on the security architecture of Europe needs to be re-emphasized. We believe that the OSCE

provides a unique platform for open and good-faith discussions among its 57 participating States, if the schisms that have opened up in contemporary European security are to be addressed. We therefore welcome the ongoing efforts by the OSCE to facilitate dialogue between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

As party to the Trilateral Contact Group responsible for the implementation of the 2015 Minsk agreements, the OSCE is indispensable in finding and implementing a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict, which, regrettably, has assumed full-scale dimensions. We note with regret in this context that the Special Monitoring Mission had to suspend its reporting activities following the evacuation of its international staff members to neighbouring countries, and we remain concerned at the cascading security, humanitarian, economic and developmental impacts of the situation in Ukraine. All efforts aimed at achieving a pacific resolution of this conflict through dialogue and diplomacy must therefore be encouraged and engender the full support of the Security Council.

Thirdly, we welcome the OSCE's efforts to enhance its cooperation with the United Nations. Ghana strongly supports a strengthening of relations between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations provides that the Security Council, pursuant to its mandate, can leverage the comparative advantage of regional bodies to promote homegrown and regional approaches to the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, we acknowledge the complexity that such cooperation entails, and for this reason Ghana is working within the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization to identify gaps and propose guidelines to enhance complementarity between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Finally, we note the enhanced engagement of the United Nations and the OSCE to finding lasting peace in the prevailing conflicts and growing threats to security in Europe and beyond. We welcome the focus on a human-centred approach, and, in that regard, we take note of the mutually reinforcing priorities within the economic-environment dimensions and the human-security dimensions.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Foreign Minister Rau, for his briefing, and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for hers.

I would like first to pay tribute to the bravery and dedication of the OSCE staff and, in particular, to Maryna Fenina, a Ukrainian Special Monitoring Mission employee who was killed in the Russian shelling of Kharkiv on 1 March while getting medicine for her family.

For decades the OSCE has worked to bring security to Europe, and yet we meet today in the middle of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine — one OSCE signatory tearing up the rulebook and pursuing war against another — as if the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law never existed, as Foreign Minister Rau said. President Putin's war violates fundamental principles of both the OSCE and the United Nations: sovereignty, inviolability of borders, respect for territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This war is a threat to us all and to the systems we have built together to preserve peace. It is also a threat to the peace and security of the millions of people in Europe, Africa and Asia who rely on agricultural, energy and commodity supply chains already profoundly disrupted by Russia's invasion.

We recognize the extensive efforts, as described by Foreign Minister Rau, undertaken by the OSCE to try to avoid that catastrophe. Russia was offered a chance to raise any security concerns in the Renewed OSCE European Security Dialogue, but said that it was not the right time. We now know that it was planning war all along. Ukraine and others invoked the OSCE Vienna Document Risk Reduction Mechanism to seek transparency from Russia and Belarus and to de-escalate the situation. Russia refused to engage.

Moreover, of course, the OSCE has worked for years to support the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Russia is accused of the gravest war crimes — bombing schools, hospitals and homes and targeting families as they try to run to safety. We welcome action taken under the Moscow Mechanism to hold Russia to account. The OSCE fact-finding mission must be given full access so that evidence can be gathered.

Finally, I would like to stress that we continue to support the vital role of OSCE field missions in Central Asia and the Western Balkans, including through its

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. We strongly support OSCE efforts to facilitate a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Georgia, Moldova and Nagorno-Karabakh.

The United Kingdom remains steadfast in our support and appreciation for the work of the OSCE and for Poland's chairpersonship at this critical time.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome Mr. Rau to our meeting today and I commend Poland's action as Chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) at a time when security in Europe is facing an extremely serious threat. France supports Chairperson Rau's unfailing commitment to the service of the organization and to defending the commitments and principles upon which it has been built over the past five decades but are now being flouted by Russia.

A month ago, the Council met at Russia's initiative to discuss the implementation of the Minsk agreements with the participation of OSCE representatives (see S/PV.8968). At that meeting, the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that Russia had no intention of attacking Ukraine and called for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Together with my German counterpart, we reported on the efforts of Paris and Berlin to make progress in the implementation of resolution 2202 (2015). All other members of the Council supported that objective.

In February, the Polish chairpersonship-in-office of the OSCE proposed the establishment of a renewed dialogue on European security in order to respond in particular to the security concerns expressed by Russia in recent months. We supported those efforts and the role of the OSCE as the main platform for dialogue on collective security in Europe.

The reality today is very different, and a cruel one at that. Russia has lied. It has blatantly violated the Charter of the United Nations and the founding texts of the OSCE, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter — the very basis for stability in Europe. It has betrayed all its commitments to the implementation of the Minsk agreements, signed by Russia and the OSCE and endorsed by resolution 2202 (2015).

The Russian aggression, supported by Belarus, is having a devastating impact on Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, but its consequences are even broader. It also threatens multilateralism and international

law, as well as the institutions that guarantee them, notably the United Nations and the OSCE. Russia is thereby directly undermining the interests of all States mobilizing within those organizations in search of negotiated solutions to the crises and challenges they face.

In view of the extreme gravity of the situation, France once again thanks the Polish chairpersonship-in-office of the OSCE for its responsiveness and calls on Russia to immediately cease hostilities in Ukraine, to withdraw its troops from all Ukrainian territory and to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. We urge Russia to return to respecting the rules of law which, through the United Nations and the OSCE, allow for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

France reiterates its support for the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and its personnel, both international — who have been forcibly evacuated — and locally recruited, some of whom are still under bombardment. We pay tribute to the memory of Ms. Maryna Fenina, a local staff member killed in Kharkiv — a victim of the Russian aggression.

We reaffirm our support for the OSCE's human dimension institutions and instruments, including the Moscow Mechanism, launched on 3 March, and the fact-finding mechanism set up by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights on Ukraine's borders.

The OSCE must be able to continue to put its resources at the service of conflict resolution in the European space, in cooperation with the United Nations and despite the war in Ukraine. France, as both co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group and President of the Council of the European Union, remains fully mobilized to contribute to the dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan and to peace and stability in the South Caucasus. The meetings held in February and December have provided guidelines in that direction.

We call for continued efforts on outstanding humanitarian issues, including the release of prisoners of war and other detainees, as well as on heritage protection and demining. We note with concern the increase in armed incidents over the past few days and call on the parties to do everything possible to avoid a repetition of such incidents.

France reiterates its unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova and for the role of the OSCE in making

progress towards a resolution of the conflicts taking place there. We also commend the concerted efforts of the Polish chairpersonship and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to maintain the essential dialogue with civil society, despite the current circumstances.

We are determined not to let Russia drag our multilateral collective security organizations down. France reaffirms its support for the United Nations and the OSCE, as well as the cooperation that both organizations are developing to contribute to the resolution of crises in Europe.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me thank the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Mr. Rau, and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for the information provided.

We welcome this timely exchange with the OSCE — one of the world's largest regional security organizations — which brings together 57 participating States across three continents, bound by joint commitments. As an important pillar of the international rules-based order, the OSCE plays an essential role in addressing many of the challenges on the Council's agenda. Therefore, collaboration and partnership between the two organizations are key and need to be strengthened.

Albania fully supports the priorities of the Polish OSCE chairpersonship. We welcome the focus on safeguarding a comprehensive security order by defending the principles of the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter and the Charter for European Security. Those principles are neither negotiable nor subject to revision or reinterpretation. The commitment to human rights and the values of freedom and democracy, as well as support for its institutions, should continue to be an irreplaceable blueprint in the work of OSCE.

We also welcome the work of the OSCE and the United Nations in the framework of the women and peace and security agenda and reconciliation processes in the Western Balkans. There has hardly been a more suitable and urgent time to reaffirm those fundamental principles, which for nearly five decades have stood as effective mechanisms for conflict prevention and de-escalation in Europe — until 24 February.

In 2020, soon after Albania assumed the OSCE chairmanship-in-office, we were confronted with an

invisible enemy that threatened the entire world. It went by the name of the coronavirus disease pandemic. We still do not know everything about it, but we know far too well what it did to humankind, to our way of life, to our countries and economies and, in many ways, to all of us.

Two years later, as Poland started its chairmanship, the OSCE area was confronted with another threat, but, this time, everyone knew where it was coming from. We were warned about what was going to happen. Now, three weeks into this war, we are left with the uninterrupted onslaught of breaking news regarding the devastation that Russia is unleashing with rage upon Ukraine and its people.

For months, huge efforts were made by the international community, including the Polish chairmanship and Minister Rau himself, in seeking a peaceful solution. Every stone was turned; every possibility was used. The reality now clearly shows that those efforts were doomed to fail because the invasion was premeditated. It was a plan to be executed despite everything. It was a war that the Kremlin wanted.

We express our gratitude to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Moldova and the Czech Republic — I am probably forgetting some countries — for the incredible efforts that they are making in sheltering thousands of civilians forced to flee the massive bombardments and war atrocities.

The OSCE is a key player for peace and security. It is an important platform to discuss issues related to comprehensive security, equipped with mechanisms, as well as confidence- and security-building measures. It remains as relevant as when it was created.

It is clear that the overarching difference between Russia and the existing European security order, based on international law and OSCE principles, is a structural one. While we are served here with all kinds of fantasies that melt like snow under the sun, the real concerns are the democratic values and principles of freedom on which the system is based. In that respect, the OSCE comprehensive concept of security connects the dots between domestic repression and external aggression. Democracy, human rights and the rule of law are key aspects for security within and between States.

We failed to prevent the pure, unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression committed by a serial violator of the rules and norms of the international

order. We should not fail to make the aggressor pay for that and the crimes committed.

Albania supports the initiative to invoke the OSCE Moscow Mechanism in order to establish the facts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including due to the deliberate and indiscriminate acts against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. Its findings, together with those of the commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council, should be presented to the relevant accountability mechanisms, as well as national, regional and international courts or tribunals.

The massive sanctions imposed on Russia have ripple effects for the whole world, including for our own countries and citizens. But that is the price to pay so that Russia's actions do not go unchecked and unpunished. We hope that the effects of such unprecedented sanctions will wake up the Russian citizens so as to see the reality through the terrible deeds of their army, not through the distorted mirror of propaganda; to understand why the whole world calls Russia an aggressor; and to feel for their neighbour, which is being savagely destroyed, cities that are becoming graveyards and children who are forcefully leaving their childhood behind because of such insanity. The sooner that happens, the sooner this war and any spillover threats will stop.

Let me end by recalling the 754th meeting of the Security Council of 4 November 1956. History has recorded it as the day when a popular revolt in Hungary was viciously crushed by Soviet tanks — uninvited, of course. I will quote Mr. Sobolev, the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at that meeting, justifying the action:

“The Nagy Government openly adopted a reactionary and fascist policy aimed at the complete liquidation of the people's democratic regime in Hungary, at the restoration of the old landowner-capitalist system and the establishment of a fascist dictatorship.” (*S/PV.754, para. 50*)

It was about the so-called fascists 65 years ago. It is about the so-called denazification now — the same discourse, the same actions, with their terrible consequences.

Ukraine is a critical test for European security, including the OSCE. We must refuse a world according to Russia. We must determine the preservation and the enforcement of the rules-based international order.

One man has started this war. One man can stop it at any time.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): At the outset, let me thank Minister Rau for his thoughtful remarks. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

The Organization for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) plays a crucial role in the maintenance of peace and security in Europe. It is one of the key partners of the United Nations in dealing with the many challenges on the Security Council's agenda. However, we need to recognize that, at this crucial juncture, the architecture of peace and security, not only in Europe but also worldwide, is facing an unprecedented challenge.

The conflict in Ukraine, with its toll of human suffering, forced displacement, humanitarian emergency and systemic risks, is an extraordinary challenge for the United Nations and the OSCE in their joint mission to guarantee peace and security in Europe.

The cessation of hostilities must be our most pressing objective. All parties must fully respect international humanitarian law and adopt measures to protect civilians. We call for continued efforts to agree on well-planned humanitarian mechanisms that ensure the safe passage of civilians. Furthermore, we should strive for the immediate, full, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel for the timely delivery of assistance to those in need.

Moreover, the war in Ukraine has momentous implications for the international order, especially the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, Brazil calls on all parties to strictly observe international law. The prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention and the protection of human rights shall remain the pillars of our collective security system.

We note that the present conflict will also have a significant impact on commodities and energy prices. Such effects could be further worsened by the application of unilateral sanctions. Developing countries stand to bear a disproportionate burden of such negative shocks.

There is no alternative to diplomatic talks. The security concerns of all parties must be addressed by meaningful negotiations. We renew our plea for them to engage in dialogue with openness, flexibility and a

sense of urgency to find ways for a lasting peace in Ukraine and in the wider region.

The OSCE has a key role to play in supporting the international efforts to bring an end to the current hostilities. Moreover, the expertise of the OSCE may be valuable in monitoring a ceasefire, which, we hope, will encompass a comprehensive disengagement of troops and military equipment on the ground.

Besides the conflict in Ukraine, we would also like to mention the ongoing crisis in Georgia, as well as the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Regarding the situation in Georgia, we commend the OSCE for its full support to the Geneva International Discussions and related incident prevention and response mechanism formats. This dialogue process, co-chaired by the OSCE, the United Nations and the European Union, is an important example of United Nations-OSCE cooperation in conflict resolution.

The unresolved conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh remains a challenge to international peace and security in Europe. After the armed conflict of 2020, we are still witnessing renewed outbreaks of clashes between Azeris and Armenians, some of them resulting in casualties, including among civilians. Last week, incidents damaged the main pipeline that brings gas to Nagorno-Karabakh. Such incidents further undermine the needed trust between Armenia and Azerbaijan to renew efforts towards a lasting peace agreement. We support the efforts undertaken by the OSCE to give impetus to this process.

We would also like to express our recognition to the OSCE work to advance the women and peace and security agenda. Important issues, such as impunity for sexual and gender-based violence, must be tackled. In that regard, we note the openness of the OSCE to involving civil society organizations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as to engaging women in all stages of peace processes.

The maintenance of peace and security in Europe is under unprecedented challenge. Close cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE is more needed now than ever before.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing today. I also thank Foreign Minister Rau for his briefing to the Security Council. His engagement with

the Council comes at a critical juncture — as many of my colleagues have said — a critical juncture for European and international security following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. He has demonstrated extraordinary leadership at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) during this crisis, and the United States thanks him.

The United States was a strong supporter of his attempt to avert this crisis through the launch of a reinvigorated European Security Dialogue at the OSCE and we support his efforts to increase the OSCE's ability to respond to the humanitarian crisis through the OSCE's toolbox. We look forward to working with him on those important issues in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office.

I would like to begin by expressing our outrage over the death of journalist Brent Renaud, who was covering the refugee situation. He was killed yesterday by Russian forces as he was leaving a checkpoint at Irpin. According to his colleagues, Mr. Renaud was in the area because he understood the critical role independent media has played in providing objective coverage of Russia's war of choice against Ukraine. His death shows that Russia will go to any extent to silence narratives that challenge its propaganda, and it underscores the importance of upholding the safety of journalists as they undertake their important work.

Last year at this meeting on cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE (S/2021/256), the United States recalled that we had just passed the seventh anniversary of Russia's invasion and occupation of Crimea and the launch of its aggression in eastern Ukraine. We noted that in those seven years, the Russian-fuelled conflict in eastern Ukraine had killed more than 13,000 people and wounded tens of thousands more. And we warned that Russia's aggression was far from over.

It has been less than three weeks since Russia launched a major invasion against the rest of Ukraine. During those three weeks, Russia unleashed horrific devastation against another United Nations Member State, resulting in the death of thousands and the displacement of more than 2.5 million people. Russia must immediately cease all hostilities, withdraw its forces from Ukraine and take the path of diplomacy, in keeping with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act.

Russia's further invasion of Ukraine is an unprecedented challenge — a challenge to the post Second World War European security order and to cooperation between all of us. Cooperation now between the United Nations and OSCE remains as essential as ever. Unfortunately, two OSCE-participating States, the Russian Federation and Belarus, continue to violate the foundational principles of the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act. With the support of Belarus, Russia has shown utter contempt for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other States, as well as for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its own people.

We have seen Russia try to spread disinformation and distract the Council from its aggression. But no amount of Russian disinformation can distract from the fact that the Kremlin is waging a brutal, premeditated, unprovoked war of choice against Ukraine. This is a war carried out with the support and the facilitation of the Lukashenko regime. Russia does not want its people to learn the appalling truth about the senseless death and destruction it is causing in Ukraine. That is why the Kremlin has forced domestic and foreign independent media outlets to suspend their operations in Russia or to close permanently. That is why it has blocked access to independent news sites and social networks.

The United States reaffirms its strong and unwavering commitment to the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, which has been forced to temporarily suspend its work in Ukraine. Despite Russia's efforts to impede its operations, the Special Monitoring Mission's impartial reporting has proved invaluable to the international community's understanding of the security situation on the ground. We join others in expressing our heartfelt condolences for the loss of staff member Maryna Fenina, who was killed on 1 March by Russia's shelling in Kharkiv, while trying to get supplies for her family.

The United States was proud to join 44 other countries in launching the OSCE Moscow Mechanism to establish an expert mission in order to document human rights violations and abuses, breaches of international humanitarian law and possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Russia's forces in Ukraine's territory. The mission will meticulously compile the facts and create a written report that can be presented to relevant accountability mechanisms. We also welcome the Human Rights Council's immediate launch of a commission of inquiry to pursue similar

aims. The commission of inquiry and the OSCE expert mission will complement one another in bringing the truth to light.

Under the OSCE Vienna Document, all participating States, as part of our collective efforts to reduce the risk of miscalculation, lower tensions and build confidence, committed to respond in good faith to the concerns that other States raise regarding unusual military activities. Russia's blatant and unfounded dismissal of Ukraine's legitimate invocation of the Vienna Document's risk-reduction mechanism for unusual military activities illustrated once again Russia's disregard of its international commitments. The refusal of Belarus to substantively respond to the Baltic States invoking the Vienna Document risk-reduction mechanism showed the Lukashenko regime's disregard as well.

In addition to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, as others have mentioned, we must also not forget the other important priorities of the OSCE. We must not forget that Russia continues to occupy parts of Georgia. It also maintains its forces in Moldova without host Government consent. We welcome the continued commitment of the OSCE to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Georgia, including by co-chairing the Geneva International Discussions.

We regret that Russia has not fulfilled its obligations and commitments under the 2008 ceasefire agreement, including with respect to the withdrawal of troops to pre-conflict positions. The United States urges all Geneva International Discussions participants to ensure that residents of conflict areas are able to visit their relatives, engage in peaceful economic activities and move freely without fear of detention or arbitrary punishment and with access to documentation that will allow them to return to their homes.

The United States remains committed to promoting a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for the South Caucasus region. As co-Chair of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, we join others in urging Armenia and Azerbaijan to continue and intensify their diplomatic engagement in order to find comprehensive solutions to all outstanding issues related to or resulting from the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

In conclusion, the United States appreciates the long-standing partnership between the United Nations and the OSCE. United Nations presentations at OSCE Permanent Council meetings and United Nations

participation at annual OSCE events, as well as the close coordination between OSCE field operations and United Nations agencies on the ground, have only strengthened their partnership. In the face of Russian aggression, the United Nations and the OSCE must continue working together to advance peace, security, development and human rights, which will contribute to international peace and stability.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the information provided by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Zbigniew Rau, in his capacity as Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We also appreciate the information provided to us by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo.

Mexico shares the priority accorded by the Polish chairpersonship-in-office to maintain a people-centred approach to security. In any armed conflict — and the current conflict in Ukraine is no exception — the civilian population is usually the most affected. We therefore support efforts to prioritize support for the most vulnerable people. As we have just heard, the situation in Ukraine is extremely urgent. We find it concerning that more than two weeks after the conflict began, the Security Council has not been able to issue a declaration on this breach of international peace and security.

However, expressing our concern about such silence is not enough to remedy it. It was therefore necessary to have recourse to the General Assembly by invoking the “Uniting for peace” resolution (General Assembly resolution 377 V) in order for the Assembly to assume the role that the Council was unable to fulfil. We nevertheless reiterate our call, together with many others, for an end to hostilities and a return to political dialogue and diplomatic channels as soon as possible.

Until such a return, we have an ethical and moral obligation to protect the civilian population as far as possible and ensure that they receive the humanitarian aid that they so desperately need. That was our sole intention, together with France, in introducing a draft resolution of an exclusively humanitarian nature. We will insist on that and we hope that we can count on the support of the Security Council and the international community to that end.

The OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has played a key role in producing impartial reports on the situation on the ground and creating a platform for

the exchange of information. Regrettably, the Russian invasion has compromised the ability of the Special Monitoring Mission to operate. Some of its activities and reporting have been suspended, at a time when accurate and objective information are needed more than ever.

We also acknowledge that in view of the serious deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the OSCE Permanent Special Council has requested the Special Monitoring Mission to temporarily modify its activities in order to support urgently needed humanitarian assistance work. It is imperative that the Special Monitoring Mission have full and secure access on the ground so that it can fulfil its mandate and the sensitive work delegated to it.

We hope that in the not too distant future, the OSCE will also resume its functions within the framework of the Trilateral Contact Group. For it is through political dialogue that alternative approaches can be found, thereby making it possible to overcome the crisis.

Since its founding, the OSCE has played a key role in building trust, working on conflict prevention and managing crises through diplomacy. The work of the OSCE has been and remains crucial in situations on the international peace and security agenda, such as the situations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Kosovo region and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We therefore highly value its mediation work and its good offices through the deployment of its peace missions, actions on the ground and work carried out by its special representatives. Accordingly, we emphasize that regional and subregional organizations, such as the OSCE, are called upon to play a decisive role in the implementation of resolution 2616 (2021).

In conclusion, I urge the Security Council to strengthen its collaboration with the OSCE, on the basis of more preventive and effective diplomacy that integrates mediation work and contributes to the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I thank His Excellency Mr. Zbigniew Rau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for his briefing. I congratulate him on his assumption of the Office and wish him every success as he advances the growth of the OSCE. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

This briefing is happening as the foundations of Europe's security order are being shaken to their core by the ongoing devastating armed conflict, which reminds us of age-old European wars. The armed conflict in Ukraine is already extremely costly in all its aspects, ranging from the loss of life to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons, the destruction of infrastructure and the destabilization of economies across the globe.

If not urgently halted, its consequences will be catastrophic, not only for Ukraine and Europe at large but also for the entire world, particularly small and fragile economies in the global South. Given this and other protracted conflicts and their related dynamics, it has become imperative in our view to redesign a security architecture for Europe that is more firmly grounded on such fundamental principles as respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Member States, sovereign equality among States, respect for agreements and the pacific settlement of disputes.

We agree with the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office that the organization offers a good forum for the region to discuss every issue related to peace and security. We are confident that it can serve a pivotal role in an inclusive discourse on a new security order for Europe.

We commend the OSCE for its preventive diplomacy efforts and its commitment to multilateralism. In that regard, Kenya lauds the close cooperation of OSCE with the United Nations and urges its strengthening in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Allow me to briefly comment on some of the current issues of concern in the OSCE region.

With regard to the deeply concerning situation in Ukraine, Kenya commends the OSCE for its efforts to execute its mandate in monitoring the implementation of the 2015 Minsk agreements, which were endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 2202 (2015). We continue to call for an immediate pause on humanitarian grounds and for a chance to be given to diplomacy in the search for a sustainable political solution.

With regard to Kosovo, Kenya believes that it is the responsibility of all relevant parties, including the OSCE as one of Kosovo's largest field operations, to ensure a sustainable environment conducive to Kosovo's long-term peace and stability.

With regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya continues to urge the authorities to work together to not only ensure full compliance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also to make progress on the five objectives and two conditions.

With regard to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, we continue to support the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group co-Chairs to find a comprehensive and sustainable settlement.

In conclusion, Kenya reiterates that genuine dialogue should be the primary option for resolving conflicts. We encourage the OSCE to continue engaging with the Security Council, other regional bodies, international partners and other actors in pursuit of the region's peace, security and stability.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Zbigniew Rau, Chairperson-in-Office for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), for the information he shared with us this morning. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

We have noted the Chairperson-in-Office's reading of the situation and the forecast of the organization regarding the issues and challenges that it must face in order to fulfil its role. With its 57 member States and partners from Europe, Asia, America and Africa, the OSCE, in the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, has cooperation in its DNA as the ideal means of achieving peace and security and offering its members a space for a safe existence that is free of armed conflict.

Cooperation naturally implies acting together, consulting with each other continuously in times of peace and times of war alike, resolving differences, reducing tensions and seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means.

Throughout its almost 50 years of existence, the OSCE has had to face numerous crises, which while they did not shake its foundations, have led it to question its guiding principles. One of the pressing questions is how to translate the principles agreed upon in Helsinki into the current security context. In addressing that fundamental question, the OSCE must fulfil its role as a bridge among its member States, based on strong trust among its members, so that they can interact in good faith with a view to enjoying mutual benefits.

However, the OSCE's potential for conflict prevention is in doubt, as we witness with concern the rise of nationalism in Europe, secessionist tensions in south-eastern Europe, multiple crises in Central Asia and the numerous security threats arising from an increase in terrorism. The many hot spots resulting from the break-up of former blocks threaten disruption in numerous regions of the world, in particular continental Europe. That is an issue of significant concern, which not only the OSCE but also the entire international community must decisively address.

The most recent events, marked by the war in Ukraine and the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, call into question the ability of the OSCE to play its role as a bridge between the eastern and the western branches of its territorial jurisdiction and therefore its capacity to set in motion its conflict-prevention mechanisms for preventing and resolving all armed conflicts in its sphere of influence.

With regard to the mandate of the OSCE in the context of the war in Ukraine, its role in the resolution of the crisis has been called into question, given the clear unravelling of the Minsk agreements. How can the current impasse be overcome? What reliable tools can be activated at this moment in order to enable diplomacy to prevail in addressing the situation in Ukraine? In order to answer those questions rationally, we must acknowledge the urgency of the situation and act in line with its pressing security and humanitarian needs.

My country has no experience of war and has never taken part in an armed conflict. Perhaps that is why we have always preferred dialogue to division and favoured political and diplomatic solutions over the use of force. It is that ideal which inspires our enthusiasm to sit at the Council table to help find solutions to the crises that plague the world. We must find a solution to the crisis in Ukraine because its consequences have a negative impact on the entire world and the values of the United Nations.

We hereby reiterate our solemn call on each and every member of the Security Council and beyond — to every member of the international community — to renew and realign themselves with our common commitment to ensure international peace and security for the peoples of the world. That is what we committed to when we signed the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we encourage cooperation between the OSCE and the United Nations and express our support for the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in his efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Ukraine. We also express our appreciation for the remarkable efforts of those countries, in particular Poland, which have welcomed those fleeing the war in Ukraine.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I welcome Mr. Rau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), to this meeting. I listened carefully to the briefings by Mr. Rau and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo.

China has always supported the efforts of the United Nations and the Security Council, on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, to develop its partnership with regional organizations, including the OSCE, with a view to effectively addressing challenges in international, peace and security.

The OSCE covers a large area and has many coordination mechanisms. For years, it has done much work to enhance mutual trust among Member States, prevent and resolve conflicts and address non-traditional security threats. We welcome and are pleased to see the role of the OSCE in complementing the international system with the United Nations at its core.

The international situation is undergoing profound challenges and is full of instability and uncertainty. The outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine has led us to think further about how to maintain peace and stability within the international architecture and focus more on a genuine path towards universal security and common development. We must seek new enlightenment and answers based on the OSCE's history and the current severe challenges it faces.

First, we must adhere to the general direction of dialogue and cooperation. Even at the most intense time during the Cold War, dialogue and cooperation were possible and necessary. The more friction, differences and potential risks, the more important and necessary it is to enhance understanding and mutual trust. The world is now in a new era. The path of dialogue and cooperation should become increasingly wider, rather than narrower. Differences among the national interests, social systems and ideologies of States should not become an obstacle to dialogue, let alone a reason for confrontation.

Secondly, the world is indivisible. Security is indivisible. In the 1975, the Helsinki Final Act established the important principle of indivisible security. That principle holds special significance under the current circumstances. Therefore, it should not only be upheld; it should be implemented. The solution to the crisis in Ukraine is to take seriously and respect the reasonable security concerns of all States and form a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture.

Thirdly, the Cold War came to an end a long time ago. Cold War mentality, based on bloc confrontation, should be completely rejected. Adhering to hegemony mentality and provoking bloc confrontation will lead only to disaster and exacerbate turmoil and division. That is the case in Europe. It is also the case in other regions. The world does not need another Cold War. The world can live with shared growth and progress. Under the banner of multilateralism, all countries must strengthen unity and cooperation and work together for a community of shared future for mankind.

China's position on the situation in Ukraine is consistent and clear. Recently, President Xi Jinping held a video-teleconference with the leaders of France and Germany, where he underscored that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States should be respected, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed. He stressed that the reasonable security concerns of all States should be taken seriously and all efforts towards the peaceful settlement of crises should be supported. Those four points represent the most authoritative elaboration of China's position on the question of Ukraine. Based on that position, China will strengthen communication and coordination with all parties concerned and play a constructive role in promoting peace through negotiations.

China is deeply concerned about and deplores the developments in Ukraine. The prompt cessation of hostilities is a shared aspiration of the international community. Dialogue and negotiation are the only feasible and realistic ways to achieve that. Russia and Ukraine have recently held multiple rounds of direct negotiations and demonstrated the desire and willingness to continue those negotiations. The international community must help sustain the positive momentum, actively encourage and support Russia-Ukraine negotiations and create the necessary conditions and environment to that end.

The crisis in Ukraine is interwoven with European security and stability. We encourage the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to bring into full play its advantages and set up the necessary platform to encourage negotiation and communication between the parties concerned. We call for maximum restraint. We call for the effective guarantee of the safety and security of civilians and their basic needs. We call for a safe and unimpeded humanitarian corridor to prevent the deterioration of the humanitarian crisis.

China's six-point initiative on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine continues to receive support from other countries. We have also provided humanitarian assistance, in kind, to Ukraine. We support the United Nations as it fully plays its coordinating role in providing humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. We stand ready to consult with other parties to achieve consensus on the Council's response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

We must also note that three-foot deep ice does not come from a cold front that lasts one day. The current situation in Ukraine is the result of a mix of complex historical and present-day factors. To resolve a complex issue, calm and rational thinking are essential. Relying on sanctions alone will not only not help resolve the issue but will create new problems. Increasing sanctions pressure has already severely affected and will continue to affect global finance, energy, food, transportation, the supply chain and other areas, thereby devastating the already fragile global economy caused by the pandemic. That will, in turn, have a serious and adverse effect on people's livelihoods, in developing countries in particular.

We once again call for greater diplomatic efforts by the international community to de-escalate tensions and bring the Ukrainian issue back to the political track as soon as possible.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I, too, would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing this morning. I would like to wish Minister Rau a very warm welcome to the Council and extend many thanks for his informative briefing earlier.

At the outset, I would certainly like to express Ireland's admiration and appreciation to the Government and the people of Poland for their generosity to and solidarity with those fleeing the war in Ukraine. We, in Ireland, are also fully committed to supporting the humanitarian response.

The Helsinki Final Act, signed in 1975, laid the foundation for what is now the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as an inclusive forum where East and West could meet. The OSCE, with its unique concept of comprehensive security, has served the European continent well for almost 50 years. As a founding member of the OSCE, Ireland regards the organization as a vital instrument for European stability and security. We greatly value the OSCE's work on conflict prevention and resolution, its activities on human rights and its role in the region, under the Charter of the United Nations.

As we now experience another tragic episode in Europe's long and often violent history, the work of the OSCE takes on a renewed significance. The Russian Federation's relentless, unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine casts a dark shadow across our continent, as innocent civilians in Ukraine suffer unbearably and we watch a humanitarian catastrophe unfold. Ireland once again strongly condemns the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign and independent country, and calls on it to uphold its international obligations.

The Russian Federation must immediately cease hostilities, unconditionally withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and refrain from using further threats or the use of force of any kind against Ukraine or any other OSCE participating State. We urge it to turn away from war and choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy, not bullets and bombs.

Ireland welcomes the priorities for 2022 outlined by the Chairperson-in-Office of the OSCE. I would like to assure Minister Rau of Ireland's full support in his important role. As Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo said earlier, the OSCE is a unique organization, extending from Vancouver to Vladivostok. It is the embodiment of a vision for Europe's security architecture — a vision of creating a different relationship for resolving issues between States. Its strength lies in its value as an essential forum for free and open engagement. That is why we welcome, in particular, the Renewed European Security Dialogue, initiated by the Chairperson-in-Office and aimed at using the full potential of the OSCE as a platform for dialogue.

Since 2014, the Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine has made a significant difference to the lives of people living along the contact line in eastern Ukraine, away from public limelight. The mission

negotiated local ceasefires, enabling repair works on critical civilian infrastructure and giving millions in eastern Ukraine access to fundamental services. It was an indispensable, impartial voice and the eyes and ears of participating States on the ground.

Allow me to express our sincere condolences on the death of Maryna Fenina, the SMM national member killed by shelling. We commend the OSCE on its evacuation of staff, recognize the evacuation as a temporary measure and acknowledge that the mission is working differently right now and is ready to resume its monitoring work. We stress the importance of an OSCE presence on the ground into the future.

While the eyes of the world are rightly focused on Ukraine, we are mindful that the institutions and field offices of the OSCE continue to operate throughout the region. Indeed, it is vital that they do so.

Ireland continues to support renewed efforts towards a negotiated, comprehensive and sustainable settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, particularly on the long-term status of Nagorno Karabakh.

We believe that the OSCE Minsk Group is the appropriate format through which to achieve that objective; it is essential that both sides meaningfully engage in that effort. Ireland, together with our European Union partners, stands ready to contribute to the intensification of negotiations in that format.

Ireland strongly supports the Polish Chair's intention to keep conflict prevention and resolution at the top of the OSCE's agenda, including in Georgia and Moldova. Here, too, will the OSCE's work to advance the women and peace and security agenda be critical, particularly for those women who have been forced to flee Ukraine.

We also welcome Poland's emphasis on responding to new and emerging threats to regional peace and security such as violent extremism and attacks in cyberspace, as well as the challenges we may face in a post-coronavirus disease environment, through effective multilateralism.

Ireland recalls that the OSCE plays a unique role in holding all participating States accountable to OSCE principles and commitments. The inclusion of civil society is essential in that regard. We fully support the OSCE's work on democracy and human rights and reaffirm our steadfast support for the invaluable

role played by the OSCE autonomous institutions, in particular the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, whose work on election monitoring we support without reservation.

In conclusion, the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security is as pertinent and relevant as ever. Respect for human rights, the rule of law and economic and environmental progress are all essential elements for sustaining peace and prosperity. We look forward to working closely with the Chairperson-in-Office to ensure strong, complementary partnerships between the United Nations and the OSCE.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): At the outset, let me begin by welcoming His Excellency Professor Zbigniew Rau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland. I also thank him for his briefing on the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and its priorities in his capacity as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

The role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as their cooperation with the United Nations, is provided for in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. We support an active engagement between the United Nations and the OSCE based on the Framework for Cooperation and Coordination, signed in 1993.

Regional organizations have a critical role to play in addressing challenges to the security environment by promoting dialogue between the parties and dissuading external influences. We are of the view that bilateral and regional agreements negotiated between the parties provide a good basis for the lasting and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The OSCE has attributes that make it the forum of choice in many situations. Of first and foremost importance, the OSCE is an inclusive Euro-Atlantic forum for consultation and joint action. The OSCE's structured dialogue mechanism, anchored in the guiding principles of transparency, collective ownership, inclusiveness and respect for diverging views, is aimed at rebuilding trust in multilateralism amid renewed geopolitical rivalry in the OSCE area.

The challenges confronting the OSCE community come from different sources. They include not only challenges to sovereignty but threats to peace from ethnic tensions and violent separatism within States.

The OSCE, as the world's largest security organization, is also addressing some of the toughest transnational threats, such as the proliferation of weapons, terrorism, cybersecurity, migration, environmental damage and drug trafficking.

While noting the ongoing global counter-terrorism efforts and contributions of the OSCE, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of this issue. The OSCE was among the first regional organizations to strongly condemn the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001. The OSCE needs to take into account such cross-border terrorist attacks and other new and emerging threats. In that context, the eight-point action plan on counter-terrorism proposed by India's External Affairs Minister on 11 January 2021 while addressing the Council also merits serious consideration by the OSCE.

The OSCE has been playing an important role in facilitating the implementation of the package of measures across both sides of the contact line in eastern Ukraine. However, recent developments in Ukraine and the consequent deterioration of the security situation have halted the functioning of the Special Monitoring Mission.

India has been consistent in calling for an immediate end to all hostilities in Ukraine. Our Prime Minister has repeatedly called for an urgent ceasefire, stating that there is no other path left but that of dialogue and diplomacy.

The human toll continues to mount, and the humanitarian situation has become dire. India undertook intensive and immediate steps to evacuate its nationals. To date, approximately 22,500 Indians have returned home safely. We are grateful to all our partners for their support in our evacuation efforts.

We call for direct contacts and negotiations with a view to ceasing hostilities. India has been in touch with both the Russian Federation and Ukraine in that regard and will remain engaged. We continue to underline the need to respect the United Nations Charter, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

We also support the OSCE Minsk Group's continued efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. India believes that any lasting resolution of the conflict can be achieved only peacefully, through diplomatic negotiations, and we

call on the parties to implement the agreement reached. We note with concern that the steps that have been committed to have yet to materialize.

To conclude, we recognize the significant contribution of the OSCE to the promotion of a rules-based international order and the strengthening of multilateralism. We join all other members of the Council in extending our good wishes to Poland's chairmanship of the OSCE. I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland for the generosity and help extended to our citizens in their safe return from conflict zones in Ukraine.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We were not surprised by the statement made by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We knew what he would talk about even before he took the floor. What we were surprised by is that the briefing and assessments of Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo overstepped the boundaries of the impartiality that is required of an international civil servant. And this is not the first time that happened. That was the case on Friday, as well, in this very Chamber (see S/PV.8991). Her views and her advancing fake information about the indiscriminate bombing of civilian facilities and the use of cluster bombs by Russian armed forces, with references to "reliable sources" of information, raises doubts as to who is sitting at this table: a senior official of the United Nations Secretariat or a representative of one of the Member States?

Over recent days, the United Nations has repeatedly drawn attention to the topic of mediation in conflict. What type of mediation can we talk about when the Under-Secretary-General has obviously picked a side in this conflict? And the Under-Secretary-General did not manage to find any words to report about the strike by the Ukrainian armed forces using a Tochka-U missile that was filled with cluster munitions, which struck the heart of Donetsk, as a result of which 20 people died and 35 civilians were injured. Further, the representatives of Western countries, who for eight years have simply turned a blind eye to what is happening in Donbas — and the conditions in which people are living, namely, under constant shelling — did not manage to mention this either.

Unfortunately, the OSCE is party to this too. It has just smoothing over the truth about the actions of the Ukrainian armed forces and the nationalists in Donbas.

I would like to ask my American colleagues a question. The representative mentioned that 13,000 people have died in Donbas. Were they, too, killed by Russia? Does he not know who most of these unfortunate people are? Most of the people who have died were from the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.

My American colleague mentioned the death of journalist Brent Renaud in Irpin, allegedly at the hands of the Russian forces. We regret the deaths of any people who die in a conflict, but I would just like to make two clarifying points. First, he was not a journalist. That was something that *The New York Times* itself stated right away, and on the Internet there's information circulating that his main occupation was actually not journalism or filmmaking. That information is available on open access. Secondly, Irpin is fully controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces and Ukrainian Territorial Defence units, according to Renault's colleague who survived the incident, it was they who opened fire on their vehicle.

We were under no illusion. We knew that today's meeting would in no way be about cooperation between the United Nations and the OSCE. The demand for cooperation over recent years has sharply decreased due to attempts by a certain club of States to replace the United Nations Charter with a rules-based order. The OSCE has become a glaring example of this.

It has become particularly noticeable recently when the work of the organization, which even before this period paid disproportionate attention to countries to the east of Vienna, was de facto boiled down to just one subject. The discussions on this, as far as we can gather, are not so much unprofessional, but in fact, hysterical in tone. Indeed, an unacceptable tone is being used.

When Mr. Rau visited Moscow on 15 February, we had substantive talks with him. Back then, he talked about the importance of a proactive, positive approach and the quest for solutions and the rejection of mutual accusations. We supported such an approach. We expressed our conviction that the Chairmanship-in-Office should facilitate the formation of a unifying agenda and achieve compromises. For this, it is important to remain within the mandate of the Chairmanship-in-Office and to stick to the status neutral approaches, as they say, and to avoid non-consensus-based language, which, in other words, is called embracing the role of an honest broker.

However, today we can note that the Polish Chairmanship-in-Office of the OSCE has almost failed in its mission, even though we are only in the middle of March. On 5 March, following the talks with the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Rau said essentially that the Chairpersonship-in-Office of the OSCE would coordinate the actions against one participating State of the organization. This is an egregious violation by Poland of the mandate of the OSCE Chairpersonship-in-Office adopted at the 2002 Porto Ministerial Council and of OSCE Permanent Council Decision No. 485 on statements and public information.

The point of the work of the Chairperson-in-Office is precisely to solve disagreements between participating States and to bring positions closer. It is in no way to take biased steps that further inflame confrontation, and especially not to head up an anti-Russian campaign in the OSCE. Today, Mr. Rau, together with a number of colleagues, stated that the OSCE has allegedly proposed to Russia that they discuss its concerns on security, but that it refused. That is not true. We did not refuse the relevant dialogue, launched by the Polish Chairperson-in-Office. However, we underscored that for it to be successful, we would need to get responses from the United States and individual members of the OSCE as to how they perceive in practice the implementation of the principle of the indivisibility of security. We have just gotten some non-committal notes — and not from countries, but from the European Union and NATO, which we had not contacted on this matter. To claim that a useful dialogue has been launched is nonsense.

It is the fault of our Western colleagues that the OSCE has not yet been able to achieve the most important, pivotal goal — to develop a single understanding of the principle of security indivisibility, which is fundamental for the European security architecture. This principle requires avoiding any actions that would strengthen one party's security to the detriment of the security of any other country. All of this is enshrined in many OSCE documents, starting in 1994, when the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, was adopted. Then, in 1999, the Charter for European Security was adopted at the highest level in Istanbul. In December 2010, at the OSCE summit in Astana, this principle was unambiguously confirmed in an expanded form.

However, the western camp made a top priority out of the right of any country to choose which alliance it

wished to join, disregarding the fact that this cannot be done to the detriment of other people's security. That is something that our colleagues prefer to forget today.

Mr. Rau said today that Russia is requiring unilateral guarantees for itself. The detonator for the deep crisis in European security occurring as a result of the trends I have mentioned was the situation in Ukraine. I believe that, in this regard as well, the OSCE is directly to blame, as it had been turning a blind eye to what was happening throughout all those years not only in Donbas, but in Ukraine itself. The Polish chairmanship-in-office is part of it as well. Who prevented the chairmanship-in-office from trying, including through the Special Representative to the Trilateral Contact Group, to get the Ukrainian side to fully and consistently implement the Minsk package of measures?

This scheme of actions was crystal clear, first and foremost to ensure direct dialogue between Kyiv, Donetsk and Luhansk and also to ensure unbiased observance of the situation by the Special Monitoring Mission of the OSCE. Its leadership was required to engage in constructive cooperation with the authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk, as stipulated in the mandate of this Mission, which was approved by the Permanent Council of the OSCE.

In line with this mandate, the Mission should not have ignored the violations of human rights and breaches of the freedom of mass media throughout the entire Ukrainian territory. It should not have ignored the blatant facts that attested to the unfurling of aggressive nationalism, neo-Nazism and the numerous cases of discrimination against the Russian-speaking population. Furthermore, there were gross violations of human rights in Ukraine. Discriminatory laws about the State language, education and indigenous peoples were adopted, primarily targeting the Russian language and the millions of Russian speakers in the population.

Instead, we encountered blatant misbehaviour on the part of the OSCE, including its Polish chairpersonship, with the Ukrainian authorities. They categorically rejected a key provision of the Minsk agreements, namely, a direct dialogue with Donbas, preferring to speak to their fellow citizens living there in the language of guns and shelling.

By blatantly sabotaging its own commitments, Kyiv has done everything it can to destroy the Minsk agreements. Russia has consistently urged Ukraine to

respect the aspirations of the inhabitants of Donbas, including their legitimate desire to speak their native language, educate their children in it and honour the memory of those who liberated those lands from the Nazis, not those who fought on the side of Hitler's people and killed civilians during the Second World War. However, Kyiv did not want to listen to us.

At the same time, the West, led by the United States, instead of forcing Ukraine to fulfil its obligations, played along and ignored its sabotage of the Minsk agreements. Furthermore, NATO countries pumped Ukraine full of modern weapons and sent military instructors, thereby contributing to the militarization of the region in every possible way. Kyiv perceived the actions of its Western backers as a *carte blanche* to conduct military provocations in Donbas.

In late January and February, nearly the entire senior leadership of Ukraine openly stated their refusal to implement the Minsk agreements. The Permanent Representative of Ukraine confirmed that during our Security Council meeting on 17 February (see S/PV.8968). Following that, the situation along the entire line of contact deteriorated sharply. Numerous violations of the ceasefire were recorded, with shells destroying civilian homes, schools and other civilian infrastructure. Unfortunately, there were casualties.

The threat of a recurrence of the full-scale hostilities that took place in 2014 and 2015 has increased significantly. The population of the republics encountered a real threat of direct physical destruction by the Kyiv authorities. An influx of refugees poured into our country. As we later learned from documents recovered from Ukrainian soldiers during our military operation, they were given orders to initiate military actions against the People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk in early March. Copies of those documents are available on the Russian Ministry of Defence website. Our operation thwarted those plans.

A large-scale information war has now been unleashed against Russia. The Western media are shamelessly passing off objects destroyed by the Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist groups in the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics as consequences of our military operation in Ukraine, spreading false reports about alleged indiscriminate bombings of Ukrainian towns and cities.

Meanwhile, total censorship of the information space is being introduced without any attempt to justify

it whatsoever. In such conditions, it is very difficult for the residents of Western countries to receive objective information about the course of our military operation, as well as to distinguish blatant fakes, such as the alleged shelling by Russia of the Mariupol maternity hospital. We therefore view the replication of such untruths in the Security Council Chamber as a deliberate provocation by our Western colleagues.

Currently, the main threat to civilians in Ukraine is posed by the armed formations of Ukrainian nationalists, who have unleashed real terror on their fellow citizens. Mass violations of human rights and international humanitarian law are taking place. The nationalists are placing tanks, artillery and multiple launch rocket systems directly outside the walls of kindergartens and schools, setting up firing positions from the roofs of people's homes and using women and children to hide behind. Russian servicemen taken prisoner are being subjected to sadistic torture, recorded by Ukrainian bandits, while the Kyiv regime flaunts its brutality.

A large number of criminals have been released from prisons. The Kyiv regime took the criminal decision to hand out tens of thousands of firearms to unknown persons — at least 10,000 in Kyiv alone. Armed gangs of looters and robbers now rampage through the cities of Ukraine. Bandits are firing at ordinary citizens. We have also recorded the mass use of phosphorus-filled munitions and cluster munitions by the Kyiv regime, which, as we know, is prohibited under Protocol III of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons of 1980. Earlier, I mentioned the cluster munitions used by the armed forces of Ukraine today in Donetsk. For some reason, that is not attracting the attention of any my colleagues whatsoever.

Under those circumstances, one of the priorities of the OSCE chairpersonship-in-office is to assist civilians affected by the conflict. It therefore needs to swiftly provide political support for the safe evacuation of civilians from the areas impacted by hostilities, in whichever direction the Ukrainian people themselves wish to go. Russian forces are unilaterally opening corridors each day to evacuate people, yet only a few can use them. Kyiv is not ashamed to threaten its own citizens as they try to leave their towns and cities.

As recently as 11 March, we raised the issue of the United States biological laboratories in Ukraine at the Security Council (see S/PV.8991). I will not repeat myself on that issue, but I would like to warn

of the danger of biological materials with dangerous strains falling into the hands of Ukrainian radicals, who, as we have seen in recent days, are capable of the most inhumane provocations against civilians in Ukrainian cities.

We are also receiving reports of the possible sabotage of Ukrainian gas pipeline system facilities. In addition, according to information available to the Russian Ministry of Defence, Ukrainian armed formations are actively preparing for a provocation involving the use of chemical substances in order to accuse Russia of purportedly using chemical weapons.

On the night of 9 March, Ukrainian nationalists transported approximately 80 tons of ammonia to the village of Zolochiv, to the north-west of Kharkiv. On 10 March, the Ukrainian media started disseminating information about methods of protection in chemical attacks. There is no doubt in which direction those thoughts are developing, especially since our American colleagues, as we have heard repeatedly from the Permanent Representative of the United States in the Security Council, are already giving us a clue as to whom they intend to blame for that dangerous turn of events. If that provocation does take place — God forbid — do not say we did not warn of it.

I would like to conclude my remarks by urging the Chairperson-in-Office to prevent the destruction of the OSCE. It is important not to forget that there are a number of other subjects being discussed within its framework that require the close attention of the members of the organization. Here I would refer in particular to the peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, in which the OSCE Minsk Group plays a fundamental role.

In the current circumstances, the OSCE remains the only forum where a pan-European dialogue is possible. We must consider the historical consequences of any actions aimed at undermining the foundations of and any prospect of cooperation for the security of all countries on the European continent.

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

At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Zbigniew Rau, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland and Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

for 2022, as well as Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, for their comprehensive briefings.

The United Arab Emirates supports the role of regional organizations in finding solutions to conflicts, as those organizations have a comprehensive understanding of regional situations and positions. They are also capable of finding common ground to establish regional peace and security. Participating States in regional organizations are usually among the first to be affected by the security, economic and humanitarian dimensions of crises in the region. As such, reflecting their concerns contributes to reaching comprehensive and realistic solutions.

Resolution 1631 (2005) affirms the role of those organizations and enhances their cooperation with the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. We are pleased to see the United Nations strengthening its relations with various regional organizations, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The organization has a long history of working to resolve conflicts and ease tensions in Europe. We believe that its role is essential today, particularly given that Europe is currently facing one of its greatest challenges in the past two decades.

As we follow the current events engulfing Europe with great concern, we believe that we can benefit from the expertise and mediation efforts of the organization to find a solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The role of the organization is also important given the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in Ukraine. That situation has in turn impacted the wider region, especially as Ukrainians search for safety away from the conflict, resulting in an increasing number of refugees, who now exceed 2.5 million.

The organization's role in dealing with the repercussions of this conflict is important not only at the regional level, but also at the international level. The continuation and the worsening of the crisis threaten food security, especially as exports of wheat from Ukraine have stopped. Ukraine is one of the five largest exporters of wheat in the world and an important source of wheat for the World Food Programme. The situation will particularly affect developing countries that depend on wheat imports amid an increase in its global prices.

In addition to the crisis in Ukraine, participating States of the OSCE have several security and political

concerns, including frozen conflicts in Georgia and Moldova and tensions in the Balkan peninsula, as well as the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh. Resolving such tensions requires balanced diplomacy, based on a holistic vision that champions dialogue and seeks to address existing differences. We depend on the role and the experience of the OSCE in mediation, as well as the good offices of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, to find diplomatic solutions to the region's crises, based on the principles of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States and maintaining regional security and stability.

We also commend the priorities of the Chairperson-in-Office, including the emphasis on compliance with the fundamental principles of peaceful relations among States, which is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and other relevant international agreements.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates commends the important role played by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as an umbrella institution for various views and concerns across the region. My country therefore looks forward to the continued cooperation between the United Nations and the organization in the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Rau to respond to the comments expressed at this meeting.

Mr. Rau: I thank you, Mr. President, for this useful and timely debate and for allowing me to participate. I appreciate the interest from the members of the Security Council. I also recognize the presence of ambassadors and high-ranking representatives of countries from outside the Security Council, some of whom are sitting in the audience today and some of whom have submitted written statements for the record.

It is fair to say that the international community is currently at a critical juncture. Even before the current crisis, we saw the erosion of the practical implementation of the Helsinki principles and commitments. Today, we should pay special attention to how the fundamental principles of the United Nations and the OSCE are implemented and how to react when those principles are violated.

In carrying out my task as the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, I will be tirelessly calling on all participating States to abide by our joint commitments. I would like to reassure partners that I will not shy away from facilitating dialogue and seeking ways to advance the settlement of the ongoing regional and frozen conflicts. As I indicated before, that will be the exact focus of my upcoming trips to Moldova and the South Caucasus. Later during the year, I will visit the Western Balkans and Central Asia.

The ongoing non-compliance by an OSCE participating State may complicate that effort. However, I will do my best to attentively listen to all partners to promote our joint principles and commitments. We will continue to show unwavering support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. We are determined to keep the conflict around Abkhazia and South Ossetia high on the OSCE agenda, as well as seek possibilities to support the communities affected by the conflict.

I will make even greater efforts to increase the involvement of the OSCE, the Minsk Group and its co-Chairs in resolving the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We encourage Armenia and Azerbaijan to engage in dialogue aimed at contributing to security, stability and prosperity in the region.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that only by reverting to the principles of the United Nations and the OSCE will we be able to ease tensions and prevent military conflicts in the future.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Rau for his statements.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): We have no doubt as to who sits in the Soviet seat behind the Russian Federation nameplate. The General Assembly gave a clear answer to that question. It is the aggressor State. There is not a shred of doubt.

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for his briefing, and in particular for his clear qualification of the Russian actions against Ukraine as an unprovoked and unjustified aggression, which runs counter to the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act and all OSCE commitments and principles. I welcome

Minister Rau to our regular intervention meetings, where members of the United Nations family gather around the aggressor State, which is in denial and makes no effort to struggle with its addiction to killing innocent citizens.

Indeed, both the United Nations and the OSCE are now at a critical juncture, with all their fundamental principles being violated flagrantly, openly and deliberately — violated by Russia, which has pretended to be a key stakeholder in maintaining international peace and security. Instead, it has been a main provider of insecurity, encircling itself with a belt of conflicts.

On 24 February, Russia went even further, launching an aggressive war against Ukraine, one that serves as an illustration of what the United Nations founding members — and I note that Russia was not among them — tried to save succeeding generations from.

I therefore commend the Chairperson-in-Office for his strong commitment to pursue, as his main priority, the termination of the war on the basis of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

We fully support the human-oriented approach of Poland's OSCE chairmanship, with a special focus on the protection of the civilian population affected by conflict.

Russian troops continue to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine, making them no different from their Nazi predecessors 80 years ago, with cities and villages razed to the ground, mass graves, terror against civilians in the occupied territories and the abduction and killing of activists and journalists and local representatives.

I reiterate my call on the Security Council — and today address this call to the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office as well — to facilitate the release of Ivan Fedorov, Mayor of Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya region, who was detained by Russian soldiers on 11 March. Now he is reportedly being tortured because of his refusal to collaborate with the aggressor. Unfortunately, the Russian occupants are stepping up their repressive practices, as yesterday they abducted Yevhen Matveyev, Mayor of Dniprorudne, another town in the Zaporizhzhya region.

Russia is proceeding with its repressive practices, as it has completely failed to create an illusion of public support on the territories it temporarily occupies.

Residents of Kherson, Berdiansk, Melitopol, Energodar and other cities and towns under occupation have no fear of taking to the streets, unarmed and staring down the barrel of a Russian gun, to say the occupants: “Go away, we are Ukraine”.

Russian attempts in Kherson to employ its usual practice of proclaiming a fake “people’s republic” was immediately rejected by the Kherson regional council, which, at an emergency session on 12 March, adopted a statement that the Kherson region will always be Ukraine. The Mayor of Kherson expressed solidarity with that statement.

There is no place in Ukraine where Russian troops are welcomed. They know it full well and have stopped restraining themselves. Mariupol remains the most powerful example of that. The toll of civilian casualties, following Russian bombardments and shelling, has reached almost 2,200 innocent local residents. To visualize that, just think of at least 11 General Assembly Halls.

Early on Sunday morning, Russian rockets struck the Yavoriv International Peacekeeping and Security Centre, killing 35 and wounding 134. The Russian Ministry of Defence tried to whitewash that crime by claiming that it targeted foreign mercenaries. That is not true, as only Ukrainian citizens were affected.

Countering Russian aggression must be a centrepiece of OSCE efforts to restore security in the European continent. In our view, the OSCE has to contribute to the implementation of resolution ES/11-1, entitled “Aggression Against Ukraine”, adopted by the overwhelming majority on 2 March.

We welcome the invocation of the Moscow Mechanism, pursuant to which is important to register all war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Russian Federation in its war against Ukraine.

We also underline the need to explore all OSCE tools in order to document Russian crimes and ensure a public and timely reaction by the Chairperson-in-Office Representatives and the OSCE autonomous institutions.

We also expect the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights to be vocal on cases of flagrant human rights violations resulting from Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Russia is intensifying its propaganda and disinformation campaign. The OSCE Representative

on Freedom of the Media has to pay close attention to Russia’s false narratives. We appreciate her strong stance on violations against journalists, which remains an element of Russian aggression. We note her condemnation of the killing of Brent Renaud, a United States filmmaker and journalist, which took place on 13 March in Irpin. In the words of Representative Ribeiro:

“He is another casualty of the horrible ongoing Russian invasion in Ukraine and his death is a blow to media freedom.”

I also express our deep condolences to the relatives of Ms. Maryna Fenina of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), who was killed by the aggressor.

A strong and clear position by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on the dire conditions of national minorities in Ukraine resulting from the Russian invasion remains long overdue. He must also be proactive in rebutting Russia’s propaganda fakes.

We also look forward to extending the OSCE SMM mandate for another year. It would be a powerful message of OSCE engagement with Ukraine.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her very principled position and for being a very strong member of the Secretary-General’s team. I quote from the Secretary-General’s statement today, made less than an hour ago:

“Ukraine is on fire. The country is being decimated before the eyes of the world. The impact on civilians is reaching terrifying proportions. Countless innocent people, including women and children, have been killed. After being hit by Russian forces, roads, airports and schools lie in ruins. According to the World Health Organization, 24 health facilities have suffered attacks. Hundreds of thousands of people are without water or electricity. With each passing hour, two things are increasingly clear — first, it keeps getting worse; secondly, whatever the outcome, this war will have no winners, only losers.”

The Secretary-General also wisely said:

“Yet there is another dimension of this conflict that gets obscured. This war goes far beyond

Ukraine. It is also an assault on the world's most vulnerable people and countries. While war rains over Ukraine, a sword of Damocles hangs over the global economy — especially in the developing world. Even before the conflict, developing countries were struggling to recover from the pandemic, with record inflation, rising interest rates and looming debt burdens. Their ability to respond has been erased by exponential increases in the cost of financing. Now their breadbasket is being bombed.”

What is happening now is not only about Ukraine's survival. Unlike Putin and his henchmen, Ukraine will survive the Russian invasion. It is about the survival of both the United Nations and the OSCE and it is about the de-Putinization of Russia and its gradual return to the tenets of international law in the post-Putin era.

The Putin regime is nearing its end. At the same time, it has inflicted such heavy damage on Russian society that it will take decades to return Russia to at least the level of democracy that it had achieved in the

1990s. In fact, Moscow required 15 years to carve out a distance between the formal signing of the Helsinki Final Act and the conscious choice to be a part of building a new Europe, as envisaged in the 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

Ultimately, Moscow failed. Yet we deem that the OSCE should currently play a special role in getting ready to support post-Putin Russia on its future path back to the family of democratic nations towards new leadership, with new ambassadors and representatives. It will not be an easy task, but we will not be able to break the vicious cycle of violence without restoring Russia's respect for the fundamental principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act.

I therefore call on the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and autonomous institutions to start considering the modalities of work with post-Putin Russia, as there will be no automatic return to normalcy, either here in New York or within the OSCE.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.