



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**9011**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 5 April 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Dame Barbara Woodward . . . . .	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
	Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Costa Filho
	China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Gabon . . . . .	Ms. Koumby Missambo
	Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
	India . . . . .	Mr. Tirumurti
	Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico . . . . .	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway . . . . .	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
	United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

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

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

### Adoption of the agenda

**The President:** The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Before we adopt the agenda, I would like to protest the way in which the newly inaugurated British presidency dealt with our two requests to convene a Security Council meeting in connection with the horrific provocation of the Ukrainian radicals in the city of Bucha.

On Sunday, 3 April, we first requested that a meeting be held on Monday, 4 April, at 3 p.m. before requesting an emergency meeting at 12 p.m. on 4 April, after our first request was refused. You, Madam, considered it appropriate to blatantly violate the Council's rules of procedure and, for the second time, issue an authoritarian decision — without coordinating with anyone else — that it would be better to discuss this topic today. This outrageous situation is outlined in the letter addressed to you, Madam, that we circulated yesterday as an official Council document.

I would like to ask: On what grounds do you consider it acceptable to act in such an outrageous way, in contravention of all existing norms and rules? Do you not know that, in cases where you do not agree with our proposal, you should convene a meeting and put forward the issue of the advisability of holding that meeting to a vote? Our presidency, during which we did not refuse to convene a single one of the six meetings on Ukraine, should have served as an example in that regard.

We therefore demand an explanation and a guarantee that, in the future, you will not challenge the right of members of the Security Council to request meetings, as enshrined in rule 2 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure:

(*spoke in English*)

“The President shall call a meeting of the Security Council at the request of any member of the Security Council.”

**The President:** If I could respond to the points made by the representative of the Russian Federation, we did not reject his request for a meeting. We received

his letter on Sunday, and it is the responsibility and obligation of the presidency to schedule a meeting.

He specifically requested a meeting for a time on Monday. The presidency's proposal was to schedule the meeting either alongside the meeting today — well within the 48-hour limit that is the convention of the Security Council — or to hold the meetings sequentially, one after the other.

I understand that the Russian Federation turned down both proposals, but I wish to be clear that we did not reject the request for a meeting. The deferral proposed was less than 24 hours and, to be clear, we share the view that this is an urgent situation, and we have, as I say, offered the Russian Federation either a separate meeting today or to combine it with this one. So as far as the presidency is concerned, we did everything in line with the provisional rules of procedure and with precedent. We have received no other complaints from Council members on the subject.

I call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We have factual evidence that this was no less than 24 hours before the meeting that we requested. That is confirmed in documents; if anyone is interested, we could provide proof. But I want to express the hope that what you said today, Madam President, means that you will not in future refuse requests made by States members of the Security Council to hold meetings.

**The President:** The presidency will not refuse to host meetings in future. I hope that that now closes that point and we can proceed with the adoption of the agenda.

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

### Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

**The President:** I should like to start by taking this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Mrs. Lana Zaki Nusseibeh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, for her service as President of the Security Council for the month of March. I am sure that I speak for all of us in expressing our deep appreciation to Ambassador

Nusseibeh and her team for the skilful conduct of the Council's business last month.

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

On behalf of the Council, I welcome the participation of His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine. I would just add that, as per the usual precedent, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine will also join the meeting in case of any technical issues.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; and Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

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

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

I wish to warmly welcome His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, to whom I now give the floor.

**The Secretary-General:** The war in Ukraine is one of the greatest challenges ever to the international order and the global peace architecture, founded on the Charter of the United Nations, because of its nature, intensity and consequences. We are dealing with the full-fledged invasion, on several fronts, of one State Member of the United Nations, Ukraine, by another, the Russian Federation — a permanent member of the Security Council — in violation of the Charter and with several aims, including redrawing the internationally recognized borders between the two countries.

The war has led to a senseless loss of life, massive devastation in urban centres and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. I will never forget the horrifying images of civilians killed in Bucha, and I immediately called for an independent investigation to guarantee effective accountability. I am also deeply shocked by the personal testimony of rapes and sexual violence that is now emerging. The United Nations High Commissioner

for Human Rights has spoken of possible war crimes, grave breaches of international humanitarian law and serious violations of international human rights law.

The Russian offensive has also led to the displacement of more than 10 million people in just one month — the fastest forced population movement since the Second World War.

Far beyond Ukraine's borders, the war has led to massive increases in the prices of food, energy and fertilizers, because Russia and Ukraine are linchpins of those markets. It has disrupted supply chains and increased the cost of transportation, putting even more pressure on the developing world. Many developing countries were already on the verge of debt collapse owing to the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and a lack of adequate liquidity and debt relief, stemming ultimately from the unfair nature of our global economic and financial system.

For all those reasons, it is more urgent by the day to silence the guns. That is why I asked the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, to travel to Russia and Ukraine to press for an urgent humanitarian ceasefire. Under-Secretary-General Griffiths will update the Council on the humanitarian situation and the results of his contacts so far. Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo will also brief the Council on the political and human rights dimensions.

But as Secretary-General of the United Nations, it is my duty to call the attention of the Council to the serious damage being done to the global economy, particularly to vulnerable people and developing countries.

Our analysis indicates that 74 developing countries, with a total population of 1.2 billion people, are particularly vulnerable to spiking food, energy and fertilizer costs. Debt obligations take up some 16 per cent of developing countries' export earnings. In small island developing States, the figure is 34 per cent and rising because of increased interest rates and the need to pay for expensive imports.

In the past month alone, wheat prices have increased by 22 per cent, maize by 21 per cent and barley by 31 per cent. Brent oil prices on 1 April were more than 60 per cent higher than at the same time last year. A series of events led to that, not only the present situation. Natural gas and fertilizer prices more than doubled over the same period. We are already seeing some countries move from vulnerability into crisis and

signs of serious social unrest. The flames of conflict are fuelled by inequality, deprivation and underfunding. With all the warning signals flashing red, we have a duty to act.

The Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, which I set up last month, has formulated some initial recommendations for the consideration of Member States, international financial institutions and others. On food, we are urging all countries to keep markets open, resist unjustified and unnecessary export restrictions and make reserves available to countries at risk of hunger and famine. This is not the time for protectionism. Humanitarian appeals must be fully funded. People caught up in crisis around the world cannot pay the price for this war. On energy, the use of strategic stockpiles and additional reserves could help to ease this energy crisis in the short term. But the only medium- and long-term solution is to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, which is not impacted by market fluctuations. That will allow for the progressive phaseout of coal and all other fossil fuels, and renewables are already cheaper in most cases.

On finance, international financial institutions must go into emergency mode. We need urgent action by the Group of 20 and international financial institutions to increase liquidity and fiscal space so that Governments can provide safety nets for the poorest and most vulnerable. The reform I have been calling for of the global financial system is long overdue. All those actions are closely linked with the prevention agenda and with building and sustaining peace.

The war in Ukraine must stop now. We need serious negotiations for peace, based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Security Council is charged with maintaining peace and doing so in solidarity. I deeply regret the divisions that have prevented the Security Council from acting not only on Ukraine, but on other threats to peace and security around the world. I urge the Council to do everything in its power to end the war and to mitigate its impact, both on the suffering people of Ukraine and on vulnerable people and developing countries around the world.

**The President:** I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

**Ms. DiCarlo:** Since I last briefed the Security Council on 17 March (see S/PV.8998), the security situation in Ukraine has seriously deteriorated. The number of Ukrainian civilians killed has more than doubled. Ukrainian cities continue to be mercilessly pounded, often indiscriminately, by heavy artillery and aerial bombardments. Hundreds of thousands of people, including children, the elderly and the disabled, remain trapped in encircled areas under nightmarish conditions. The devastation wrought on Mariupol and other Ukrainian cities is one of the shameful hallmarks of this senseless war.

The horror deepened this past weekend, as shocking images emerged of dead civilians, some with hands bound, lying in the streets of Bucha, the town near Kyiv formerly held by Russian forces. Many bodies were also found in a mass grave in the same locality. Reports by non-governmental organizations and media also allege summary executions of civilians, rape and looting in the Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Kyiv regions.

Away from the fighting, diplomatic efforts to end the war, including direct talks between Ukrainian and Russian representatives, have continued. We commend the Government of Turkey for hosting those discussions, as well as the efforts of many others engaging with Russia and Ukraine to help bring about peace. We welcome the willingness of the sides to continue engaging to reach a mutual understanding. That requires good faith and earnest efforts, and progress in the negotiations should be translated quickly into action on the ground.

While there has been a reported reduction of Russian troops and attacks around Kyiv and Chernihiv, such moves should not be merely tactical, repositioning forces for renewed attacks on Ukrainian cities and towns elsewhere. The General Assembly has twice called for Russian forces to withdraw entirely from Ukrainian territory and cease all military operations.

We also take note of the reported withdrawal of Russian forces from around the Chernobyl nuclear site. The International Atomic Energy Agency reports that this development will hopefully allow it to conduct an assistance-and-support mission to provide technical advice and to deliver equipment, where necessary, as soon as possible. All nuclear sites in Ukraine must be fully protected and secured. Military operations in or around those locations must be avoided.

The numbers tell a tragic, if yet incomplete, story. According to the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), at least 1,480 civilians were killed and at least 2,195 injured between 24 February and 4 April. OHCHR believes that the actual figures are considerably higher.

We are gravely concerned by the persistent use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area in or near populated areas. Such weapons are causing most civilian casualties, as well as massive destruction of civilian infrastructure, including residential buildings, hospitals, schools, water stations and electricity systems. OHCHR has received credible allegations that Russian forces have used cluster munitions in populated areas at least 24 times. Allegations that Ukrainian forces have used such weapons are also being investigated.

As noted by the High Commissioner, indiscriminate attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes. The massive destruction of civilian objects and the high number of civilian casualties strongly indicate that the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution have not been sufficiently adhered to.

In besieged cities, a significant increase in mortality rates among civilians can also be attributed to the disruption of medical care and basic services. People with disabilities and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. As of 4 April, the World Health Organization had reported a total of 85 attacks on health-care facilities, resulting in at least 72 fatalities and 43 injuries.

We are seriously concerned about reports of cases of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances of persons who have been vocal against the Russian invasion. As of 30 March, OHCHR had documented the arbitrary detention and possible enforced disappearance of 22 journalists and civil society members in the Kyiv, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya regions. In regions under Russian control, 24 local officials have also been detained, 13 of whom have been subsequently released. We call for the immediate release of all individuals who have been arbitrarily detained, including journalists, local officials, civil society activists and others.

Also as of 30 March, OHCHR had recorded seven journalists and media workers killed since hostilities began. Another 15 have come under armed attack, nine of whom were injured.

Allegations of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by Russian forces have also emerged. Those

include gang rape and rapes in front of children. There are also claims of sexual violence by Ukrainian forces and civil defence militias. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine continues to seek to verify all those allegations.

We are also concerned about disturbing videos depicting the abuse of prisoners of war on both sides. All prisoners of war must be treated with dignity and full respect for their rights, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The many credible allegations of serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, from the areas recently retaken from Russian forces, must not go unanswered. We support efforts to examine those allegations and to gather evidence. Ensuring accountability and justice for acts committed during the war will not be easy, but it is essential.

We are heartened by the generosity of neighbouring countries that have accepted millions of refugees and by the solidarity of the Ukrainian people, who are hosting their displaced compatriots. With more than 10 million people displaced, either within Ukraine or abroad as refugees — roughly one-quarter of the population — the United Nations is gravely concerned about the heightened risk of human trafficking. Indeed, suspected and verified cases of human trafficking are surfacing in the surrounding countries, according to the International Organization for Migration.

This war is devastating Ukraine now, but it also threatens its future. Early assessment projections by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggest that, if the war continues through 2022, Ukraine faces the prospect of seeing 18 years of socioeconomic progress lost. That would set the country and the region back decades and leave deep, long-term social and economic fissures.

United Nations agencies, including UNDP, are working to help preserve Ukraine's hard-won development gains. That involves supporting the Government to sustain essential governance structures and basic services, including emergency measures to sustain livelihoods, such as cash-based assistance.

The war in Ukraine has damaged Europe's security architecture. Its economic repercussions are already evident far from the battlefield. The longer the war continues, the greater is the risk that it will

further weaken the global institutions and mechanisms dedicated to preserving peace and security.

The war was started by choice. There is no inevitability to it or to the suffering it is causing. The United Nations is ready to do everything within its means to help bring an end to it.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** As members just heard from the Secretary-General and from Under Secretary-General DiCarlo, Ukrainian civilians are paying far too high a price for this war. I want to speak briefly about humanitarian needs and what we are doing to meet them, before I then refer to my recent travels.

As we have heard, at least 1,430 people have been killed in the past six weeks, among them more than 121 children, and we know that that is likely a serious underestimate. Homes and civilian infrastructure — bridges, hospitals and schools — have been damaged and destroyed. The current statistics on displacement tell us that more than 11.3 million people have been forced to flee their homes, of whom more than 4.2 million are now refugees in the generous neighbouring countries that Rosemary DiCarlo just referred to. In total, more than a quarter of the population of Ukraine has fled in this extraordinary short time. Unfortunately, we can imagine that those numbers will continue to rise until we can find a pause and some peace.

The ground and air offensives and counteroffensives are making life nearly impossible for many civilians in Ukraine. Families, the elderly, women and children have been trapped by fighting already for too long. For more than five weeks, the people of Mariupol have been caught up in fighting, and it is well documented that Mariupol really is a centre of Hell. Other cities — like Chernihiv, Sumy and Kharkiv — remain cut off from essential goods and services.

Perilous conditions are hampering our efforts to access civilians, or their ability to access us. We restate here that civilians must be allowed to move to safer areas without the fear of attacks and at their own choice and selection. It is vital that all parties to the conflict respect their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and allow impartial humanitarian organizations safe, rapid and unimpeded access to all civilians in need wherever they are in Ukraine.

As the world watches humanitarian needs soar in Ukraine, the United Nations and its partner organizations are making every effort to dramatically increase our support to affected civilians. As we noted before in this Chamber (see S/PV.8988), the work of the 6,000 volunteers from the Ukraine Red Cross, together with local non-governmental organizations in eastern Ukraine, continue to work tirelessly at the front line of assistance to communities. The World Food Programme has reached more than 1.3 million people with cash and food assistance, and it plans to increase that number to 2.5 million people this month.

Health partners report that more than 180 tons of medical supplies were delivered in Ukraine, with another 470 tons on the way. That will address the health needs of around 6 million people in the months ahead. I am also pleased — that seems an odd word to say in the context of Ukraine — that, after much effort, in the past day another convoy was dispatched from our humanitarian hub in Dnipro to the far east.

Today food, winter clothing, non-food items, medicine and hygiene kits were offloaded to the Ukraine Red Cross and will reach the hands of those most in need. Following the notification to both parties — a formal process that we and the International Committee of the Red Cross are engaged in — four United Nations convoys in total have provided critical support to people in some of the cities encircled by war and affected by ongoing fighting. Several more are planned. Those are initial steps, but it gives us a basis to now expand, taking our efforts up to scale and expanding much more beyond one convoy a day.

I want to join the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General in what they have already said in expressing my concern about the growing number of reports we have received of human trafficking and sexual violence, exploitation and abuse in Ukraine and the region. As always, the horrific incidents that we are seeing overwhelmingly impact displaced women and children more than others. We are bolstering protection of gender-based violence services through agencies to provide specialized care for survivors and the wealth of civil society organizations in Ukraine. Those services are designed and carried out directly in collaboration with and through Ukrainian civil society, including, in particular, women-led organizations.

Today I am addressing the Security Council from Geneva, having just returned from Moscow overnight.

As all are aware, the Secretary-General, as he said earlier, charged me to bring both sides together on humanitarian grounds to explore both specific and sustained ways to reduce humanitarian suffering, including, inter alia but in particular, the pursuit of a humanitarian ceasefire.

Yesterday in Moscow, I had long and frank exchanges with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, and his Deputy, Sergey Vershinin, and then separately with Alexander Fomin, the Deputy Minister of Defence. In my meetings with those senior officials, I also discussed, in addition to the possibilities of humanitarian ceasefires, the issue of humanitarian convoys and safe passage, including the four that I have already referred to. I outlined possibilities for building further on that cooperation, sharing specific suggestions for mutually agreed upon military freezes to allow for evacuations of civilians and the safe passage of life-saving aid — in effect, for humanitarian pauses in different parts of Ukraine to save lives and bring back a modicum of safety for those living in those places.

My counterparts in Moscow received those suggestions and assured me of their intent to carefully study those ideas, which I left with them. We agreed to remain in close contact. I came away from the meetings believing that we have a very long road ahead of us. But it must be travelled, and we will travel it. Tomorrow I plan to travel to Ukraine for discussions with senior authorities from the Ukrainian Government in Kyiv on Thursday on the same issues and others that they will undoubtedly present to me, as well as to see first-hand with our Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine, Amin Awad, the humanitarian response.

Thanks to generous donor contributions, mainly from Governments represented in this Chamber, the humanitarian response since February has been scaled up, allowing us to meet the needs of 1.5 million people. We will need sustained financial support for needs in Ukraine. And, like the Secretary-General, I want to stress, as he has done insistently, that funding must not be diverted from other crises. Afghanistan is but one example.

As the Council heard from David Beasley last week (see S/PV.9008), conflict, climate shocks and the coronavirus disease, compounded by the soaring food and fuel costs indicated by the Secretary-General, could push another 47 million people globally into severe

food insecurity. The total number of people around the world who will not know where their next meal will come from could be driven to the astonishing number of 325 million people. That is, by a long distance, the highest in our recent history and well over double what it was three years ago.

In conclusion, like others, I remind the Council of what it already knows well, that is, that the world cannot afford this war, and neither can the people of Ukraine. And like others, I call on all Council members and Member States with influence to support all efforts, from wherever they come from, in the pursuit of peace and the alleviation of humanitarian suffering. For the sake of the people of Ukraine, for the sake of those around the world who cannot afford to bear the additional burden this war imposes on them and on all of us, we must, as the Secretary-General said, silence the guns.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

**President Zelenskyy** (*spoke in Ukrainian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I thank the President of the Security Council for this opportunity. I am sure that all the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations will hear me today.

Yesterday I returned from our city of Bucha, recently liberated from Russian troops, not far from Kyiv. There was not a single crime that they would not commit there. The Russian military searched for and purposefully killed anyone who served our country. They shot and killed women outside their homes when they were just trying to call to see if someone was alive. They killed entire families — adults and children — and they tried to burn the bodies.

I am addressing the Security Council on behalf of the people who honour the memory of the deceased every single day, the memory of the civilians who died, shot in the back of the head, killed after being tortured. Some of them were shot on the streets, others were thrown into wells. These people died there in suffering.

They were killed in their apartment houses, blown up by grenades. These civilians were crushed by tanks while sitting in their cars in the middle of the road, just for the Russians' pleasure. They cut off limbs, slit their throats. Women were raped and killed in front of their children. Their tongues were pulled out only because

the aggressors did not hear what they wanted to hear from them.

This is therefore no different from other terrorists such as Da'esh, who have occupied others' territories elsewhere. Yet, in this case, it is being done by a member of the Security Council, destroying internal unity, borders and sovereign States and violating the rights of dozens of countries that are defending their right to self-determination.

The aggressors are pursuing a consistent policy of destroying ethnic and religious diversity. They inflame wars and deliberately wage them in such a way as to kill as many regular civilians as possible and destroy as many cities as possible, to leave the country where they deploy their troops in ruins and filled with mass graves.

Council members have seen this. The aggressors support hatred at the State level and seek to export it to other countries through their system of propaganda and political corruption. They provoke a global food crisis that could lead to famine in Africa, Asia and other continents, which will surely end in large-scale political chaos in many countries, destroying their domestic security.

Where, then, is the security that the Security Council needs to guarantee? It is not there, despite the fact that there is a Security Council. Where, then, is peace? Where are those guarantees that the United Nations needs to uphold?

It is obvious that this key global institution, which must ensure that all aggressors be brought back to peace, simply cannot work effectively.

Now the world can see what the Russian military did in Bucha while it occupied that city. But the world has yet to see what the Russians have done in other occupied cities and regions of our country. Geography may vary from place to place, but cruelty is the same everywhere, crimes are the same and accountability must be inevitable.

I would like to remind Council members of Chapter I, Article 1, of the Charter of the United Nations. What is the purpose of our Organization? Its purpose is to maintain peace and make sure that peace is adhered to. And now the United Nations Charter is being violated, starting literally with Article 1. If that is the case, what is the point of all the other articles of the Charter?

Today, as a result of Russia's actions in our country, Ukraine, the most terrible war crimes we have seen since the end of the Second World War have taken place, and they are being committed by Russian troops who are deliberately destroying Ukrainian cities, turning them to ashes with artillery and air strikes. They are deliberately blocking cities, creating mass starvation, shooting columns of civilians on the road trying to escape from the zones where hostilities are conducted. They even deliberately blow-up shelters where civilians are hiding from air strikes.

They are deliberately creating conditions in the temporarily occupied territories so that as many civilians as possible are killed there. The massacre in our city of Bucha is unfortunately only one of many examples of what the occupiers have been doing on our land for the past 41 days, and there are many more cities and similar places about which the world will have yet to learn the full truth.

Mariupol, Kharkiv, Chernobyl, Okhtyrka, Borodyanka and dozens of other Ukrainian communities are similar to Bucha. I know perfectly well — and so do Council members — what the representatives of Russia will say in response to the accusations for these crimes — what they have said many times before, the most significant of which were what they said when their forces shot down the Malaysian Boeing aircraft over Donbas with their own weapons, or what they have said during the war in Syria. They will blame everyone just to justify their own actions. They will say that there are different versions of what happened, so it is impossible to establish which one of those versions is true. They will even allege that the bodies of those killed were thrown away and that all videos are staged.

But it is 2022 today. We have conclusive evidence. There are satellite images. And we can conduct full and transparent investigations. That is what we are interested in today: maximum access for journalists, maximum cooperation with international institutions, the involvement of the International Criminal Court, complete truth and full accountability.

I am convinced that every State Member of the United Nations should be interested in this. Why? In order to punish once for and for all those who consider themselves privileged and who believe that they can get away with anything. We must show all the other potential war criminals in the world how they will be

punished. If the biggest one is punished, then all of them will be punished.

Why has Russia come to Ukraine? I will tell you, Madam President. It is because the Russian leadership feels like the colonizers of ancient times. They need our wealth, our people. The Russians have already deported hundreds of thousands of our citizens to their country. They have abducted more than 2,000 children, and they continue to do so.

Russia wants to turn Ukrainians into silent slaves. The Russian military is openly looting the cities and villages that they have captured. This is widescale looting. They are stealing everything, starting with food and ending with gold earrings that are pulled out and covered with blood. We are dealing with a State that is turning the veto in the Security Council into a licence to kill, which undermines the whole global security architecture. It allows them to go unpunished, so they are destroying everything that they can.

If this continues, countries will have to rely on the power of their own arms alone to ensure their security, and not on international law, not on international institutions. The United Nations can simply be closed.

Are you ready to close the United Nations? Do you think that the time of international is over? If your answer is no, then you need to act immediately.

The United Nations Charter must be restored immediately. The United Nations system must be reformed immediately, so that the veto is not a licence to kill. There must be fair representation in the Security Council of all regions of the world. The aggressor must be brought to peace immediately. Determination is needed. The chain of massacres in Syria and Somalia to Afghanistan, Yemen and Libya should have been stopped long ago, frankly. If tyranny had at least once received such a response to the war that it waged, it would have ceased to exist. If genuine peace had then been guaranteed, the world would clearly have changed. There would perhaps then not be a war in my country against our people — Ukrainian people and our citizens. However, the world watched and did not want to see the occupation of Crimea, the war against Georgia or the seizure of the entire Transnistria from Moldova and how Russia was preparing the basis for other conflicts and wars near its borders.

How do we put an end to it? The Russian military and those who gave them orders must immediately

be brought to justice for the war crimes committed in Ukrainian territory. Anyone who gave criminal orders and carried them out by killing our people will be brought before a tribunal, which should be similar to the Nuremberg trials. I would like to remind Russian diplomats that Von Ribbentrop did not escape punishment for crimes in the Second World War. I would like to remind the architects of Russia's criminal policy that Adolf Eichmann did not go unpunished. None of the perpetrators will escape punishment — not one.

However, the main thing today is that it is time to transform this system, the linchpin of which is the United Nations. To that end, we propose convening a global conference. We request that this be done in peaceful Kyiv in order to determine how we are going to reform the global security system, how we can establish a guarantee for the recognition of borders and the integrity of States and how we will fulfil the rule of international law.

It is now absolutely clear that the objectives set in San Francisco in 1945, when the international organization for global security was established, have not been achieved, and it is impossible to achieve them without reforms. We must therefore do everything in our power to pass on to the next generation an effective United Nations that is able to respond preventively to security challenges and thereby guarantee peace, prevent aggression and force aggressors to peace, and have the determination and ability to punish if the principles of peace are violated. There can be no more exceptions or privileges. Everyone — all participants in international relations — must be equal regardless of economic strength, geographical area and individual ambitions. The power of peace, justice and security to which humankind has always aspired must prevail.

Ukraine is ready to provide a seat for one of the main offices of the newly updated security system. Just as the Geneva office deals with human rights and the Nairobi office that deals with environmental protection, in Kyiv we can have a United Nations office that specializes in preventive measures to maintain peace. I would like to recall our peaceful mission in Afghanistan, where we Ukrainians evacuated more than 1,000 people from that country at our own expense. It was the most intense time, but people needed assistance and, like other States, Ukraine came to their help. We took in people of different nationalities and faiths: Afghans, citizens of European countries, of the United States and of Canada

alike. We did not distinguish as to who needed help, whether it was one of our own or someone else. We saved everyone.

If every time that there was a need everyone in the world could be confident that help would come, the world would definitely be safer. Ukraine therefore has the moral right to propose a reform of the global security system. We have proved that we help others, not only in good times but in dark times too. We now need resolutions from the Security Council for peace in Ukraine. If it does not know how to take such decisions, it can do two things. Either it can either remove Russia as an aggressor and an instigator of war so that it cannot block resolutions about its own aggression and its own war and then do all that it can to establish peace. The other option is for the Council to show how we can bring about reform or change and genuinely work for peace. If there is no alternative to the current working configuration and there is no other way, the next option would be to dissolve itself all together. I am convinced that the Council can avoid the third option. Ukraine needs peace. We need peace. Europe needs peace. The world needs peace.

Finally, I would kindly urge that participants watch this short video. I ask that I be given one more minute of the Council's time. The video is a testament to what has replaced the Council's power because one single actor can abuse its rights. That is the result of going unpunished. If possible, please watch this video, since it is not possible for everyone to come to our country and see it with their own eyes. I would therefore ask that they watch this brief fragment.

**The President:** We will turn to the video once we have sorted out the technical issues.

I thank His Excellency Mr. Zelenskyy for his compelling and powerful remarks. Speaking in my national capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom, may I express appreciation to the President for his leadership in war time and for the extraordinary fortitude and bravery of the Ukrainian people under this unprovoked and illegal invasion.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): Let me also start by thanking the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Nusseibeh for her

successful presidency during the month of March. As you, Madam President, begin your Security Council presidency, I want to thank the United Kingdom for its leadership and for organizing this vital discussion on Ukraine today. I also want to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks, as well as the other briefers. I would like to extend a warm welcome to President Zelenskyy. I was so moved by the address that he made recently to the United States Congress, and we are truly honoured by his presence here under the circumstances that he and Ukraine face today.

Last night, I returned from a trip to Moldova and Romania. I saw with my own eyes the refugee crisis caused by Russia's unconscionable war. I spoke to refugees who indicated to me their desire to return to their homes. We have all seen the images on television of bombed-out buildings. However, what we have not seen is that behind those destroyed buildings are lives and families that have been destroyed. I met with women and children who had fled Ukraine. They had stuffed their lives into backpacks and left the only home they had ever known. Those were sobering conversations.

One young woman with whom I spoke came with her 6-year-old brother, who had autism and is struggling with cancer. Their single mother helped them escape to save their lives, but Russia's war has interrupted the care that her brother desperately needs. Another woman with whom I spoke fled with her 8-year-old from Odesa. The father, whom they had left behind, told them there was shelling right next to their apartment that very night. They very well could have died had they not left.

A third woman I met told me that she used to love to travel but never expected her next trip would be to flee for her life. When I asked her where she was from, she started to respond and then stopped, with tears in her eyes. Then she said, "I'm sorry. I do not know how to say it — whether I live in Kyiv or whether I used to live in Kyiv". She was realizing in the moment just how dramatically her life had changed because of this senseless war.

Those are three stories of those of more than 10 million people — 6 million internally displaced and 4 million who have left Ukraine altogether. Those 4 million people have relied on the big-heartedness of countries such as Moldova, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and others across the region and the world, to welcome and support them and all those leaving Ukraine in search of safety.

Ukraine's neighbours are bearing the brunt of Europe's most significant refugee crisis since the Second World War. I would like those countries to know that they have a committed partner in the United States. That is why the United States announced recently that we are prepared to provide more than \$1 billion in new funding towards humanitarian assistance for those affected by Russia's war in Ukraine and its severe impact around the world. It is also why we are welcoming to the United States up to 100,000 Ukrainians and others fleeing Russia's aggression. We will continue to assist humanitarian efforts to help the people of Ukraine and all those fleeing Putin's violence.

Nonetheless, as heart-wrenching as the stories I heard in Moldova and Romania, there are some stories we will never hear — those of the people we saw in the images out of Bucha. We have all seen the gruesome photos of lifeless bodies lying in the streets, apparently summarily executed, their hands tied behind their backs. As we work to independently confirm the events depicted in those images. I would remind the Council that, based on currently available information, the United States has assessed that members of Russia's forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine. Even before seeing the images from Bucha, President Zelenskyy, along with others in the region, reported that children were being abducted, and we heard him say that again today. Also being abducted are mayors, doctors, religious leaders, journalists and all who dare defy Russia's aggression. Some of them, according to credible reports, including by the Mariupol city council, have been taken to so-called filtration camps, where Russian forces are reportedly making tens of thousands of Ukrainian citizens relocate to Russia. Reports indicate that Russian federal security agents are confiscating passports and identification cards, taking away cell phones and separating families from one another. I do not need to spell out what the so-called filtration camps are reminiscent of. It is chilling, and we cannot look away.

Every day we see more and more how little Russia respects human rights. And that is why I announced yesterday that the United States, in coordination with Ukraine and many other States Members of the United Nations, will seek Russia's suspension from the Human Rights Council. Given the growing mountain of evidence, Russia should not have a position of authority in a body whose very purpose is to promote respect for

human rights. Not only is this the height of hypocrisy, but it is also dangerous.

Russia is using its membership on the Human Rights Council as a platform for propaganda to suggest that Russia has a legitimate concern for human rights. In fact, we will hear some of that propaganda here today. I know it. I will not dignify those lies with a response, only to say that every lie we hear from the Russian representative is more evidence that Russia does not belong on the Human Rights Council.

One hundred and forty Member States voted to condemn Russia over its unprovoked war and the humanitarian crisis it has unleashed upon the people of Ukraine. Here is my message to all those in the Chamber: now is the time to match those words with action and show the world that we can work responsibly. I share President Zelenskyy's view that this moment requires responsible world Powers and global leaders to show some backbone and stand up to Russia's dangerous and unprovoked threat against Ukraine and the world.

The Secretary-General said that confronting this threat is the Security Council's charge. It is — and it is also the responsibility of United Nations leaders and leaders around the world — every single Member State with a voice in the General Assembly. No one can be a shield for Russia's aggression. Suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council is something we collectively have the power to do in the General Assembly. Our votes can make a real difference. Russia's participation on the Human Rights Council hurts the Council's credibility. It undermines the entire United Nation. And it is just plain wrong.

Let us come together to do what is right and do right by the Ukrainian people. Let us take this step to help them start to rebuild their lives. Let us match the courage of President Zelenskyy, who we are so honoured to have with us today. I would like President Zelenskyy to know that we stand with the people of Ukraine as they face down this brutal attack on their sovereignty, democracy and freedom.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): Let me thank Ambassador Nusseibeh for having steered our work during the month of March and to wish the United Kingdom and you, Madam President, full success in our common work during this month.

Albania welcomes President Zelenskyy to today's meeting. His remarks are painful, and his account on

what Ukraine is experiencing under Russian occupation is revolting. We stand by him and his compatriots — all Ukrainians — for their heroic resistance and for the resilience the entire world is admiring. They are not alone. They have the world on their side because it is the side of right, justice and, we hope, victory.

Let me thank Secretary-General Guterres for his very clear and powerful remarks. I also thank Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo and Griffiths for their updates.

This is the fourteenth meeting of the Security Council on Ukraine since 31 January, while the war of aggression has entered its second month.

Let us establish a few basic, yet meaningful facts. Russia has stalled, and its imperial dreams are nowhere. Taking Ukraine finally proved impossible. Kyiv was too hard to swallow. The Russian army is in disarray, but it has not stopped shelling and bombardments. But all of that is not new, and all of that is not news.

The real news that has horrified the world is what Russia is leaving behind — the unspeakable horrors, those soul-crushing images in areas from which Russia is withdrawing; images of civilians executed with a bullet to the neck, sometimes with their hands tied behind their backs or shot dead on their bicycles; images of mass graves overflowing with corpses; images of carnage and devastation, including looted homes; rape and sexual violence — acts usually attributed only to thugs. They spring from the same cruel impulses as the bombardment of cities, homes, hospitals, schools and kindergartens by Russian forces. Bucha is an open-air graveyard, the notorious facelift of the Russian aggression.

We have heard time and again: It is not Russia. Yes, but no. It will be hard, actually impossible, to convince anyone that the destroyed tanks that clutter the roads, the mines and booby traps left behind amid the wreckage and the bodies of civilians killed by arbitrary executions and lying in the streets amid debris are staged scenes for propaganda.

Who could believe that Russia aggressed Ukraine simply to protect civilians, while Ukraine is busy staging horror movies? Russia may muzzle media back home, but it cannot fool satellite images and it cannot blind independent reporters and human rights non-governmental organizations on the ground.

Waiting for Russia to accept and tell the truth is like waiting for Godot. And he never arrives.

These are facts — hard and sickening proof of the atrocities committed, the ugly face of this madness. Such crimes, as documented by Human Rights Watch and verified by independent and respected professional reporters, those who are banned for the Russians, call for answers, thorough investigations, effective accountability and justice.

Prime Minister Rama called these crimes a terrible pain and a horrible shame. Russia has an international obligation to abide by international humanitarian law, the laws of war, including the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its First Additional Protocol. Russia has an obligation to abide by the order of the International Court of Justice to immediately halt its military activity in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, Russia has made another choice — to not respect any of it and to remove the need to abide by international law. But the law will pursue Russia. The Russian army and its commanders cannot escape accountability. The name of the butcher of Mariupol, a criminal that has reduced an entire city to ashes and has made its citizens go from three meals a day to barely three meals a week, is engraved in the ruins of the city.

That is why we will support the call to suspend Russia's participation in the Human Rights Council. General Assembly resolution 60/251, which created the Council, stipulates that "members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights". As we see, Russia's standards are nauseating, and its presence there is a farce and a desecration of the place that is called on to be the sanctuary of rights.

Russia has announced that it will now shift its focus to eastern Ukraine. That means that it will concentrate its brutality there, in what may end up becoming a war of attrition.

Russia has blocked the renewal of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, thereby denying the international community the independent eyes it needs there. Sadly, that signals more war, further atrocities, other crimes and even more humanitarian disasters.

This war continues to affect women and children, in particular. Millions have been displaced, many of them alone, in search of safety and security. It is heart-

breaking to see mothers write names and addresses on the backs of their children so that they can be recognized in case they end up becoming orphans. We welcome the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and its partners to deliver assistance, in support of the people in Ukraine and the millions of refugees in neighbouring countries.

Let me end on this note. Rarely has the outcome of a war been so disastrously the complete opposite of what the aggressor wanted to achieve. Russia's army has been defeated by the outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian resistance; Russia is isolated like never in its history; it has become the world's most sanctioned country in history. No country has ever seen itself transform, in a matter of only 10 days, from a global player into a financial and international pariah to the point that it is obliged to find comfort in support from North Korea and Syria.

This aggression and its startling defeat have once and for all separated the fates of Ukrainians and Russians because the case of Ukraine is also the cause of democracy against tyranny and kleptocracy. It is a fight between the will of the people against the vicious will of one, whose reckless actions have challenged everything we stand for and who is directly responsible for the economic disruption and food insecurity that is affecting the entire world. He can choose to stop, withdraw troops and quit Ukraine or continue to descend in the very abyss he has created and face the consequences.

**The President:** I understand that we have solved the technical problems, so I suggest that we return to the video.

*An audiovisual recording was played in the Council Chamber.*

**The President:** I would like to thank the delegation of Ukraine for sharing that video with us. The images are harrowing. Speaking in my national capacity, we are appalled by what we have seen and reiterate our solidarity with Ukraine.

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

**Ms. Koumby Missambo** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates for her remarkable presidency. I would like to thank the Secretary-General António Guterres, Under-

Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Mr. Martin Griffiths for their briefings. I welcome the participation of President Zelenskyy in today's meeting.

We continue to watch helplessly as the war in Ukraine unfolds, as the death toll and the number of displaced persons continue to rise and as the statistics of civilian casualties and infrastructure continue to grow. One day of war is certainly one too many.

As the conflict enters its sixth week, the number of displaced people has now exceeded 10 million, including nearly 4 million refugees in neighbouring countries. This is an appalling humanitarian disaster, the repercussions of which will undoubtedly be exacerbated by the risks of food insecurity due to the unpredictability of the harvests — again, with transregional effects. In that regard, I would like to welcome the establishment by the Secretary-General of the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to reduce the impacts of the war.

The allegations of violence, including sexual violence, against women are a matter of grave concern. My country is also very concerned about attacks on humanitarian infrastructure and personnel. Humanitarian workers who are active in combat areas must never be the target of armed attacks. They are often the only connection that victims of war have with what remains of humanity when its very foundations have been overturned. Therefore, they must be able to deliver humanitarian aid everywhere it is needed, unhindered and in conditions of security guaranteed by all parties. Secure evacuation convoys must be arranged to allow for the smooth evacuation of people who wish to leave the combat zones. This is a matter of vital aid for the approximately 18 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine.

The situation in Mariupol, to name but one city, is becoming untenable. The exponential deterioration of living conditions and even survival in some localities is of great concern, especially when civilian infrastructure and the provision of essential public services are impacted. We are concerned about the risk of disease resulting from water shortages in some parts of the country, as well as the health risks resulting from the lack of access to basic or specialized health care. Women, children, the elderly and all those not participating in the hostilities must be able to be helped in all respects, without fearing for their lives.

War is a horror and a rupture in every respect with that which binds us together as human beings. International humanitarian law exists as a means to try to reduce the effects of and mend, through legal means, such a rupture of the human contract, as well as to deny the expression of force free rein. All parties must therefore respect it.

Regarding the persistent reports of massacres, summary executions, atrocities and other mass crimes against civilians in Bucha, it is urgent that a free and independent investigation, under United Nations auspices, be commissioned as soon as possible to shed light on the victims and the circumstances of those abuses. In the meantime, it is essential that the Council does not lose sight of its role to guarantee peace and security by offering an alternative to war. Peace will not be restored in Ukraine by exchanging insults.

The war has gone on long enough and its effects are already being felt beyond Ukraine's borders. In our view, it is essential that a ceasefire be established and that conditions be created for the safe and unhindered deployment of the necessary humanitarian aid to the populations in distress. I reiterate my country's appreciation for Ukraine's neighbouring countries, which continue to mobilize for the emergency reception of refugees. We encourage them to grant the same welcome to all people in distress without distinction of origin or race, including African nationals and students. We demand respect for their dignity and call for the fair treatment of all persons in distress.

It is urgent that the parties engage resolutely in negotiations with a view to ending the hostilities. We therefore call for de-escalation and an end to the fighting. There is no other possible outcome. My country is paying close attention to the negotiations currently taking place between the parties, particularly in Istanbul, and hopes that they will lead to a ceasefire in the short term in order to create a climate of trust and establish the calm necessary for diplomacy to prevail and for the weapons to be silenced.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the delegation of the United Arab Emirates for its presidency during the month of March.

We thank the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General

Griffiths for their briefings. We also listened carefully to the President of Ukraine, Mr. Volodymyr Zelensky.

We thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his visit to Moscow, during which, as far as we can judge, he had some useful meetings and discussions. He should know better than anyone else the efforts that Russia is undertaking every single day to organize humanitarian corridors. However, even in the context of the arrangements reached with the help of international mediators, it is the Ukrainian side that is consistently failing to fulfil its obligations.

I will not bore the Council with statistics, but detailed reports are published daily by our Ministry of Defence. I will simply note that, from Mariupol alone towards the east, without any participation by the Ukrainian side, we have already managed to save over 123,686 people. Overall, more than 620,000 people — more than 122,000 of whom are children — have already been evacuated to Russia since the beginning of the special military operation. There has been no coercion or abduction, as our Western partners like to imply. The many videos available on social media testify to the voluntary decision of those people.

Another topic raised for discussion at today's meeting has barely been discussed, so I will refrain from delivering my remarks on that. Instead, I would like to take advantage of the virtual participation of the President of Ukraine in this meeting to address him directly.

We place on his conscience the groundless accusations against the Russian military, which have not been confirmed by any eyewitnesses. We spoke about that in detail yesterday at our press conference.

We all remember very well when, in 2019, Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelenskyy was elected the President of Ukraine. There were many hopes tied to his election, because he went to the polls with the promise of peace and an end to the war in Donbas. The Russian-speaking population believed in him because he undertook to protect their rights. It seemed that we were on the verge of turning the page on the historical injustice resulting from the Maidan coup in 2014, when Ukraine began to transform into a hateful "anti-Russia".

However, those hopes were not destined to become a reality. He now scornfully refers to the inhabitants of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics as a sub-species, echoing his predecessor, who threatened

to let the people of Donetsk and Luhansk rot in their basements and urged them to leave for Russia. Now he has declared war against his native Russian language by introducing, in essence, a linguistic inquisition in a country where Russian is the native language of a minimum of 40 per cent of the population. Today, bombs and artillery rounds are exploding throughout the territory of Ukraine, not only in the east, where they have not ceased for the past eight years. They are exploding precisely because, unfortunately, there is no other way left to bring peace to Donbas, after he and his subordinates categorically refused to implement the Minsk agreements while preparing, already back in March, to solve the problem of Donbas by military means. During our special operation, we found many secret orders testifying to that.

We are told that there can be no Nazis in Ukraine. However, we know perfectly well that they are there and that, unfortunately, they are running the show. How could it be otherwise when the national heroes of Ukraine are the Nazi collaborators Bandera and Shukhevych, who are responsible not only for the Holocaust but also for the murders of hundreds of thousands of Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish civilians? He simply chose not to notice the Ukrainian neo-Nazis, pretending that they do not exist.

But, unfortunately, they are there, and even more regrettably, there are many of them and they include numerous young people. How do we know that? They are not concealing it. They have Nazi tattoos, they decorate their clothing with swastikas and other Nazi symbols, they give one another Nazi salutes and are open about it on social media.

There are many of them in national battalions such as Aidar, the Right Sector and the Azov Battalion. That would not have been such an issue had they not acted like Nazis and killed as they did. They are not just killing captured Russian soldiers, whom they torture and gloat about it on social media, but also their fellow countrymen. His neo-Nazis and radicals have shown unrivalled cruelty towards the civilian population, which they use as human shields, and position heavy artillery and multiple rocket launchers next to residential buildings.

Today we have heard once again a tremendous number of lies about Russian soldiers and the Russian military. We have hundreds, if not thousands, of video testimonials by people who are ready to testify to the

cruelty of Ukrainian nationals. I will read just a few of them here. They are cruel, but they need to be heard.

Natalia Kudinova said that the mayor of the town was one of the first to escape, and then the Ukrainian authorities lied and said that Russia was not allowing people through the humanitarian corridors. The Azov national battalion, under threat of death, kept women with children in basements and robbed civilians at checkpoints.

A grandmother with her grandchildren said that the Azov Battalion did not allow her to leave her basement. Anyone trying to leave was shot.

At the Azov checkpoint, girls and women were stripped naked and had their jewellery and money taken away.

Valentina Nikolaevna Borisenkova said that the Ukrainian military expelled a woman with two children from a private home on Kramatorskaya Street and used it as a firing position to lob mortar rounds. She left her home with tears in her eyes, along with two children. They were kicked out by soldiers with blue armbands, which are insignias of the Ukrainian army.

Marina Vasilievna testified that she was tortured in a basement by Ukrainian security services.

“They tied me to a sewer pipe. When they found out that I was Russian, they beat me, tortured me with electric current, raped me and threatened to rape and torture my young daughter.”

Shapovalova Olga Georgievna said,

“We left Mariupol from Mangush already on 25 March. The firing positions of the Ukrainian army were positioned between residential homes and the school courtyard. They used civilians as cover. Near the drama theatre, a Ukrainian tank drove around firing indiscriminately, including targeting residential buildings. Tanks were stationed near schools No. 68, No. 69 and N. 5. I saw it with my own eyes.”

Suportkina Olga Sergeevna said,

“At school No. 15 in Mariupol, on 25 February the Ukrainian armed forces took up positions there and left on 7 March. They directed fire from there. Our building was badly damaged by the shelling.”

On 8 and 9 March there was intense shelling targeting homes. The Ukrainian military was asked

why it was doing that. They replied that until the entire Russian spirit was destroyed, they would remain there.

“They started looting right away and plundered all the shops. It was the forces of the Donetsk People’s Republic that helped us to get to Mangush.”

There are many other heart-rending stories — about Russians and Ukrainians tortured to death with swastikas burned into their chests; about people killed by looters and criminals to whom weapons were distributed; and about killed civilians and foreigners whose deaths the Ukrainian leadership tries to blame on Russian military, contrary to all facts and common sense.

I said it already and I say it again now: it is absolutely unacceptable and vile to even consider that the Russian military would be capable of this, of doing what they are accused of.

Now we are seeing blatant, criminally staged events with Ukrainians killed by their own radicals, in the best tradition of Goebbels, so as to accuse the Russian army. They were killed in areas from which Russian troops withdrew after encouraging peace negotiations in Istanbul.

Now it turns out that the Russian forces should not have left. I am talking primarily about Bucha.

I understand that members saw corpses and heard testimonials. But they saw only what was shown to them. They cannot ignore the blatant inconsistencies in the version of events that is being promoted by the Ukrainian and Western media, the fact that there were no corpses in the city immediately after the departure of Russian troops, as confirmed by several videos, and the fact that there are recordings in which Ukrainian radicals called for shooting those with white armbands, that is, civilians.

If one watches the video shown today very closely, one can see that the people lying on the ground wore white armbands. They are civilians. Also, the bodies shown in the video in no way appear to have been lying on the street for three or four days; or, based on the sensational and completely scientifically absurd information provided by *The New York Times*, to have been there since 20 March. The only ones who could fall for this fake are absolute dilettantes or our Western partners that do not want to hear anything and have called black white, and vice versa, for a long time now.

Those countries do not care in the slightest about Ukraine itself. For them, it is simply a pawn in the geopolitical game against Russia, which they will sacrifice easily. But in the meantime, they will try to prolong the conflict by delivering as many weapons and as much ammunition as possible.

But the most important thing is — and I want to reiterate it — how have we sunk to depths of cruelty such that nationalists are displaying, for example, those of the Azov Battalion? In President Zelenskyy’s interview with the American media, he coyly and bashfully stated that they are what they are. I really hope that he will reflect on this and that he will find a solution to the situation, because it depends only on him.

We went to Ukraine not to conquer Ukrainian territory but to bring long-awaited peace to the blood-soaked land of Donbas, not a truce but a true, lasting peace. For that we need to root out the cruelty that I mentioned. We need to cut out the malignant Nazi tumour that is consuming Ukraine and would have eventually begun to consume Russia. We will achieve that goal, I hope sooner rather than later, because there is no other outcome. We avoid shooting at civilian targets in order to save as many civilian lives as possible, and that is why we are not advancing as fast as many expected. We are not acting like the Americans and their allies in Iraq and Syria, razing entire cities to the ground. They had no pity for them, but we feel great pity because those are people who are close to us.

Radicals, however, have nothing to lose. They could not care less about civilians. They are ready to take to the grave with them the entire population of Ukraine, as was clearly demonstrated by the provocation in Bucha.

Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelenskyy must not allow the West to achieve its goals. He must make the right decisions for his country, because the West is ready to fight in Ukraine to the last Ukrainian. He must make that decision now. After all, he is well aware of the real situation at the front. Later might be too late.

**Ms. Byrne Nason** (Ireland): I too would like to thank the Secretary-General and our other briefings this morning. I want to express a very warm welcome to President Zelenskyy, who is with us this morning. President Zelenskyy’s leadership and courage, and that of the Ukrainian people, are an example to us all.

On 24 February, as Russia launched a large-scale invasion of its neighbour, Ukraine, the Secretary-

General told the world that Russia's action was wrong, that it was against the Charter of the United Nations and that it was unacceptable. We agreed with him. However, he also told us that this invasion was reversible and called on President Putin to end this war to save innocent lives. We echoed those calls.

Sadly, 40 days later, our call has been left unanswered. Instead, over the past 40 days, we have witnessed unprecedented levels of destruction and human suffering. We are watching cities get pounded by Russian artillery. We are seeing millions forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge from Russian aggression. Just minutes ago in this Chamber, we saw the utterly shocking images of civilians lying dead in the streets of Bucha and elsewhere in Ukraine. Some, we know, have been piled into improvised mass graves. It is simply harrowing. So many innocent lives have been lost on our watch as our pleas for peace go unheeded.

The attempts at this meeting today to deny Russian culpability are frankly appalling in their cynicism, and I see them as an insult to the memory of those slaughtered civilians.

We roundly condemn the atrocities reportedly committed by the Russian armed forces in a number of occupied Ukrainian towns. The images from Bucha and other towns in the Kyiv region liberated by Ukrainian forces are horrifying. We in this Chamber cannot suspend our humanity. Our thoughts, first and foremost, must be with the families of those killed. Their pain at the loss of their loved ones in such an unspeakable manner is almost unimaginable.

Let us be clear. The Russian authorities are responsible for those atrocities, committed while they had effective control of the area. The Russian authorities are subject to the international law of occupation. There can never be impunity for such crimes — never ever — not in Bucha or in any other town or village ever. Where crimes have been committed, they must be fully investigated and evidence preserved, so that those crimes can be prosecuted by domestic and international courts, including the International Criminal Court. Ireland will continue to support efforts to ensure robust and independent investigations of all violations of international law. We must have accountability and justice for the victims and for the survivors of this war. We at this table share that responsibility in the face of such atrocities. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by the order of the International Court of Justice

and immediately cease its military action and withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine.

In the past 40 days, we have seen a horrific humanitarian disaster unfold in Ukraine because of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustifiable further invasion of that country — a country where just weeks ago citizens lived in relative peace and prosperity and which has now been transformed into one where families lack access to basic necessities, where basements have become bomb shelters and where millions have become internally displaced persons and refugees.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas has had a devastating impact on civilians in the midst of active hostilities. Once again, we call on the parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law, including the obligation to direct attacks against only military objectives, the prohibitions against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and the obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack.

We have heard increasing allegations of sexual violence by Russian soldiers. The Secretary-General referred to that this morning. We must stress that conflict-related sexual violence can constitute a war crime. The perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable and will be held accountable. Sexual violence is another abhorrent crime of this war that cannot go unanswered. We again reiterate the need for full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need, as called for today by Martin Griffiths.

We again echo the Secretary-General's call for Russia to implement an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It is the very least the aggressor can do. It is way past time.

As we know, the reverberations of this war are reaching far beyond Ukraine. It is unacceptable that Russia's war of choice against Ukraine is also having and will continue to have significant spillover effects across the globe: the deterioration of food security, surging energy prices and increasing poverty. The most vulnerable and impoverished in developing countries will suffer the most. We utterly reject that.

It is our collective responsibility, here at this table, to maintain international peace and security, and nothing less. That is why we call on the Russian Federation to stop the war, to stop its unlawful attempts to establish occupying authorities and to

stop destabilizing the democratic foundations of the Ukrainian State. Such steps are yet further reprehensible violations of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It gets harder each time to say this, but it is never too late to do the right thing and to end this war now.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): Let me start by thanking Ambassador Nusseibeh, along with her team at the United Arab Emirates Mission, for competently navigating the work of the Security Council in March.

I welcome His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, at this meeting of the Security Council today.

I would like to thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Martin Griffiths for their updated briefings on the situation in Ukraine.

As we enter the sixth week of hostilities on Ukrainian territory, we continue to witness appalling images of human suffering. The recent reports of acts of violence against civilians in Bucha, Irpin, Kharkiv, Donetsk and other places affected by the conflict are extremely worrying, according to the statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross. We call for a genuinely independent and thorough investigation of all reported violations, with the full cooperation of both parties to the conflict, without prejudging any conclusions and underscore the need for perpetrators to be held accountable.

The international community has witnessed for too long appalling scenes of destruction of once peaceful cities, with shocking images from the conflict and the desperation of thousands of civilians trapped on the battlefield with no food, no water and no electricity. We once again renew our pleas for a broad, effective and immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine. Only after the silencing of the guns and the withdrawal of troops are achieved will it be possible to halt the immense costs of human suffering that the conflict has brought about.

The General Assembly recently adopted resolution ES-11/2, on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. As we said on that occasion (see A/ES-11/PV.7), the General Assembly could not become a bystander to the shocking consequences of the conflict, and, as we added last week in this Chamber (see S/PV.9008), neither can

the Security Council. As the main United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has the mandate and the responsibility to address the situation in an effective manner.

Nevertheless, our assessment is that the Security Council is failing in its role to help support efforts to foster a constructive dialogue between the parties, with the aim of brokering an effective peace settlement to the conflict. We deeply regret that the Security Council has not been able to speak with one voice throughout the crisis.

Promoting compliance with international humanitarian law, protecting civilians and calling for peace are the objectives that should unite rather than divide us. We should strive to create the conditions for, on the one hand, invigorating the political negotiations, and, on the other, reaching an understanding on practical measures to minimize human suffering in Ukraine. Civilians wishing to flee the hostilities must be able to do so in safety, and those who decide to stay cannot become targets of attacks. In the same vein, parties must grant safe passage to relief consignments to those in need.

Once again, Brazil reiterates the call for all parties to fully respect, and ensure respect for, international humanitarian law. The causes of conflict, whatever they may be, do not undermine the obligations incumbent on all parties to guarantee that civilians be protected, that the wounded receive medical care, that humanitarian assistance reach those in need and that detainees be treated humanely in all circumstances. There must be no politicization of humanitarian actions, or the selective application of international humanitarian law. In addition, geopolitical objectives must not supersede the endeavour for peace, or prolong the human suffering caused by war.

This conflict, and its associated sanctions, apart from the enormous human suffering and devastation caused in Ukraine, is having spillover effects in the entire world, especially through increased prices of oil, gas, grains and fertilizers, among other things. Food insecurity has become an even greater threat to the world's poorest people, above all in developing countries. The longer the conflict persists, the higher the risk of further instability, hunger and devastation in Ukraine and around the world.

It is high time to return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. We urgently need the cessation of hostilities. The de-escalation of tensions and negotiations are the only way out of the conflict, not only for the countries directly involved but also for the entire world.

**Mr. Kimani (Kenya):** I congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for April and assure you of my delegation's full support.

I listened closely to the remarks by the Secretary-General and his Under-Secretaries-General, Rosemary DiCarlo and Martin Griffiths, hoping to hear that our fears that the war in Ukraine has entered a new more dangerous phase were exaggerated. Sadly, they offered no such comfort.

Instead, we are left with the words of His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, who has described the horrifying suffering in Bucha and other towns and neighbourhoods in Ukraine. His account of the atrocities is in stark contrast to that of our colleague in the Security Council, the representative of the Russian Federation. But the fact that the truth in Bucha is contested is the surest sign that we stand on the precipice of more widespread human rights abuses.

In April 1994, even as genocide engulfed Rwanda, there were members of the Security Council contesting the horrifying truth that 1 million people were being murdered. We should stand warned that the inability of the Council to establish the facts and accordingly attribute responsibility may enable the risk of escalation into far worse crimes.

Beyond the city of Bucha, we are extremely worried about the safety of civilians who are trapped in other besieged cities and villages, such as Mariupol and Kherson. Our actions today should seek to prevent what we have witnessed take place in Bucha, Mariupol and Kherson. While we debate who is responsible for the horrors of Bucha, it is incontestable that what started as a special military operation is now a war and that what began with reassurances of limited aims, not targeted at civilians, has led to thousands of dead civilians and millions of refugees and internally displaced persons.

No one can doubt that there are flagrant violations of international law, international humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations under way in Ukraine. Kenya condemns the abuses undertaken in the

past few weeks and those in the eastern provinces of the country during the years that the conflict has raged.

The war in Ukraine is today's most dangerous threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is the latest assault by the most powerful States against the multilateral order. Their continued abuse of the Charter has created growing cracks over the years in the global security order. Now the bottom has fallen out. Ukraine may now become a model for a new generation of disastrous wars on multiple continents.

Millions of refugees are being created, and there will be many more as the economic effects of the war produce and intensify conflicts elsewhere. Accelerating food and energy prices are plunging millions into worse forms of poverty. The United Nations, as a forum for solutions to humankind's most pressing problems, is losing prestige and historical standing. President Zelenskyy has left us with ideas for Security Council reform that we need to consider seriously. Things have fallen apart, and the centre cannot hold under these assaults on the United Nations. We must reform.

There are no easy solutions. Even a negotiation that is not properly structured to protect the people and the sovereignty of Ukraine could be the prelude to a wider war. For now, we urge the following urgent steps, while understanding their limits owing to the inability of the Security Council to act decisively.

We call for an impartial and prompt United Nations investigation into the atrocities against the civilians in Bucha and other towns in Ukraine. That calls for an immediate end of all hostilities to guarantee unfettered access for the investigative teams. We urge the conflicting parties to immediately make clear to their military personnel that they will be held to account on the basis of command or superior responsibility if they violate the international laws that regulate warfare.

We commend Ukraine's neighbours for opening their borders to refugees of multiple nationalities from Ukraine. We continue to urge them to ensure that the thousands of affected Africans be treated in accordance with international humanitarian law and with basic dignity. We commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the many other organizations and individuals that have come to the aid of the deserving people of Ukraine. In this regard, we commend the third United Nations-organized humanitarian convoy that reached thousands of people in need in Sumy and other cities.

We call for the urgent activation of safe passages with no restrictions and call for unimpeded humanitarian access to the many in need, particularly those in Mariupol, Kherson and other besieged cities. We also urge the Security Council to reassure the world of its relevance by approaching the other conflicts with renewed vigour. The humanitarian crises caused by conflict in Afghanistan, Haiti, the Horn of Africa, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Palestine and Israel, Syria, Yemen and the Sahel, as well as the unfolding situation in the Korean peninsula, deserve our urgent attention.

We look forward to the Secretary-General rallying the international community to deploy resources to cushion the most vulnerable from the effects of the conflict in Ukraine. We reiterate our call for the cessation of hostilities to allow humanitarian operations under clearly defined contact lines and humanitarian passages.

I conclude by reaffirming Kenya's recognition of the inviolable rights of Ukraine to its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish you every success, Madam President, during your presidency this month and acknowledge the work of the United Arab Emirates in leading the Security Council last month.

We thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries DiCarlo and Griffiths for their briefings. We acknowledge the participation of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in this meeting of the Security Council. We have listened to him with the utmost attention and with the respect that we have for his dignity. We also watched with horror the pictures he shared with us. They are the Guernica mural, recreated anew with civilian victims.

For six weeks now, the world has been following with dismay the devastating consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Through two General Assembly resolutions (General Assembly resolutions ES-11/1 and ES-11/2), the international community has spoken out forcefully, deploring the invasion, demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities and of any attack on civilians or civilian infrastructure, and has called for the urgent delivery of humanitarian assistance in an expeditious, safe and unrestricted manner.

The International Court of Justice has also demanded the immediate suspension of military operations on Ukrainian territory. It is up to the United

Nations to act as guarantor of compliance with the Court's decisions. All mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes under international law should be channelled towards this common goal.

Regrettably, the hostilities are ongoing, and civilian casualties are increasing, and with them the humanitarian needs of the population are growing, including with expanding urgency those of refugees and internally displaced persons. The images of the streets of Bucha and other cities, which have circulated widely in recent days, have shocked the world. We strongly condemn the atrocities depicted. There is absolutely no justification for them. Protecting civilians is an inalienable responsibility of the international community.

As the High Commissioner for Human Rights has pointed out, the serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law make it necessary to maintain the possibility that war crimes have indeed been committed. Mexico fully supports the Secretary-General's statement that impartial investigations should be carried out as soon as possible to identify those responsible and to ensure effective accountability. We will also closely follow the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and we support the ICC Prosecutor who is in the process of investigating alleged international crimes committed in Ukraine. We also support the Independent International Commission of Inquiry created for the same purpose by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Their reports will be decisive.

The consequences of this war have been terrible. Its dramatic impact will also have serious effects in the medium and long term, not only in the region, but throughout the rest of the world. As the Executive Director of the World Food Programme has made clear, millions of people will pay the price for this conflict. There will be shortages of basic foodstuffs in many already insecure and fragile regions.

With all the difficulties involved and the urgency they entail, the international community's efforts to address the humanitarian drama can only be temporary. The fundamental solution is, as has been said in this Chamber, an immediate cessation of hostilities and a political agreement restoring negotiations through diplomatic channels. We strongly support the efforts of Under-Secretary Griffiths to agree on humanitarian pauses to create the conditions on the ground for a

more fluid flow of humanitarian assistance. Mexico recognizes and commends the work of all humanitarian actors involved in Ukraine, as well as the solidarity of neighbouring countries that have received millions of refugees, and the mediation efforts of numerous countries and different actors.

We hope that the Security Council, in strict adherence to international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, will fulfil its responsibility and contribute effectively to ending the war and restoring peace.

**Mr. Tirumurti (India):** Let me begin by thanking Secretary-General António Guterres for his presence and remarks on the situation in Ukraine. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their respective briefings on the security and humanitarian situation. We thank the participation of His Excellency the President of Ukraine at today's meeting. I also take this opportunity to thank the United Arab Emirates and Ambassador Lana Nusseibeh for their excellent presidency of the Security Council last month.

The situation in Ukraine has not shown any significant improvement since the Council last discussed the issue (see S/PV.9008). The security situation has only deteriorated, as have its humanitarian consequences. Recent reports of civilian killings in Bucha are deeply disturbing. We unequivocally condemn these killings and support the call for an independent investigation.

We hope the international community will continue to respond positively to the humanitarian needs. We support calls urging guarantees of safe passage to deliver essential humanitarian and medical supplies.

Keeping in view the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine, India has been sending humanitarian supplies to Ukraine and its neighbours, which include medicines and other essential relief material. We stand ready to provide more medical supplies to Ukraine in the coming days.

India continues to remain deeply concerned about the worsening situation, and reiterates its call for the immediate cessation of violence and an end to the hostilities. From the beginning of the conflict, we emphasized the need to pursue the path of diplomacy and dialogue. When innocent human lives are at stake, diplomacy must prevail as the only viable option. In that

context, we take note of the ongoing efforts, including the meetings held recently between the parties.

The impact of the crisis is being felt beyond the region, with increasing food and energy costs, especially for many developing countries. It is in our collective interest to work constructively, both inside the United Nations and outside, towards seeking an early resolution to the conflict.

Allow me to once again reiterate the importance of the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian action must always be guided by the principles of humanitarian assistance, that is, humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Such measures should never be politicized.

We continue to emphasize to all States Members of the United Nations that the global order is anchored in international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

**Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*):** At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. At the same time, I would also like to thank Ambassador Nusseibeh and her United Arab Emirates team for their outstanding work during that country's presidency of the Council during the month of March.

The de-escalation of tensions in Ukraine, an early ceasefire and putting an early end to the fighting are the urgent expectations of the international community and the strong desire of China. We have repeatedly stressed that dialogue and negotiation are the only way to open the door to peace. Russia and Ukraine have held several rounds of negotiations. We call on the two sides to adhere to the general path of peaceful negotiations, overcome difficulties and differences and continue to build conditions for a comprehensive settlement of the crisis. The international community should create the conditions and environment conducive to negotiations between the two sides and space for a political settlement. It should not set up obstacles to increase resistance to peace, let alone add fuel to the fire to aggravate the confrontation. Every effort should be made to prevent the localized conflict from escalating.

China attaches great importance to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and supports all initiatives and measures conducive to easing the humanitarian crisis in

Ukraine. As the current conflict continues, we call on all parties to abide by international humanitarian law, protect the safety of civilians and civilian facilities, minimize civilian casualties, ensure safe and smooth evacuation and access to humanitarian corridors and guarantee the basic rights of women, children and wounded combatants. Humanitarian issues should not be politicized. The humanitarian needs of Ukraine and neighbouring countries are enormous. International humanitarian agencies should maintain neutrality and impartiality, actively mobilize and coordinate increased resources and make unremitting efforts to save lives and protect civilians. China has provided, and will continue to provide, humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

Under international humanitarian law, civilians should be spared any form of violence in armed conflict, and attacks against civilians are unacceptable and should not occur. Reports and images of civilian deaths in the town of Bucha are very disturbing, and the circumstances and specific causes of the incident must be established and verified. Any allegations should be based on facts, and all parties should exercise restraint and avoid groundless accusations until conclusions are drawn.

As Secretary-General Guterres said, the spillover effects of the Ukraine crisis are having a major impact on the world, particularly developing countries. That requires our close attention and must be managed and controlled. Sanctions are not an effective means to resolve the issue, but will accelerate the spillover effects of the crisis and bring about new and complex problems. Today, when globalization is intensifying and the destiny of humankind is closely interlinked, implementing comprehensive and indiscriminate sanctions is tantamount to politicizing, instrumentalizing and weaponizing the world economy, triggering serious crises in the areas of global economic, trade, financial, energy, food, and industrial chains and supply chains, jeopardizing the development achievements of the international community over decades and causing the people of all countries to pay a heavy price. The vast majority of developing countries are not parties to the conflict and should not be involved in the confrontation, let alone be forced to bear the consequences of geopolitical conflicts and great power games. The world's major economies should take responsibility, manage the risk of the spillover effects

of the crisis and maintain the stability of global markets and the momentum of the global economic recovery.

More than 30 years after the end of the Cold War, such a geopolitical tragedy in Europe merits our profound reflection. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, and small and medium-sized countries should not be pushed to the forefront of confrontation between major Powers. All countries have the right to decide their foreign policies independently and should not be forced to take sides. The security of all countries is indivisible, and the security of one country cannot be achieved at the expense of that of other countries. We call on the United States, NATO and the European Union to engage in comprehensive dialogues with Russia, face head on differences accumulated over the years, find solutions to problems and promote the establishment of a balanced, effective and sustainable regional security framework.

On the Ukraine issue, China does not seek geopolitical self-interest. It is not our mindset to watch the situation indifferently from the sidelines, let alone add fuel to the fire. There is only one goal to which we sincerely look forward, namely, peace. China will continue to promote peace talks and play a constructive and responsible role in helping to resolve the crisis in Ukraine.

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome President Zelenskyy's participation in this meeting. Through him, I commend the courage and spirit of resistance of the Ukrainian people. France stands by his side. I thank the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs for their briefings.

The war of aggression waged by Russia against Ukraine has reached a new level of horror in recent days. The images of mass graves, mass abuses against civilians in the northern Ukrainian towns of Bucha, Borodyanka and Motyzhyn have aroused condemnation and indignation around the world. We express our deepest sympathy for the victims and our full solidarity with the Ukrainians. We of course remain shocked by the appalling images that were shown in the video earlier this morning.

France condemns in the strongest possible terms the widespread abuses committed by Russian forces.

Such abuses could constitute war crimes as well as crimes against humanity.

The disinformation tactics used by Russia to conceal its crimes, regrettably, are no surprise to anyone. Moscow again compounds the indignity of the murder of civilians and the massacre of children with lies, cynicism and denial. In the light of such heinous crimes, France requests that we not yield to hatred. We call for action to be taken in the following areas.

First, we must maintain the strongest pressure on Russia to force its authorities to put an end to a war that undermines global security and, as discussed, well beyond Europe, in particular food security. France remains fully committed to helping to achieve that goal, in particular with its European partners, under the French presidency of the Council of the European Union, and in the Group of Seven. It will also continue its resolute support for the Ukrainian authorities in all its forms.

Secondly, the crimes committed in Ukraine must not go unpunished. Credible and independent investigations must be conducted to enable the competent national and international courts to try those responsible for those atrocities. We call in particular upon Russia and Ukraine to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court and with the commission of inquiry on Ukraine established by the Human Rights Council.

Russia is determined and methodical in its ongoing war on Ukraine, which brings with it its share of destruction and indescribable suffering. We call for respect for international humanitarian law. Civilians, including children and humanitarian workers, must be protected. The same applies to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools. We welcome the mobilization of countries that share a border with Ukraine, as they play a major role in receiving refugees. The hospitality they demonstrate is a credit to Europe.

The European Union has mobilized a package of more than €500 million in emergency support for Ukraine. On 24 and 25 March, the European Council announced plans to develop a solidarity trust fund for the reconstruction of Ukraine. France will also play its part by contributing €100 million in humanitarian aid.

We support the efforts of the Secretary-General and Martin Griffiths to broker a humanitarian ceasefire to enable the evacuation of civilians from besieged cities and access to humanitarian aid. All efforts must be

made to end the hostilities. That is the first step towards a lasting settlement of the conflict and a crucial sign of a credible Russian commitment to the negotiations.

France is determined to continue contributing to peace efforts, in particular by supporting Ukrainian authorities in the quest for a political solution once a ceasefire has been established, as well as by maintaining channels of dialogue with Russia.

As the French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, reminded us on 3 April, France remains fully committed to putting an end to this war of aggression, whose human cost and humanitarian impact are becoming increasingly serious every day. In the light of the horror and devastation caused by the Russian aggression, France reaffirms its solidarity and support for Ukraine and Ukrainians. We call on the Russian people, who are also victims in this war, to continue to find ways to express their opposition to the conflict, despite the repression. It must be done to break the mindset of hatred with which Vladimir Putin seeks to hold hostage Ukrainians and Russians alike.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I thank the briefers for their valuable input.

Norway, too, expresses its utmost support for the Secretary-General in making full use of his good offices in the quest for a peaceful solution.

I would like to thank President Zelenskyy, through the Ambassador of Ukraine, for his strong testimony today and for the heroic fight in which the President, the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people are engaged for their country and for the peace and freedom of us all. We are with them. We support them.

As we heard from President Zelenskyy and saw this weekend, the need for peace could not be more urgent. For more than 40 days and nights, attacks by Russia have continued to batter the Ukrainian people and their cities, causing death and destruction. Their suffering is escalating. We, too, are appalled by the reports coming out of areas around Kyiv and other regions. We are deeply shocked by the atrocities committed against civilians in places that have been held by Russian forces, including Bucha. The images are distressing — dead bodies on roads and in mass graves; homes, schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure destroyed and reportedly left mined.

Russia is desperate to hide the truth about the war, but atrocities must be investigated and those responsible

must be brought to justice. In that respect, we welcome the establishment by the Human Rights Council of a commission of inquiry on Ukraine to investigate all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also welcome the fact that the International Criminal Court has opened an investigation into the situation in Ukraine. We urge Russia and everyone holding evidence to fully cooperate with those investigations. We cannot allow there to be impunity for war crimes being committed in Ukraine. The world is watching.

Russia's unprovoked and illegal war against Ukraine, a free and sovereign country, is also an attack on democratic values and freedom. It is a blatant violation of international law and the very principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As the Secretary-General underlined earlier today, the Council has a responsibility. We must do everything in our power to end the war and mitigate its impact.

Let me repeat the message of Norwegian Prime Minister Store to President Putin when they spoke on Thursday. He urged him to cease the hostilities and emphasized that Russia must ensure rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to the civilian population, particularly in Mariupol. He also stressed the need to find a negotiated solution for ending the war.

The suffering is widespread. Russia's war is causing the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. A quarter of the Ukrainian population has now been displaced, and cluster munitions will continue to maim and kill long after the conflict has ended. The reconstruction, when it comes, will take years. Ukraine has been set back decades in its economic development, and the consequences of this war will be felt by generations of Ukrainians.

Russia's voice is also being felt globally, exacerbating other humanitarian crises and causing a serious negative effect on the agricultural sector, with a global rise in food insecurity and increased prices of fuel and fertilizer.

Before concluding, let me be very clear: Russia must abide by international law. It must comply with the order of the International Court of Justice to immediately suspend this military operation and withdraw its troops from Ukraine. The killing and destruction must end. Russia must stop its illegal war.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): I congratulate the delegation of the United Arab Emirates for its successful presidency in the preceding month and wish you, Madam President, and the delegation of the United Kingdom the very best for this month.

Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing to the Security Council and welcome the briefings of Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths on the prevailing situation in Ukraine and the coordinated humanitarian response of United Nations agencies in the face of difficult operational challenges on the ground.

I also welcome the virtual participation in today's meeting of the President of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy. My delegation has taken careful note of the Ukrainian President's remarks and his country's steadfast commitment to peace and encourage the path of dialogue and diplomacy in finding a settlement to this needless war.

The prolongation of the war in Ukraine continues to be a situation of deep concern for Ghana. We are particularly disturbed by the increasing humanitarian cost arising from the unjustified aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

We have observed with pain the unbridled bombardment of civilian populated areas, as well as civilian and other critical infrastructure, without regard to the customary norms of international law and the principles of international humanitarian law relating to armed conflict.

Ghana is gravely concerned about the reports of alleged gross violations of international humanitarian law and international criminal law since the onset of the invasion, including emerging reports and images of human rights violations and the killing of civilians in Mariupol, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and areas on the outskirts of Kyiv, such as Bucha. We support the Secretary-General's call for independent, impartial and thorough investigations to establish facts, gather evidence and hold all perpetrators of such atrocious crimes accountable for their actions.

The killing of children, the elderly, medical personnel, humanitarian workers and journalists is deplorable, and we condemn all such acts unreservedly.

We urge restraint on all sides and re-emphasize the urgency of an unconditional cessation of hostilities nationwide in order to enable the evacuation and safe passage of civilians and facilitate the delivery of life-saving aid to people in the cities who remain under siege. Humanitarian agencies require unobstructed access to reach people in need of food, water and medicine and other critical supplies, and all parties must guarantee such access.

The ravages of both the global coronavirus disease pandemic and the situation in Ukraine serve to demonstrate the interconnectedness and interdependence of States and to reinforce the need for a unified international response in support of the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

We have followed closely the direct negotiations between the conflicting parties and note the progress made in the fourth round of consultations, which took place in Istanbul on 29 March. In order to support the negotiations, we urge restraint in the ongoing hostilities and follow-through on the expressed commitments to resolve the security concerns of the parties.

In furtherance of the efforts of the parties, the Council must now focus on supporting confidence-building measures that facilitate a negotiated settlement of the immediate conflict and the wider question of European security on the basis of international law and other internationally agreed frameworks. The convergence of the parties and the international community on these matters is the only way to end tensions, bridge the differences between the parties and forge a unified position on the situation in Ukraine.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): I would like to join others in congratulating you and your team, Madam President, for assuming the presidency and wishing you a productive month. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for their helpful briefings. We also thank President Zelenskyy for his address to the Security Council.

We have once again heard in the Council deeply sobering and concerning reports from the ground, including from Martin Griffiths and Rosemary DiCarlo. With every meeting, the Council is reminded of the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation on the ground in Ukraine — one quarter of the country's

population have fled their homes, and the rising death toll and the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure are a grim reflection of the tragic human cost of war.

The images coming out of Bucha and other towns and cities are shocking. The alleged crimes they entail are of the utmost gravity. First and foremost, as others have said, we must establish what happened there, with the cooperation of all parties. It is imperative that we do not get caught up in a war of narratives in addition to the conflict that is ongoing. Indeed, we need to allow for the existing mechanisms to investigate facts on the ground impartially so that justice for all victims can be served. We acknowledge the Secretary-General's call for that independent investigation as well as last week's appointment of the members of the Human Rights Council's independent, international commission of inquiry on Ukraine.

As we enter the sixth week of conflict, we believe that an immediate cessation of hostilities throughout Ukraine is imperative in order to move towards a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine. We take note of efforts to reach a diplomatic resolution to the conflict, and we see the ongoing negotiations — several rounds of negotiations — between Russia and Ukraine as a very positive development. We remain hopeful that those efforts at the negotiating table can urgently translate into de-escalation on the ground, and we urge others to support those efforts.

We also welcome the readout from Mr. Griffiths on his meetings with senior Russian officials, as well as his upcoming meetings with Ukrainian officials. Establishing a viable humanitarian ceasefire could be a stepping stone for broader negotiations and, eventually, a sustainable peace.

However, until a cessation of hostilities is achieved, the priority must be to work towards protecting and alleviating the suffering of civilians. In addition to the points we made during the most recent Council meeting on Ukraine on 29 March (S/PV.9008), I want to focus here on four additional points for the Council's consideration.

First, as others have done, we all need to continue to reaffirm the need for all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians and respect for the principles of distinction and proportionality, which are paramount in conflict.

Secondly, the difficulties in providing relief and humanitarian access need to be addressed immediately and can be addressed quickly. It is critical to find either local or broad-based agreements for security guarantees so as to allow for the safe provision of humanitarian assistance and for civilians to voluntarily evacuate safely. Those are initial confidence-building measures that can be developed down the line and should also be encouraged, including the proposals left by Mr. Griffiths with the Government in Moscow.

Thirdly, as the International Committee of the Red Cross has noted, false narratives and disinformation have the potential to cause real harm for humanitarian organizations on the ground. The use of digital technologies that amplify the spread of harmful information, including misinformation, disinformation and hate speech, is a true challenge in conflict zones. Those phenomena are not new, but technology has greatly increased the scale and speed at which harmful information reaches target audiences online. That is particularly concerning in crisis settings where information can influence the dynamics and behaviour on the ground and can put communities and humanitarian responders at risk.

Fourthly, at a time of conflict, protecting civilians, of course, must be our top priority. However, we should not forget the impact that war has on a nation's cultural heritage and identity. We are concerned by UNESCO's recent reports on the dozens of cultural sites that have been damaged in Ukraine since the conflict began. We know from our experience in the Middle East that the protection of cultural sites is critical to rebuilding peace. In moments of violence and turmoil, cultural sites are essential cornerstones for collective memory and a foundation for future reconciliation. We therefore call on all parties to refrain from the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage and to think about what comes next after the war concludes for the people living there and how they go about building peace.

Before I end, allow me to take a moment to reflect on what others have commented on, including the Secretary-General — the devastating impact of the conflict on food security worldwide. We are alarmed by the figures shared just now by the Secretary-General on how the war is affecting some of the most vulnerable communities around the world — 1.2 billion people in 47 developing countries are at risk due to rising food prices.

Food shortages are aggravating situations already on the Council's agenda, and those shortages are felt in other settings where high prices of basic commodities can lead to further unrest and instability, not just in this part of the world but around the globe. We look forward to seeing the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance address those issues and offer it our full support.

Let us not forget that the effects of this war are hitting communities that are still reeling from the global coronavirus disease pandemic. These vulnerabilities are further exacerbated by reduced domestic food production due to the rising costs and scarcity of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The knock-on effects, including global conflicts, will be grave and the Council must stay focused on all of them.

Unless we do something to end this conflict now, it will continue to drive suffering and instability worldwide in the coming months and years. The world simply cannot afford that. The Security Council should do its part to stop this conflict and to help parties reach a peaceful solution.

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

The United Nations was created in the wake of a European war of aggression that laid waste to Europe and engulfed the world. All of us who signed the Charter of the United Nations committed to ending the scourge of war, to fundamental human rights, to the dignity and worth of the human person, to the equal rights of nations large and small, to justice and to respect for international law.

Yet now we are facing another war of aggression in Europe. We have heard again today the devastating impact of Russia's unilateral and illegal military action on Ukraine, its impact on surrounding countries and the region and on the security and prosperity of the wider world as it seeks to recover from the coronavirus disease pandemic. Thousands have been killed and millions have been displaced. Cities have been razed to the ground, hospitals have been bombed and citizens have been cut off from food, water and medicine. Sea ports have been blockaded and wheat prices have seen a rapid increase. More pressure has been placed upon already stretched humanitarian resources.

Now, as Russia is forced to retreat from areas around Kyiv, the brutality of the invasion is laid bare.

We have all seen the horrific images from the towns of Bucha and Irpin of civilians deliberately killed in areas from which Russian forces have recently withdrawn. The video we saw earlier underlined that horror. Those acts and other credible incidents must be investigated as war crimes and the United Kingdom fully supports the work of the International Criminal Court and the work of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and other national prosecutors.

As we and so many others have said so many times, all of that could be stopped if the Russian Federation ends the war now.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I know that this will not bring us any closer to the end of today's meeting, but given that today's topic is extremely important, I think that it is essential to say a few words on the reason this meeting was convened, especially as we were not given the chance to elaborate on that yesterday in a separate meeting of the Security Council on the matter. Unfortunately, our Western colleagues have tried to sweep our request for yesterday's meeting under the rug by any means possible, providing us with a fine example of what the new "rules-based order" really is.

I would like to focus once again on the events in Bucha, which became the premise for convening today's meeting and has led many Council members to jump to far-reaching conclusion. All Russian armed forces units fully withdrew from Bucha as a gesture of good faith on 30 March, the day after a round of negotiations was conducted between Russia and Ukraine in Turkey. A report on the matter was published the very same day on the official website of the Russian Ministry of Defence.

During the time that the town was under the control of the Russian armed forces, not a single civilian suffered any kind of violence. People were able to move freely around the town and use their cell phones. Furthermore, the Russian army supplied 452 tons of humanitarian assistance to cities and towns in Kyiv oblast. There is evidence to support this. The exits from the town were not blocked; all inhabitants were free to evacuate towards the north.

Meanwhile, the areas to the south of Bucha, including residential areas, were shelled around the clock by Ukrainian forces with heavy calibre weapons, tanks and mortars. After the withdrawal of Russian forces from the city, the Mayor of Bucha, Anatoliy Fedoruk, in a video statement on 31 March, presented that withdrawal as a heroic liberation of the city by the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Let him be responsible for the misrepresentation of circumstances of that so-called liberation and focus on the fact that he confirmed that, on 31 March, there were no longer any Russian soldiers in the town. Furthermore, the Mayor did not mention any local inhabitants having been shot with their hands tied. Can one believe that the Mayor did not notice 280 corpses on the streets, as reported? On 1 April, Bucha city councillor Kateryna Ukraintseva warned her fellow residents several times in a two-minute video that representatives of the Ukrainian security forces had entered the town and were conducting a mop-up operation. She asked everyone to be very careful.

Currently, on the web, one can also find an almost eight-minute-long video on the announced mop-up of Bucha by the Ukrainian national police on 2 April. In that video, there are no bodies of civilians on the street. Furthermore, in that video, the National Guard of Ukraine conducts interviews with local residents, who also make no mention of corpses or mass shootings. On one Ukrainian news site, there was also a warning posted on the upcoming mop-up of Bucha on 2 April by Russian collaborators. It has now been deleted, but some users were able to save it.

The so-called evidence of crimes by the Russian forces in Bucha appeared only on 3 April — the fourth day after Russian forces left the town. Once again, without any evidence and based on the presumption of guilt, the Russian army is being accused of evil deeds. Of course, we could not help but notice how quickly the images by Ukrainian journalists were lapped up by Western politicians and famous human rights organizations claiming to be impartial and unbiased.

At the same time, the obvious inconsistencies in the Ukrainian version of events promoted by Ukraine and westerners are pointedly ignored. If the corpses had been out in the open for several days, they would have displayed signs that are well-known to forensic specialists. Our Western colleagues do not seem to be bothered by that. Otherwise, *The New York Times*

would not go even further to state that the corpses had been there on the streets since 20 March. Can you imagine the kind of state they would be in if that were indeed that case?

Furthermore, many of the bodies in the videos circulated by the Ukrainians were wearing identifying marks — white arm bands. Those arm bands were worn by civilians after the Russian armed forces entered the town. In one video posted online by Ukrainian radicals, a call to shoot anyone not wearing a blue arm band can be heard. That video, taken during the mop-up of Bucha, was posted by a leader of the Territorial Defence Battalion, to whom the Ukrainian authorities had handed out weapons in an uncontrolled way. Furthermore, the member of the City Council of Bucha whom I mentioned, Kateryna Ukrainseva, stated on the Meduza website that she had not seen Russian forces execute any civilians. In the same interview, she confirmed that it is the Armed Forces of Ukraine that are guilty of most of the destruction. Of course, those details have not been mentioned in the presentations made by our Western and Ukrainian colleagues.

However, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy is already claiming that all the staged events in Bucha give the Ukrainians the right to an uncivilized response. We can only imagine what that is based on how Ukrainian radicals behaved in the east of Ukraine. Many testimonials about their crimes are shocking. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian experts on disinformation and staging do not intend to stop there.

As the Ministry of Defence has claimed based on confirmed information, in the evening of 4 April in the town of Moschun, 23 kilometres north-west of Kyiv, troops from the 72nd Center for Information and Psychological Operations, Ukraine, shot another staged video of civilians allegedly killed by Russian troops for future circulation by Western media. Those kinds of activities were carried out by Ukraine's special forces in Sumy and other towns.

In conclusion, I would like to address my Western colleagues. We understand very well what they are doing by playing the Ukraine card and fuelling anti-Russian hysteria every single day. We are assuming that there will be further horrible provocations similar to the one in Bucha and fresh attempts to discredit Russian soldiers and present them as sadists, murderers and rapists.

I say once again that this is an incredibly low blow. Of course, they are not interested in the fact that

modern technologies today make it possible to create any video. We watched a video today presented by the Ukrainian side. Already there is plenty of information refuting what was in the video, stating that it was filmed in a different place, at a different time and with different people.

Just a few words to my American colleague, who launched a crusade to exclude Russia from the Human Rights Council. That was stated by the representative of a country who three years ago criticized the Council in the strongest, harshest terms because it had the audacity to condemn the actions of American soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq. And, as is well known, the United States left the Council. I hope that all our colleagues from the United Nations will not allow themselves to be manipulated and play up to Washington, as that is a very dangerous game.

**The President:** The representative of Ukraine has asked to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I would like to say a couple of things in Russian and then switch back to English.

*(spoke in Russian)*

We have become accustomed to the lies that are constantly being spewed in the Security Council Chamber. Comrade Nebenzia decided to quote from an interview from a media outlet called Meduza. I should like to ask Comrade Nebenzia why he does not quote the interview in full? Let me quote from that interview, which the representative of Putin wanted to use for his own purposes.

These are the words of the woman he mentioned:

“Sometimes Russian soldiers sent dry rations to the basement, and then, after lowering those rations, they tossed grenades into the basement.”

He wanted to quote that interview. Why did he not quote the whole interview? This is about their humanitarian assistance. After providing that humanitarian assistance, they toss grenades. That is an interview from the same woman he mentioned.

*(spoke in English)*

I would like to make a further statement in response to the hypocritical questions put by Putin's representative. After the video we saw, with the

shocking images from Bucha, Irpin, Motyzhyn and other sites, he should ask those very questions of himself. When did the Russians get to be as cruel as Nazis? When did they start enjoying acting like Nazis? Killing civilians, attempting to redraw internationally recognized borders and setting themselves the task of finally resolving the Ukrainian issue, just like Hitler attempted to resolve the Jewish issue.

When did they miss the point at which Russia turned into a Nazi-style cancerous tumour, unable and unwilling to stop expanding and bringing to neighbouring nations suffering, destruction, pain and death? I am appalled at his cynical and outright lie that they do not hit civilian targets and that is why they are moving so slowly. They do hit civilian targets and kill civilians.

Shall I quote his own words, spoken yesterday at the press conference that he gave here at Headquarters, in which he said that civilians were being killed by the Russian army, or shall I not? Shall I play the video? He said that this is war, and civilians re killed in wartime. It is warfare, he said. Perhaps in his mind, the children's hospital in Mykolaiv destroyed by a Russian strike yesterday was a military target. And perhaps one of the children killed as a result of the strike was a Ukrainian nationalist.

The only truth he has spoken is that the Russians are not moving as planned, and the only reason is the resistance of the Ukrainian army and the Ukrainian people, not the Russians' smart military planning. The Ukrainian people realize quite clearly what the Russian world means in reality means.

We thank the international community for its solidarity with Ukraine. Ukraine will win on its territory and the entire world will win, despite the threats that the criminal and liar throws in the face of the Security Council.

Finally, if there is anything that we have to thank the Russian representative for, it is his acknowledgement at yesterday's press conference that Russia is waging war against Ukraine — "war", he said several times, not the "special operation". I believe that confession will impact the United Nations assessment of what is going on at the centre of Europe. Perhaps it was a unique moment when we should believe what a fully accredited representative says in the United Nations.

Once again, I remind Putin's diplomats that Ribbentrop denied any knowledge of concentration camps or racial extermination policies, yet he was found guilty of war crimes at the Nuremberg trials. And we all know what happened to him on 16 October 1946.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Skoog.

**Mr. Skoog:** I have the honour to address the Security Council on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Monaco and San Marino all align themselves with this statement.

I want to start by congratulating you, Madam President, and the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April, and by thanking you, Madam, for convening this meeting and inviting us to speak. I also acknowledge the presidency of the United Arab Emirates for the month of March.

I want to thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries-General DiCarlo and Griffiths for their briefings, and I want to express our full support to, solidarity with and respect for the heroic people of Ukraine, as embodied by the address delivered this morning by President Zelenskyy.

Forty-one days ago, Russia decided to wage a war of aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the acquis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. It was an affront to the rules-based order and to global security and stability. We have heard and seen again today the tremendous cost to the people of Ukraine.

The dramatic consequences of Russia's war of choice are well known. Thousands of lives have been lost and more than 11 million people — most of them women and children — have been forced to leave their homes. More than 500 schools and 52 hospitals have been shelled; entire cities have been razed to the ground. The unfolding drama in Mariupol and the images from Bucha stain our common humanity. Russia must stop that senseless act of violence.

The EU condemns in the strongest terms Russia's unjustified and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. We demand that Russia immediately stop its military aggression, immediately and unconditionally

withdraw all forces from the entire territory of Ukraine, and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders, as demanded by the General Assembly.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the reported atrocities committed by the Russian armed forces in a number of occupied Ukrainian towns. Haunting images of massacres, with large numbers of civilian deaths and casualties, as well as the destruction of civilian infrastructure, show the true face of Russia's brutal war of aggression. Those massacres will be inscribed on the list of atrocities committed by Russia on European soil. The Russian authorities are responsible for those crimes, committed while they had effective control of the area. They are subject to the international law of occupation.

Russia is directing attacks against the civilian population and is targeting civilian objects, including hospitals, medical facilities, schools and shelters. Those war crimes must stop immediately. Those responsible will be held to account, in accordance with international law.

We welcome the International Court of Justice's provisional measures ordering Russia to suspend military operations immediately. We fully support the investigation launched by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court into war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. The EU is assisting the Ukrainian Prosecutor General and civil society in the collection and preservation of evidence of the war crimes. It is clear. There must be and there will be accountability.

The EU and its member States are providing shelter for the more than 4 million refugees who fled Russia's violence. They do so regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion or race. We have adopted sanctions against the Russian Government, its financial and defence sectors, and those individuals enabling and financing the aggression.

We have committed significant funding to the United Nations humanitarian flash appeal and the regional refugee response plan on Ukraine. So far, the EU and its member States have mobilized over €1.1 billion in emergency aid. That comes on top of the €2.4 billion in humanitarian, emergency and early

recovery assistance the EU and its member States have provided to Ukraine since 2014.

In the largest ever operation under the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, 29 countries — all EU member States, together with Norway and Turkey — have responded to the request for assistance from Ukraine. As of 4 April, over 13,000 tons of medicines, hospital equipment, ambulances, firefighting equipment, food and energy supplies had arrived in Ukraine. European leaders have set up a Ukraine Solidarity Trust Fund to channel support to post-war reconstruction. At the pledging event on 9 April, with Canada we will further showcase that we stand in words and deeds with the courageous people of Ukraine.

After the Security Council was unable to take action, the General Assembly demonstrated once again, less than two weeks ago, the overwhelming international rejection of the Russian aggression and overwhelming support for addressing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The international community demanded safe and unhindered passage for civilians fleeing violence, as well as humanitarian access to those in need. International humanitarian law must be respected.

The dramatic consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine are not limited to Europe; they are global. Ukrainian farmers are prevented from sowing as a result of Russian shelling. Ships filled with wheat are blocked in Black Sea ports by Russian military forces. As a result, food prices have skyrocketed, pushing people into poverty and threatening to destabilize entire regions. The poorest countries, as we have heard, are the most vulnerable to shocks in food prices. All this is a direct result of the war, despite Russia's cynical attempts to shift the blame.

The EU and its member States are fully mobilized to end the war, in line with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. But at the same time, crises the world over need our urgent attention. The EU will continue to provide humanitarian and development support to our partner countries, from North Africa to the Middle East and from sub-Saharan Africa to Asia. We are scaling up our multilateral action to provide support to countries with acute food insecurity and are committed to keeping global trade routes open so agricultural staples can feed the world. The EU has pledged €2.5 billion for international cooperation related to nutrition for the period 2021-2024.

We also fully support the work of the United Nations to deliver and scale up humanitarian assistance, protect refugees and work towards a ceasefire. With a particular focus on food security, we will contribute to the work of the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to deal with the global social and economic effects of the war. We heard the Secretary-General's recommendations this morning, and we have already launched a strategy for safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems, backed by increased assistance.

Once again, we call on Russia to cease the destruction of innocent lives across Ukraine and immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its

troops. We call for an immediate ceasefire, safe passage to civilians trapped in war zones and uninterrupted humanitarian access. We stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and all other people affected by the war of Russian aggression. We stand in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we will continue to work diligently with the United Nations and our partners to end the aggression and the address humanitarian needs.

**The President:** I acknowledge the written statement submitted before this meeting by the delegation of Poland and on behalf of the eight Nordic Baltic countries.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*