



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

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Provisional

President: Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Biang
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 Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Council, to thank Her Excellency Ambassador Barbara Woodward, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for her service as President of the Council for the month of April. I would also like to express the Council's appreciation to Ambassador Woodward and her team for the skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Piotr Gliński, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator; Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and Ms. Tetiana Luzan, Advocacy Coordinator at Right to Protection.

Mr. Griffiths, Ms. Bachelet and Ms. Luzan are joining today's meeting via video-teleconference.

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

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

The Secretary-General: I welcome this opportunity to address the Security Council on my recent visit to the Russian Federation and Ukraine, where I met with President Putin and President Zelenskyy on 26 April and 28 April, respectively. As part of my visit to the

region, I also held discussions with President Erdoğan in Ankara and President Duda in Rzeszów, Poland.

Throughout my travels, I did not mince words. I said the same thing in Moscow as I did in Kyiv, which is exactly what I have repeatedly expressed in New York, namely, that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a violation of its territorial integrity and of the Charter of the United Nations and that it must end, for the sake of the people of Ukraine, Russia and the entire world.

I visited Moscow and Kyiv with a clear understanding of the realities on the ground. I entered an active war zone in Ukraine with no immediate possibility of a national ceasefire and with a full-scale ongoing attack on the east of the country.

Before the visit, the Ukrainian Government issued an appeal to the United Nations, and to me personally — expressed publicly by the Deputy Prime Minister — regarding the dire plight of civilians in the devastated city of Mariupol, and specifically at the Azovstal plant.

In my meeting with President Putin, I therefore stressed the imperative of enabling humanitarian access and evacuations from besieged areas, including first and foremost Mariupol. I strongly urged the opening of a safe and effective humanitarian corridor to allow civilians to reach safety from the Azovstal plant. A short time later, I received confirmation of an agreement in principle.

We immediately followed up with intense preparatory work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), along with Russian and Ukrainian authorities. Our objective was to initially enable the safe evacuation of those civilians from the Azovstal plant, and later the rest of the city, in any direction they choose, and to deliver humanitarian aid. I am pleased to report on some measure of success.

Together, the United Nations and the ICRC are leading a humanitarian operation of great complexity, both politically and in terms of security. It began on 29 April and has required enormous coordination and advocacy with the Russian Federation and the Ukrainian authorities. So far, two safe passage convoys have been successfully completed. In the first, concluded on 3 May, 101 civilians were evacuated from the Azovstal plant, along with 59 more from a neighbouring area. In the second operation, completed last night, more than 320 civilians were evacuated from the city of Mariupol

and surrounding areas. A third operation is under way, but it is our policy not to speak about the details of any of them before they are completed, to avoid undermining possible success. It is good to know that, even in these times of hyper-communication, silent diplomacy is still possible, and is sometimes the only effective way to produce results.

So far, in total, nearly 500 civilians found long-awaited relief, after living under relentless shelling and the scarce availability of water, food and sanitation. The evacuees have shared moving tales with United Nations staff. Mothers, children and frail grandparents spoke of their trauma. Some were in urgent need of medical attention. I hope that the continued coordination with Moscow and Kyiv will lead to more humanitarian pauses to allow civilians safe passage from the fighting and aid to reach those in critical need. We must continue to do all we can to get people out of those hellscapes.

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths will brief the Council today in greater detail on the most recent efforts in Mariupol and additional steps. High Commissioner Bachelet will brief on reports of violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, possible war crimes and the need for accountability. As I discussed yesterday with President Zelenskyy, the United Nations will continue to scale up humanitarian operations, save lives and reduce suffering.

My meetings with both leaders also focused on the crucial issue of global food security. Indeed, the worldwide implications of this war were in full view in my subsequent travels to West Africa. In Senegal, the Niger and Nigeria, I heard direct testimony from leaders and civil society on how the war is unleashing a food security crisis. We need quick and decisive action to ensure a steady flow of food and energy in open markets, by lifting export restrictions, allocating surpluses and reserves to those who need them and addressing food price increases to calm market volatility. But let me be clear — a meaningful solution to global food insecurity requires reintegrating Ukraine's agricultural production and the food and fertilizer production of Russia and Belarus into world markets, despite the war. I will do my best to help facilitate a dialogue to help make that a reality.

At the same time, the war in Ukraine, in all its dimensions, is setting in motion a crisis that is also

devastating global energy markets, disrupting financial systems and exacerbating extreme vulnerabilities for the developing world. That is precisely why I established the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance — to mobilize United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks and other international institutions to help countries face those challenges. We were particularly engaged in making proposals at the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

The war on Ukraine is senseless in its scope, ruthless in its dimensions and limitless in its potential for global harm. The cycle of death, destruction, dislocation and disruption must stop. It is high time to unite and end this war.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

Mr. Griffiths: As members just heard from the Secretary-General, elements of diplomatic progress are coming into view, even as civilian suffering mounts. I will speak briefly today, if I may, about the human toll of the war and then about what we are doing to address humanitarian needs, including a short update on our most recent operations. I know that High Commissioner Bachelet will provide details on the impact on civilians.

To recap, the destruction of civilian infrastructure has come to characterize the conflict. Apartment buildings, schools and hospitals in populated areas have been attacked. They must not be. More than 13 million Ukrainians have now been forced to flee their homes, of whom 7.7 million are displaced inside Ukraine. Lives have been uprooted, ripped apart and will never be the same again. Many other people could not run. Often, the most vulnerable are simply stuck. The elderly and people with disabilities have been unable to seek shelter from bombs, get out to gather supplies or receive information on evacuations.

The threat of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, sexual exploitation and abuse and human trafficking, has risen considerably since the war began, as I am sure we will hear from the other briefers. Allegations of sexual violence against women, girls, men and boys are mounting. As we have all seen, roads are heavily contaminated with explosive ordnance, putting civilians at risk and stopping humanitarian convoys from reaching them.

Let me brief members on what the United Nations and its humanitarian partners are doing inside Ukraine to meet those growing needs. There are approximately 217 humanitarian partners with whom we work in Ukraine. We have scaled up at record speed. We have more than 1,400 United Nations staff deployed across the country, operating out of eight hubs beyond Kyiv, with staff, warehouses and supplies in 30 locations, principally, of course, across the east of the country, where the war is happening and the needs are greatest.

We have reached more than 4.1 million people with some form of assistance, on a daily basis, across all of the country's 24 oblasts. Our humanitarian response has three main aspects. First, we deliver a great deal of humanitarian assistance and protection services to displaced people. I know that that is not enough; it is inadequate. I know that we will hear more about that. That is all across the country, especially where internally displaced people have sought safety or where people have begun returning to severely damaged communities, which is a crucial development. Just a few weeks ago when I was in Irpin, the Mayor described to us, as I think he did to the Secretary-General, how his people are trying to return to Irpin — but to do so, reconstruction will be necessary and will take a year and a half, as he put it.

Restoring basic services necessary to survival is key. I was very struck by the fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) very quickly after the conversation I had with the Mayor, but not as a result of it, went in to repair the basic services element for the population of Irpin to be able to return. In those areas, injecting cash aid allows civilians to choose what they need and offers a modicum of dignity in these fractious times. It helps to keep markets open and liquidity and supply chains moving.

We plan to reach 1.3 million people with cash assistance. Plugging into Ukraine's social protection system with top-up payments and working with the Government and the Prime Minister to implement his plans for the distribution of cash to his people in order to reach families at risk has needed technical liaison but is now largely achieved. Cash-based aid will now scale up rapidly.

Secondly, the other part of our response is working on prepositioning supplies to forward operating bases and increasing our preparedness in areas to where we imagine the war might move next.

Thirdly, as we have heard from the Secretary-General, we engage every single day with the parties to the conflict to push for the movement of aid to civilians in areas of active conflict, or to negotiate to help civilians leave for safer areas. So far, we have been able to stage five inter-agency aid convoys to some of the hardest hit areas — operations that required a humanitarian notification system used by both parties to allow for safe passage movements. They have been a lifeline, a small mercy perhaps, to civilians encircled by fighting, bringing in medical supplies, water, food rations, non-food-items and so forth. It is a beginning, but hopefully it is not an end.

As the Secretary-General has described, we have seen a glimmer in these past days, thanks to his efforts and those of our colleagues on the front line. As Council members know, on 2 May, more than 100 civilians were evacuated from the Azovstal plant in Mariupol, including women, children and older people. About 60 more people joined that convoy on the outskirts of Mariupol and were then able to move to safety. And it was, as the Secretary-General described, a project of the greatest complexity and of constant oversight, and it was an exceptional operation.

I am especially grateful to the International Committee of the Red Cross and the leadership of Peter Maurer, as well as to our own highly experienced first responders. But I must also applaud the authorities — essentially the respective militaries of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation — for their close and constructive and essential cooperation in making that operation a reality. It showed us that that can happen. And I believe, although the numbers were not great, that a single life saved is worth every ounce of effort.

As of yesterday, as the Secretary-General said, we were able to move more than 320 civilians out of the Mariupol area broadly, again working closely in lockstep with the ICRC and with the cooperation of Ukrainian and Russian authorities. Today we have a third operation, which began this morning, with the intent of evacuating civilians from Mariupol and Azovstal. And as he said, we prefer not to speak about that operation until it is complete.

What I can finally say about this is that we are finally seeing the fruits of our labour over these past many weeks — of establishing liaison in Moscow and of the visit that preceded the Secretary-General — which

were brought about by the long and detailed meetings with the leaderships on both sides this past week. We are beginning to see now that the agreement on local ceasefires — because none of those movements of safe passage would happen without local ceasefires, pauses or windows of silence — are allowing us to make some progress. And we are building relations and experience that we hope we can broaden to more such operations. That is the third element of our humanitarian programme.

We will keep pushing for more civilians to be able to leave Mariupol, and indeed Azovstal, if they so choose. And we will begin, on that basis, to explore options for reaching others where the need is greatest and where we need and desire to serve the people of Ukraine in their hour of direst need.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Bachelet.

Ms. Bachelet: For over eight years, since 15 March 2014, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) — through the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine — has been monitoring the situation in country. To date, we have released close to 50 periodic and thematic reports.

On 24 February, we quickly adapted to a very different working environment. Like millions of Ukrainians, the staff of my Office relocated to other regions of the country, but — and I am very proud to say — have not paused their work for a single day. Currently, the mission has staff on the ground in Uzhgorod, Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, Donetsk and Odesa, and conducts field visits to various parts of the country, including the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions just last week.

The mission continues to verify allegations of violations of international human rights law and of international humanitarian law in the context of the Russian Federation's armed attack on Ukraine. Many of those allegations concern violations that may amount to war crimes.

Based on the mission's work, my Office updated the Human Rights Council at the end of March, and will present a report on the human rights situation in Ukraine covering the period from 24 February to 15 May at the next session of the Council in June. My press statement on Ukraine of 22 April summarized our most recent findings. It pains me to say that all our concerns remain valid, and the situation keeps deteriorating.

Today is the seventy-first day of the escalation in hostilities, expanding the already eight-year-long conflict to all regions of the country. Reports of deadly incidents, such as attacks on hospital No. 3 and the drama theatre in Mariupol, on the railway station in Kramatorsk, on residential areas in Odesa, have become shockingly frequent. There seems to be no end in sight to the daily reports of civilian deaths and injuries.

My team on the ground conveys the palpable trauma and shock experienced by the people they speak with, the vast majority of whom have either personally witnessed a violation or are victims themselves.

Rather than try to describe what victims are going through, let me use their words. Residents of Mariupol set up a Telegram channel to share information about their relatives who perished in the city: "He was killed in front of his wife and children." "Her body remained under the debris of her house. We could not even bury her." "My uncle died from loss of blood after sustaining fragmentation injuries. I know only that he was buried in a collective grave." I could share many more such messages.

Last week, on 28 April, when the Secretary-General was visiting Kyiv to meet the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the city was hit by two missiles. At least one woman, a journalist, was killed, and four civilians were injured in the attack. An OHCHR team was in Kyiv on that day too, preparing to visit Bucha. On the same day, we corroborated 22 civilian deaths and 40 civilian injuries in other places of Ukraine.

In Ukraine as a whole, my Office has recorded 6,731 civilian casualties since 24 February. We know the real figures are considerably higher. As my Office consistently reports, most of those casualties have been caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas, such as shelling from heavy artillery, including multiple launch rocket systems, missiles and air strikes.

My Office is also documenting the devastating consequences of the conflict on other human rights. In areas around Kyiv, from late February for about five weeks, Russian forces targeted male civilians, whom they considered suspicious. Men were detained, beaten, summarily executed and, in some cases, taken to Belarus and Russia, unbeknownst to their families, and held in pre-trial detention facilities. My staff met with families who are searching for their missing male relatives, desperate to know where they are, if they are

alive, and how they can get them back. Families were shot at as they tried to escape in convoys. In some areas, it was dangerous to cross the street, with snipers or soldiers shooting at anyone who tried. Local authorities are compiling lists of dead and missing, continuing exhumations, taking DNA from relatives, while also trying to reconnect those districts to electricity and water.

In other areas controlled by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups such as the Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, we continue to document arbitrary detention and possible enforced disappearances of representatives of local authorities, journalists, civil society activists, retired servicemen of the armed forces and other civilians by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups. As of 4 May, my Office had documented 180 such cases, of which five victims were eventually found dead. We have also documented eight possible forced disappearances of people considered to be pro-Russian in Government controlled territory.

My staff heard about cases of women having been raped by Russian armed forces in areas that were under their control, as well as other allegations of sexual violence by both parties to the conflict. And yet, the stigma around rape and sexual violence continues to prevent victims and their families from feeling safe to report. That only highlights the importance of ensuring adequate and safe support services for victims.

Grim evidence of torture, ill-treatment and summary executions of prisoners of war committed by both parties to the conflict is surfacing. My Office is collecting such evidence, which will be included in its future reporting.

The only way for those horrors to stop is for armed forces to fully respect their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. It is vital that all parties give clear instructions to their combatants to protect civilians and persons hors de combat, as well as to distinguish between civilian and military objects. Those in command of armed forces must make it clear to their members that anyone found to have been involved in such violations will be prosecuted and held accountable. Accountability demands that evidence be preserved and that mortal remains be treated with decency.

The list of gross violations of international human rights law and serious violations of international

humanitarian law continues to grow each day. We cannot let the number of victims continue to rise.

A one-day ceasefire alone would spare the lives of at least 50 civilian children, women and men, including many older persons. A one-day ceasefire would prevent 30 to 70 civilians from being injured and a dozen from becoming disabled. A one-day ceasefire would allow several thousand civilians to safely leave areas where they are currently trapped in hostilities. Most important, a ceasefire will show that the horror in Ukraine can be stopped. It is of the most fundamental importance that the ongoing hostilities cease, once and for all.

Advocating for accountability is a cornerstone of my Office's work. If the perpetrators of violations against civilians and persons hors de combat are brought to justice, potential perpetrators will think twice before unleashing similar unlawful attacks or acts of violence and creating new victims. Accountability also contributes to the healing process for the victims, their families and society at large.

National justice systems are the most crucial. I urge the parties to the conflict to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law allegedly committed by their armed forces, and I welcome Ukraine's efforts in that regard.

My Office is fully committed to supporting those systems and the work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and to cooperating with the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and other international justice mechanisms, in accordance with our established United Nations frameworks.

Let us commit to putting a stop to this senseless conflict. We must be steadfast in our efforts for peace and resolute that justice will be done.

The President: I thank Ms. Bachelet for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Luzan.

Ms. Luzan: It is a great honour today to represent Ukraine's civil society, which mobilized in the first hours after the full-scale Russian invasion of 24 February, as they did before for eight years of the war.

Our joint efforts are aimed at supporting brave Ukrainians fighting at the forefront, as well as in public offices in Lviv, Kyiv and Kramatorsk. They consist of volunteers, municipal workers planting flowers in Kharkiv and other cities in Ukraine under heavy

shelling. They are railway workers evacuating people away from hostilities and death. They are bakers, cashiers and grocers and all people affected by the war. All Ukrainians are now beating as one big heart.

In the chaos of war, no one should be left behind. People, their lives, health, honour, dignity and security will always be our greatest value. In order to maintain that goal, Ukraine and the whole civilized world will face immense challenges caused by the military invasion of the Russian Federation.

The war has lasted eight years. In 2021, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ukraine, including the occupied territories of Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk regions, officially reached almost 1.5 million. At the end of April, the International Organization for Migration reported that the number of internally displaced persons as a result of the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine reached 7.7 million. They all carried the same heavy burden of displacement. They all need equal protection.

We must also not forget the Ukrainians — from Mariupol, Chernihiv, Sievierodonetsk and other cities and villages — who were forcibly displaced to the Russian Federation. They were forcibly displaced without documents or means of communication and were exposed to “filtration” by the Russian Federation. In the two most recent months, more than 1 million people suffered that fate, including approximately 200,000 children. It must be ensured that those who are willing to come back to Ukraine or travel to other countries have the ability to do so.

The challenges that children and their parents have experienced in the face of war are overwhelming. Right to Protection received calls via our hotline of parents ready to send their children abroad with complete strangers out of desperation because of the Russian atrocities being carried out in Kharkiv, Mariupol and other cities. The world was shaken by stories of little boys as young as 4 or 5 crossing the State border alone or, in the best-case scenario, with barely familiar people.

Ukraine and recipient countries should assume responsibility for protecting those vulnerable little Ukrainians so that they can safely cross State borders, supported by specially trained State officers and child service representatives. Recipient countries must guarantee their protection at the highest level; family reunification should be pursued; and their safe

and timely return to the Ukraine after the war must be ensured.

The number of killed and injured civilians is ever-increasing. The destinies of dozens of thousands of people in Mariupol, Kherson, Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Irpin are unknown. Relatives cannot always prove the deaths of their loved ones — even if they witnessed that person’s final moments. The international community must assist the Government of Ukraine in establishing and enforcing appropriate measures for investigation and prosecution — because each life is priceless and relatives deserve to know the truth.

I want to mention the Ukrainians who have fled Ukraine, seeking safety and security in the European Union and other countries of the civilized world. Those Ukrainians — overwhelmingly women and children — must not be overlooked. We must promote their rights, provide them shelter, protect them from human trafficking and ensure their access to services, including psychological help. Stateless persons and third-country nationals who had previously found refuge in Ukraine must also be granted protection alongside Ukrainians.

Finally, it is of paramount importance to recall the vast number of IDPs, many of whom may not even have a roof over their heads. In many cases, the conditions of temporary accommodations do not comply with the basic norms of adequate shelter. IDPs live in collective or transit centres established in schools or places of common use that are often not designed to provide shelter during cold periods.

Over 32 million square metres of housing and other properties were destroyed, damaged or occupied. Despite the massive destruction that the world has seen in Bucha, Irpin, Chernihiv and Kharkiv, thousands of civilians either returned or never left their damaged homes. All of them urgently need adequate temporary or permanent accommodations, especially for the cold autumn and winter periods. Those who chose not to leave their damaged homes must receive much-needed tangible support, such as construction materials, tools, plastic wrapping and physical help.

In addition, such unprecedented massive destruction of civilian infrastructure requires durable solutions from the Ukrainian authorities, with the support of the international community. We call on all members of the Security Council, international organizations and

Governments to firmly support the people of Ukraine in these dark times.

In the name of the millions of people who have died, those yet unborn and the surviving residents of Ukraine, a United Nations Member since 1945, we are required to rephrase and give a new sense to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” to live in peace.

The President: I thank Ms. Luzan for her briefing.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council’s commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

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

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): May I start by congratulating the United Kingdom presidency on its excellent stewardship of the Security Council during the month of April. I wish you, Madam President, as well as the United States team, the very best for this month. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks, for his clear positioning in upholding international law and, even more so, for his efforts to negotiate safe passage for civilians in Mariupol during his recent visit to Russia and Ukraine. We all must be proud of what the United Nations system is doing to help Ukraine and its people. I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, High Commissioner Bachelet and Ms. Luzan for their important and updated, yet sobering information.

The absurd, unprovoked, unjustified and ongoing war of choice of Russia in Ukraine is in its third month. While Russia continues to be immured in total denial, the world continues to witness a never-ending human tragedy. Despite worldwide calls, there is no end in sight. Calls for a humanitarian pause during Orthodox Easter went unheeded. The war continues to inflict undue pain on Ukraine and its people. Indiscriminate shelling and bombing of population areas, the killing of civilians and attacks on health facilities, schools and civilian infrastructure continue. Extrajudicial killings, sexual violence and rape — actions that may amount to war crimes — have been documented and are mounting, as we heard from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths.

The eastern and southern parts of Ukraine are now facing severe consequences, while air strikes continue in multiple areas in Ukraine, causing additional damage and civilian losses. Every time that we meet here, there are new reports of casualties and news of more atrocities uncovered and more destruction inflicted, just like the apartment hit in Odesa, killing eight civilians, including a three-month-old baby, and all those dreadful accounts just mentioned by High Commissioner Bachelet.

But Russia’s actions are not limited only to Ukraine. More than 5 million people have been forced to cross the borders. No one could have imagined how quickly the world’s breadbasket could go from wheat fields to battlefields. Global hunger is soaring to alarming levels, exacerbated like never before by this war, which is destroying a country, aggressing developing countries and challenging the entire world.

To date, 1,200 bodies have been discovered around Kyiv, almost all of whom were civilians, killed by a bullet to the head. Members will recall that the Kremlin considered Ukrainians as brothers, yet it is killing them. When one kills one’s family, one is a monster. Soldiers have tortured, raped and murdered, only to be honoured for their bravery. They should be called to account, not celebrated.

As Russia stalls and keeps redrawing its strategy, everything indicates that disabused commanders have abandoned military doctrine and, to prove any form of success, are flattening cities and terrorizing civilians. That is the victory *à la russe*. When one cannot prevail on the battlefield, one resorts to atrocities — a terrible match of incompetence with brutality. That is a cruel reality and a dreadful prospect.

The more Russia struggles in the face of Ukraine’s resistance, the more the Kremlin’s rhetoric continues to escalate into the madman’s idea of nuclear war. Nuclear sabre-rattling is ignominious. Once it was by the President himself, then another official and then the unstoppable propaganda machine. What is the purpose of showing on the television a nuclear weapon, which could trigger a tsunami strong enough to flood the entire United Kingdom? What is the logic of staging a nuclear explosion in the heart of Ireland? There could not be a more striking contrast between dreams and projects of science for conquering space and extending human civilization beyond the planet and that archaic and rotted rhetoric of the possible use of weapons of

mass destruction and of annihilation of civilization because of the war of choice that is being lost.

Leon Trotsky wrote:

“The army is a copy of society and suffers from all its diseases, usually at a higher temperature.”

That is why truth is critical so that domestic and international opinion does not fall for the propaganda and the conspiracy theories vehiculated relentlessly from a black hole, from where only darkness escapes.

Only the day before yesterday, we celebrated World Press Freedom Day. I would like to pay tribute to all the brave journalists who are risking their lives to tell the truth and keep the world informed about the war in Ukraine.

Russian citizens must learn that this war is not glorifying their country. It has isolated it like never before. It is not making it further prosper. To the contrary, it is vertiginously spiralling it downward. It is not transporting it to modernity, but rather dragging it into a revolved past.

No one wants to destroy Russia. No one wants to cancel Russia. If the Kremlin has made bad choices and has taken wrong decisions, it can correct the course, which means stopping the war, recalling troops back home, choosing reason, returning to diplomacy, respecting its neighbour and letting that big Ukraine heart beat in freedom, as Ms. Luzan mentioned. That is what is needed. The keyword here is *mir*.

After several failed attempts, safe passage was arduously secured for a number of civilians in Mariupol’s steel facility, which, as we heard, is under way. That is a testimony — a welcome, but a meagre one compared to the scale of tragedy in Ukraine — that diplomacy can work, but there must be a will.

The lucky ones who are seeing the sun again after weeks underground to escape relentless shelling say that, before being escorted to non-occupied parts of Ukraine, they were interrogated by Federal Security Service agents seeking information on the tunnels of the Azovstal steel complex, with a view to locating Ukrainian soldiers still in the only part of Mariupol not occupied by Russian forces. Occupied means destroyed. Only two months ago, Mariupol was a thriving city, with almost half a million inhabitants. The scorched-earth strategy applied by Russia has made it the catacomb of Ukraine.

We now know that the main mantra of the pretext of the war was that the invasion of Ukraine is to free the country of Nazis despite the fact that the first citizen, the President of Ukraine, is Jewish. Yet the theory has been further elaborated.

Pretending that the most ardent anti-Semites are usually Jews and that Hitler had Jewish blood, which underlines a theory that Jews inflicted the Holocaust on themselves, just like the Ukrainians are supposedly slaughtering their people and destroying their own country, is not black humour. That is not one of those basic fake-news items that one easily discards as rubbish. That is part of the worst conspiracy-theory warfare. When we have the top diplomat dwelling on such disgracefulness, that is a terrible low, coming from a very dangerous high.

We are not in the business of competition as to who speaks more or louder. We are here to try to stop this war and those crimes, protect civilians and make sure that the perpetrators do not have a place in our world, but only in theirs — the one where they pay for their deeds through accountability.

We welcome the huge efforts of the European Union to respond to the massive increase in humanitarian needs and in providing military, financial and other support for the reconstruction. We welcome the high-level international donor conference for Ukraine held today in Warsaw. Albania made a commitment there.

As we heard, the Secretary-General was received in Moscow for uneasy talks with the authorities. He also visited Kyiv. As appalling and as shameful as it may be, Kyiv was shelled during his visit and while he was speaking. Rarely have we witnessed such a degree of disregard for the United Nations and its Secretary-General and such contempt for the Organization and the entire United Nations personnel. I do not know how the Russians explain that, unless in the very same way as for everything else: the Ukrainians did it.

Let me conclude with this note: we should strongly reject any idea of territorial division of Ukraine imposed by force as a result of aggression. We have mentioned it before, and we reiterate it now: the creation of artificial entities, either by occupation or by proxies, is unacceptable. That should not be accepted in Ukraine or anywhere else.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate the United Kingdom on

its presidency of the Security Council last month and wish the United States every success during its presidency this month. I thank Secretary-General António Guterres, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Ms. Tetiana Luzan for their briefings today.

I begin by acknowledging the efforts of the Secretary-General during his recent mission to Russia and Ukraine which, inter alia, allowed for the evacuation of a considerable number of civilians in very critical conditions at the Azovstal plant in Mariupol. In this context, the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross is also commendable. Humanitarian assistance must remain our priority through the implementation of resolution ES-11/2, adopted on 24 March by the General Assembly.

We support the Secretary-General in his good offices and diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful solution to this conflict, which has lasted more than 10 weeks, and which has had very serious consequences on the Ukrainian civilian population and whose repercussions at the global level are already beginning to have a harsh impact. Until a cessation of hostilities is reached and progress is made towards a diplomatic solution, the objective must be to urgently provide the required humanitarian aid and protect the civilian population and the infrastructure necessary for meeting people's basic needs. The numbers that have been shared with us with regard to the victims, damages and costs that this conflict has caused to date are alarming, and the most unfortunate thing is that the real figures are probably even worse.

A year ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2573 (2021), which requires all parties to armed conflict to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law. It is unacceptable that the World Health Organization has so far reported 186 attacks on health and hospital facilities during the conflict. In addition, we must also deplore the attacks recorded against schools, dams, train stations, food warehouses and homes, inter alia, which demonstrate a total disregard for international humanitarian law.

We reiterate once again the obligation to distinguish between the civilian population and civilian objects, on the one hand, and combatants and military objectives, on the other. It is impermissible to attack, destroy or render useless goods that are indispensable for the

survival of the civilian population, which is even more tragic when it occurs in the context of great and growing humanitarian needs.

Mexico will closely follow the developments surrounding the investigation into the situation in Ukraine announced by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. Such investigations are fundamental, since international law is the foundation of the United Nations. International law is also the basis of multilateralism and of all forms of respectful coexistence between sovereign States. All parties have undertaken to respect the obligations arising from the Charter of the United Nations, the various treaties and other sources of international law, in particular international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Mexico's position has been unequivocal: we advocate preventive diplomacy, we favour dialogue and a political solution based on international law, and, above all, we support putting people at the centre of the Security Council's action — without exceptions and without conditions. We will continue to call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as this is the highest of all priorities. We are closely following the orders of the International Court of Justice and the investigations of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

We reiterate that, by ratifying the Charter of the United Nations, all States have pledged to respect the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of States. Ukraine cannot be an exception. My delegation will continue to promote everything that allows unrestricted access to humanitarian assistance, and we insist on the imperative need for the Security Council to emerge from the paralysis to which it has been held hostage and fulfil its responsibilities, namely, to stop the war and restore peace in Ukraine.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General, Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Griffiths and Ms. Luzan for their briefings.

Let me commend the outstanding work of the United Nations agencies and humanitarian actors. We have just heard that the Secretary-General's visit to Kyiv and Moscow has enabled the evacuation of hundreds of civilians. I thank him for that. But how many people are still there, holed up in the tunnels of the Azovstal steel plant or blocked in the hidden recesses of Mariupol, being shelled by the Russian army? It is essential that the evacuation of civilians continues in complete safety and

on a voluntary basis, leaving the choice of destination to the evacuees. France condemns the resumption of the offensive by Russia and the maintenance of the siege of the city in defiance of international humanitarian law. It also condemns the indiscriminate strikes that hit Kyiv during the Secretary-General's visit. These strikes reflect the low esteem in which Russia, which has constantly trampled on the Charter and its founding principles since the beginning of this war, holds the United Nations.

For more than two months, the Russian army has been killing civilians, including children, humanitarian workers and journalists. More than a quarter of the Ukrainian population has been forced to flee, and the number is growing. Civilians can no longer find respite in schools and hospitals. Russia is indiscriminately dropping bombs, hitting water infrastructure and laying mines in fields, so as to deprive the Ukrainian population of the goods necessary for their survival.

The priority is an immediate cessation of hostilities and full respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. Access must be urgently guaranteed in Mariupol and in all besieged cities, while more than 15 million people are in need of aid. France will continue to play its full part. It has delivered over 815 tons of aid in response to the crisis. And more than 22,000 tons of emergency aid has been delivered by the European Union. Our overall support will increase to \$2 billion, as President Macron announced today at the donor conference hosted by Poland and Sweden.

Beyond Ukraine, the whole world is affected by this war, which risks pushing a fifth of the world's population into poverty and food insecurity. Russia must lift the blockade of Ukrainian ports in the Black Sea in order to allow for food exports.

I state this emphatically: war criminals will be brought to justice. In that regard, France supports the prompt deployment of accountability mechanisms. We will remain resolutely engaged alongside the people of Ukraine and international jurisdictions and mechanisms, including in particular the International Criminal Court.

Lastly, I wish to reiterate that France will continue to stand firmly by the side of Ukraine and its people, to whom I wish to pay tribute for their courage and their staunch resistance.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish at the outset to thank Secretary-General António Guterres, Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet for their briefings. I also listened to the statement made by Ms. Luzan.

The fighting in Ukraine has been raging for more than two months now, and China has repeatedly stated its position on the issue. The longer the conflict lasts, the more people will suffer. The priority at hand is to step up efforts to promote a ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities. Secretary-General Guterres visited Russia and Ukraine last week and met with the leaders of the two countries, calling for the creation of conditions for effective dialogue so as to achieve a ceasefire as soon as possible. The Secretary-General has also made unremitting efforts to mitigate the humanitarian situation.

It is heartening to note that after the visit of the Secretary-General, and thanks to the intensified coordination between the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, Russia and Ukraine have agreed to arrange for the evacuation of the civilians stranded in Mariupol; more than 300 civilians have been successfully evacuated from Mariupol and other places to Zaporizhzhya. China welcomes that positive progress, which was made possible through consultations among the parties concerned, and thanks the Secretary-General for his instrumental role.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict remains dire, and the ever-increasing number of civilian casualties is deeply lamentable. Once again, we call on the parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint, refrain from hurting innocent civilians and damaging civilian facilities, and give priority to ensuring humanitarian relief and assistance for such vulnerable groups as women and children.

Building on the evacuation work in Mariupol, all parties concerned should establish a broader and more efficient humanitarian coordination mechanism so as to ensure the safe and smooth operation of the evacuation and humanitarian rescue channels and minimize the humanitarian impact of the conflict.

International humanitarian agencies should continue to mobilize the international community to increase resource inputs, help Ukraine and its neighbours to cope with the pressure of providing humanitarian relief, spare no effort to save lives, alleviate the suffering of

people and create the conditions necessary for the safe and orderly return of refugees to their homes.

The signs that point to a protracted and expanded conflict are truly worrying. It has to be pointed out that delivering weapons will not deliver peace and that the conflict can have no winners. Dialogue and negotiation is the only and inevitable way to resolve disputes. Russia and Ukraine have laid some groundwork in the previous negotiations; all the more reason for them to continue talks against all odds. The international community should create enabling conditions for the Russia-Ukraine negotiations and make further efforts to facilitate the political settlement rather than the other way around. It is not only morally despicable to try to benefit from the turmoil but also dangerous, as doing so is doomed to backfire.

The continued fighting and multifarious and indiscriminate sanctions are subjecting people in all countries, not least the developing countries, to higher prices for food and oil as well as other hefty consequences. The arbitrary seizure and freezing of the foreign-exchange reserves of other countries is tantamount to weaponizing economic interdependence, which is bringing more uncertainty and posing an even greater peril to the world economy and international relations.

We call on the international community to strengthen macroeconomic policy coordination and work together to effectively regulate and contain the negative spillover effects of the Ukrainian conflict.

The lessons being drawn from the Ukraine crisis are profound and deserving of serious reflection. The security of all countries is indivisible. To base one country's security on the insecurity of others is neither reasonable nor viable.

NATO's repeated eastward expansion after the cold war has not only failed to make Europe any safer but also sowed the seeds of conflict. Contrary to its claim to be an organization that is defensive in nature, NATO wantonly launches wars against sovereign countries, causing colossal numbers of casualties and humanitarian disasters.

The day after tomorrow is 7 May. On 7 May 1999, NATO fired a number of precision-guided missiles at the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia, killing three Chinese journalists and injuring more than 20 Chinese diplomats. The Chinese people will never forget that

barbaric atrocity and will never allow such history to repeat itself. Now that the cold war is behind us, NATO should naturally size up the situation and make the necessary adjustments. Clinging to the anachronistic doctrine of security and keen to provoke bloc confrontations and create tensions in Europe and even in the Asia-Pacific region and the entire world, it engages in practices that are as harmful to others as they are deleterious to the perpetrators themselves. They deserve nothing less than China's firm opposition. The world does not need a new cold war, and it cannot afford greater turmoil and division.

China solemnly advocates that in order to solve the practical problems relating to human security and seek a long-term solution aimed at ensuring world peace, all countries should reaffirm their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, earnestly uphold the principle of the indivisibility of security, forge synergies through consultations and build together a balanced, effective and sustainable global and regional security architecture.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May and wishing you every success during the month. I also take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Barbara Woodward and the United Kingdom delegation for their able leadership of the Council last month.

We thank the Secretary-General for his statement and have paid close attention to the important briefings by Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, and we thank them also for their coordination of United Nations efforts and actions in Ukraine.

We also thank Ms. Tetiana Luzan of Right to Protection for highlighting the work of her organization in the area of protection assistance.

It is the ordinary people of Ukraine who continue to bear the brunt of the war, with women, children and the aged being disproportionately affected. Urgent action is therefore imperative to stem the rising humanitarian crisis and restore the hope of peace, which has so far eluded the people of Ukraine.

We therefore welcome the important undertakings of the Secretary-General during his recent visit to Moscow and Kyiv, where he held discussions with

President Putin and President Zelenskyy, personally assessed the impact of the war and helped to mobilize humanitarian evacuations in Mariupol.

We encourage the continued deployment of the good offices of the Secretary-General in the international endeavour to bring an end to the war and facilitate a diplomatic solution to the ongoing security and humanitarian crises in Ukraine.

We commend the facilitative role played by United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in the coordinated evacuation of civilians from the Azovstal steel plant on 3 May. However, we regret the resumption of heavy shelling and the fact that air strikes were aimed at the steel plant before all the people could be moved to safety. Intense efforts must be made to secure the immediate evacuation of close to 1,000 people, including an estimated 30 children, still holed up in the underground tunnels of the steel plant, with little access to food, water and medical assistance. We urge the parties to agree to further humanitarian pauses and demilitarized humanitarian corridors in all besieged areas to help protect the lives of civilians and to ensure the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to alleviate suffering.

We note the set obligation of the parties to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules of international law and international humanitarian law and reiterate our call on them to implement the necessary measures to protect civilians and humanitarian workers from harm, while also avoiding the deliberate destruction of civilian and critical infrastructure, including in Lviv, Kharkiv, Odesa and the Donbas region where intense fighting continues to rage.

We continue to be concerned by the growing reports of gross human rights violations and possible war crimes, involving summary killings, forced disappearances, human trafficking and conflict-related sexual violence, and reiterate the necessity of an independent, impartial and thorough investigation to ensure effective accountability and secure justice for the innocent victims of the war. In that regard, we welcome investigations opened into all cases of alleged atrocities.

Beyond the destruction and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, the impact of the war is already being felt on the food, energy and financial systems of the world. The disruptions in food supply chains and the high cost of energy have caused historic rises in the cost of

living globally. The stifling economic effects, along with the existing difficulties of the coronavirus disease pandemic, have the potential to fester sociopolitical tensions and instability, especially in developing economies that have little fiscal space to contain the shocks.

Ending the war in Ukraine now is therefore not only urgent to avoid a direct humanitarian crisis for the Ukrainian people but also critical to abate a global meltdown, which would linger and have deep adverse impacts on the global economy, the security architecture and the multilateral order. Furthermore, we are concerned about the fact that the avowed commitments of the parties to engage in negotiations have so far not yielded the desired results due to growing mistrust and widening differences in expectations. We encourage the parties to recommit to the objectives of peace and the settlement of their dispute.

In that context, the international community, and Security Council in particular, must overcome inherent challenges to facilitate a constructive dialogue — first, to support the immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and, secondly, to provide a forum within which the core geopolitical and security concerns of the Russian Federation, Ukraine and NATO and its allied countries can be sustainably addressed.

In conclusion, we call on the members of the Council to find common purpose in working to restore and maintain the peace and security of Ukraine.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I congratulate you, Madam President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month.

I thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and welcome him back to New York after his extensive and important travels. I also thank the other briefers for their briefings and the work they do every day. We also welcome Ukraine's Permanent Representative and the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, among other speakers, to today's meeting.

The briefings we have heard make it clear that the war in Ukraine, caused by the armed breach of the country's territorial integrity by the Russian Federation, is causing extreme suffering. It is also sadly clear that sufficient care is not being accorded by combatants to the protection of civilians. After all, the millions of civilians who have fled their homes did so only because

they understood that their lives and properties would be directly harmed in the course of the conflict.

We are gravely concerned about the most recent developments in Mariupol, Iziium, and Popasna, among other cities. The reports from those cities reveal heavy artillery shelling and air strikes that destroy civilian objects at scale. Those acts constitute a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law.

Kenya condemns the disproportionate use of force, the use of human shields and the exploitation of civilian suffering as a tactic of war. As important as it is for the Security Council to be clear in its condemnation of those violating our shared values and rules, it is more urgent to stop the present cycle of escalation. Public statements by the combatants and their allies suggest that there is little respite from violence that civilians in Ukraine can look forward to. Instead, weapons and soldiers are being deployed in ever-greater numbers.

The war itself and its aims are being communicated as existential. There is even repeated mention of the possible use of nuclear weapons being made in the media. Increased battlefield engagements, combined with their propaganda counterpart in the shaping of domestic and international public opinion, plus the apocalyptic tone, may lead to a far more dangerous escalation than is presently the case, with the result being more Ukrainians being harmed.

Connected to the harm being done to the civilians in Ukraine is the harm that the war is causing in other parts of the world. The inability of Ukraine to export its harvests and fertilizer is directly contributing to the immiseration of many millions, and serious harm is being caused to their food security. That is particularly the case in relatively poor and food insecure countries in the global South, including those in Africa. The unprecedented sanctions in response to the war are also reshaping global development, food security and even political stability.

With every new mention of nuclear weapons as part of the conflict continuum, or promises of unceasing war until one side is permanently disabled, global equity and debt markets will exit riskier emerging market economies, and investors will delay or cancel the investments that we all need to be able to deliver sufficient jobs to our young people.

It is therefore our contention that the civilians in Ukraine, while under the more immediate threat of extreme violence, are united in their interest in safety with the billions of civilians globally. It means that the whole world has a stake in an immediate cessation of hostilities for humanitarian purposes, followed by a structured ceasefire that enables meaningful negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. In addition, if we want the global markets to play a part in the development of the global South, rather than the reverse, then Europe's security order must be placed on a stable footing.

Added to the growing global economic crisis, that stable security order in Europe is also needed if we are to limit the harm to civilians from climate change. The present arraying of major geopolitical forces in a growing conflict will make it next to impossible to undertake ambitious climate change action. Even before the war started, agreement on climate adaptation and mitigation action was plagued by the lack of trust, changing goalposts and unmet commitments. If climate change is indeed, as the science informs us, leading to serious harm to humankind, then we can count the war and its deleterious impact on multilateralism as yet another blow to the safety and security of civilians worldwide.

At this rate, the multilateral system may not survive the multiple major crises we are causing while undermining its ability to solve them. As a minimum response to protecting peace, Kenya urges Member States to place more trust in the good offices of the Secretary-General. The historical record of the use of those good offices is replete with shortcomings but also with great successes. The decisive factor has been the extent to which conflicting States and their most influential allies give the Secretary-General space to help mediate conflict at all stages.

We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's recent trips to Russia and Ukraine, where he sought commitments for a ceasefire and safe humanitarian passage and to encourage negotiations. We urge the parties to embrace his readiness to mediate. Their doing so will signal their regard and respect for our United Nations.

I underscore, in conclusion, that the continued undermining, and even destruction, of multilateralism will lead only to more war. It will be a catastrophe for civilians in multiple regions and countries. Stopping

the war in Ukraine offers us all an opportunity to live up to the promise of the Charter of the United Nations to protect succeeding generations from our own shortcomings.

I reaffirm Kenya's respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I would like to express my gratitude for the participation of Secretary-General António Guterres, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and Ms. Tetiana Luzan, including for their first-hand accounts from the conflict in Ukraine.

The Brazilian Government continues to follow closely the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Our utmost priorities should be the immediate cessation of hostilities and the strengthening of diplomatic negotiations in order to bring about a lasting solution to this crisis, one that does not only end the conflict but also contributes to improving the security and defence architecture in Europe. Besides the human rights violations and the humanitarian costs of the conflict, we are also attentive to the negative economic effects of the war for the whole world, especially in the form of higher food and energy prices, which have particularly dire consequences for developing countries.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Secretary-General during his recent visits to Moscow and Kyiv to discuss with Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy how to establish safe humanitarian corridors to allow the evacuation of civilians from conflagrated areas, such as in the city of Mariupol. We commend all the tireless work being done by the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to provide humanitarian aid to millions of people inside Ukraine, while being cognizant of the fact that humanitarian assistance needs remain huge. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ukraine's neighbouring countries for keeping their borders open to refugees.

I would also like to express my recognition of the Secretary-General for having raised this afternoon, despite it not being the central focus of this meeting, the impact that the conflict and its associated factors are having on food security worldwide.

Brazil stresses the importance of all parties to the conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law, especially its provisions regarding the protection of

civilians. Of particular concern to Brazil are: first, the consequences of the shelling of urban areas, including with the use of explosive weapons and the targeting of civilians; secondly, the need to avoid the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the disruption of basic services; thirdly, the protection of the elderly, people with disabilities and children, among other vulnerable groups; fourthly, the protection of humanitarian personnel and unimpeded humanitarian access; and fifthly, the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons.

It is our belief that resolution ES-11/2, the humanitarian resolution adopted by the General Assembly last March, provides an adequate framework for concrete actions on the ground, such as guaranteeing safe passage for civilians and unimpeded access for humanitarian personnel. Furthermore, the resolution provides us with the main objectives we should strive to achieve, in particular full compliance by all parties to the armed conflict to respect international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law.

Within its capabilities, Brazil is contributing to the humanitarian efforts, offering shelter to citizens fleeing the armed conflict in Ukraine. Since last March, Brazil has granted temporary visas and residency authorization for Ukrainian nationals and stateless persons who have been affected or displaced by the events in Ukraine. Brazil has also donated food, medicine and water purifiers to the victims of the conflict.

The lives and well-being of civilians in conflagrated areas are in great jeopardy. The cessation of hostilities is a matter of urgency. We have already witnessed too much suffering. The effective delivery of humanitarian aid is of paramount importance. Moreover, we need a resumption of diplomatic negotiations that are conducive to a peaceful and lasting solution to this crisis.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to welcome back the Secretary-General and thank him for his briefing this afternoon. I also want to extend a particularly warm welcome to High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and Ms. Tetiana Luzan for updating us today on the humanitarian disaster in Ukraine. Their briefings highlight yet again the utter senselessness of this unlawful war.

Eleven weeks into this unjustified and unjustifiable war, we continue to witness widespread destruction,

indiscriminate attacks and unconscionable human suffering. As each day passes, reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by Russia grow. And, as we have heard from colleagues around this table, the consequences are being felt far beyond Ukraine and Europe. Russia must end its war now.

We salute the courageous decision by the Secretary-General to visit Moscow and Kyiv last week. The founders of the United Nations were clear on their primary objective — to prevent the human suffering wrought from war.

The Secretary-General speaks for all of us in deploring this war and calling for its end. The cynical timing of further attacks on civilian infrastructure during his time in Kyiv and following his visit to Moscow is further evidence of the disdain that has been shown towards the United Nations. It is more than regrettable that we should have to recall that the Secretary-General of the United Nations is appointed by all Members of the United Nations. He is mandated by all Members of the United Nations. We have a responsibility towards our Secretary-General.

What the Secretary-General witnessed in Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka follows the devastation wrought on Kharkiv, Kherson and Mariupol, as well as elsewhere. Civilians, as he said, are paying the highest price for this conflict.

We commend the work of the United Nations agencies in Ukraine and the organizations with whom they are working to alleviate the suffering there. They have our support. They have our appreciation.

We welcome the Secretary-General's work to put in place arrangements for the evacuation of civilians from Mariupol. We welcome the ongoing life-saving work of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross there. We believe that thousands still remain trapped and under siege. We encourage all parties to ensure that those safe passage operations continue and that humanitarian aid reach all those in need.

Parties to the conflict must comply with international humanitarian law, including the obligation to limit attacks to military objects. That also includes the prohibitions against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and the obligation to

take all feasible precautions in attack. Compliance is not optional.

We have heard today from High Commissioner Bachelet of how civilians continue to bear the brunt of this unconscionable war. We condemn the horrific violations documented by the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine — unlawful killings, including summary executions; conflict-related sexual violence; arbitrary detentions and deportations, including of journalists, human rights defenders and civil society activists; enforced disappearances and torture of prisoners of war. All allegations of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law must continue to be investigated and those responsible held to account. The people of Ukraine deserve nothing less.

Let us be clear. Daily, we see the devastating impact of the use of explosive weapons, including prohibited cluster munitions, by Russian forces in populated areas, without regard for civilians. We see the toll of destruction of homes, hospitals and schools. We know what we are dealing with: it cannot be dismissed as fake news. The sheer scale of destruction in itself belies the Russian Federation's attempt to dissemble and distort reality. We condemn indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks in all circumstances. We reject all efforts to question reality.

We are resolved to ensure accountability for the atrocious crimes taking place in Ukraine and recognize the important role of the ongoing investigation of the International Criminal Court in helping to pursue that.

We must not and cannot accept impunity for those inflicting such horrors — not in Ukraine, not anywhere in the world. As the High Commissioner said last week, “accountability is a cornerstone of upholding human rights.” We will never shirk our responsibility in upholding human rights.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under international law to allow full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access for humanitarian personnel, to allow all those seeking to leave Ukraine to do so safely and to destinations of their choosing. Civilians who choose to remain in Ukraine are not combatants. That is a fact, pure and simple. They must be protected in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The international community and the Council must not become numb to the devastation and tragedy that continues in Ukraine. I am marked by the horror of the death of a 91-year-old Holocaust survivor who froze to death in a basement in Mariupol — her life ending, under our watch, in a shameful reflection of how, as a child, she had hidden to save her life during the war she called the Great Patriotic War.

Stopping this war today could not undo what has been done. It could not bring back those lost, or erase the horrors that those who have been forced to flee have endured. It could not undo the human suffering already caused around the world. But it would stop the slaughter; it would save lives. Russia must end its aggression, comply with its obligations under international law and withdraw all forces unconditionally from the entirety of the sovereign territory of Ukraine.

We call again on the Russia Federation to end its war. It is never too late to do the right thing.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First, we would like to congratulate the United States on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We trust that, unlike the previous presidency, yours will be effective and impartial, as is necessary when acting in the capacity of President of the Security Council rather than in a national capacity.

We are compelled to make a few remarks about the briefer Ms. Bachelet, the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I will not delve into the substance of what she stated or her one-sided assessments, about which we had many questions. I would like to remind colleagues and the High Commissioner that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141, which established the mandate of the High Commissioner, under the guidance and auspices of the Secretary-General, this official is primarily responsible for United Nations human rights activities within the framework of the overall competencies, powers and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council. No other matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security or the protection of civilians fall under the High Commissioner's purview.

For two months now we have been discussing the developments in Ukraine, and for two months, in addition to the stream of hostility, lies, deceit, fakes, hatred and insults, we have been hearing the same

question: How could Russia, unprovoked — as they say — attack a sovereign, democratic, non-aggressive, independent and peaceful Ukraine — for it posed no threat to Russia.

Among those who say or think that, I allow that there may be those who are sincere and may not understand what has actually been taking place all those years. Yet there are also deceitful people and countries that have long dreamed of transforming Ukraine into a bridgehead for a battle against Russia and have been doing everything possible — politically and ideologically — to achieve that, since Ukraine gained independence, 30 years ago. Today they continue to do that by pumping weapons into Ukraine.

What has been happening in Ukraine all these years will not fit into the format of our statement today, and it is unlikely that many of those gathered here will want to hear or understand it — just as they did not, and did not wish to, understand it before. We have spoken repeatedly here in the Chamber about the difficulties of translation. People are listening to an interpretation of the Ukrainian authorities, who have told and are telling people what they want to hear. But we have listened, and continue to listen, to the Kyiv authorities in the original, without interpretation. We know about their machinations, their intractability, their lies, their deceit, including to their own people, in the course of all of these years.

Instead of providing for their own State, an oligarchical and totally corrupt regime flourished, which made even the Western sponsors of Kyiv cringe. We know how they tried to create their own ideology based on a repudiation of everything Russian and all that has bound us together for centuries. Some people do not know, and do not want to know, what kind of insults and hatred was directed against everything connected with Russia — not only at the household level, but also at the level of State and public figures. Some do not know that, during the years of independence, a whole generation of people has been taught to hate Russia on the basis of absurd Ukrainian history textbooks. Russophobia has become the main domestic national product of the Ukrainian Government — and the main export commodity of Ukraine. There is nothing of the sort in Russian society with respect to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Some simply do not hear their slogans or notice their torch-bearing marches. Some do not see their nationalists and undisguised Nazis.

A clever Ukrainian historian and patriot, Oles Buzina, who was killed by nationalists in 2015 — in a crime that has not yet been investigated, even though the murderers were known — rightly said that as, the empire collapsed, extreme blatant nationalism, tinged with deep provincialism, began to flourish along the border areas. Ukraine is the clearest example of that.

Today it is not a war in Ukraine, as is said; it is a proxy war between the collective West and Russia. It seems that the West has just been waiting for this moment to launch a spiral of repression against Russia. If there is any talk of a world war, today it is clearly being waged at the economic level. We have no doubt that it was prepared for well in advance, because of the speed with which the spiral was launched. It is simply mere robbery in the best traditions of the Wild West.

In case anyone here is not aware, let me report that, in addition to countless sanctions and bans, misappropriation of private property from Russian citizens who have nothing to do with the special military operation, Western countries have frozen \$300 billion worth of accounts belonging to Russia. What international law dare they talk about? It is not even a rules-based order that is being invented. It was not even colonialism when the enlightened West went about imposing civilization on its colonies, while plundering their natural resources. It is nothing less than basic lawlessness and pillaging. Now the masks have simply been cast off. At the same time, it has become fashionable to blame Russia for the energy and food crisis, which the West itself created.

For eight years we have been talking about the suffering of the people in Donbas, the shelling by Ukrainian armed forces and nationalist battalions, the deaths of civilians caused by that shelling and the fact that it was not Donbas that waged a war on Kyiv, but Kyiv that went to Donbas just because people there did not accept the coup d'état and the policy of complete Ukrainianization implemented by the Maidan authorities. There was no response. Members do not want to remember that similar protests in 2014 were brutally suppressed in Kharkiv, Odesa and the very same Mariupol. We have been saying for all those eight years that this must stop.

There was very little that needed to be done. The Ukrainian authorities had to implement the Minsk agreements, which they had publicly renounced, using the West's protection and support and being

under the illusion of complete impunity. They liked to feel part of the so-called civilized world and to be its vassals. I wonder if, in the light of the current situation, the bankrupt Ukrainian Government is now kicking itself about that. Now, after all that and after all the Kyiv regime's crimes and the warnings, when the special military operation to liberate Donbas began, we suddenly heard desperate cries: what have we done wrong? Those who know Ukrainian and Russian folklore will know what I am talking about. But I will answer the question myself. It is all thanks to the Western sponsors and patrons, who have been rubbing their hands with glee at the sight of Ukraine becoming anti-Russia. Everything that is happening now did not start at the end of February, and not even eight years ago. It began much earlier with the encouragement and support of the United States and its Western satellites.

We have repeatedly raised our security concerns. Those in the West were dismissing those concerns, not taking them seriously, assuring themselves that NATO was purely defensive, while pushing the bloc's boundaries right up against our borders. Today they are already talking about a global role for the alliance, including in Asia. We put forward our proposals for a global and indivisible security architecture. They arrogantly dismissed them. They should not try to convince us today that dragging Ukraine into NATO was never part of their plans. It was — if not today, then tomorrow. We did not have, and do not have, any illusions in that regard.

We would once again like to stress that the West does not need Ukraine, as such. It was, and is, needed only as an area of confrontation with Russia. Ukraine should have no illusions either. The West will not help Ukraine except by pumping in armaments and trying to prolong the conflict. The West is already at war with Russia by means of a proxy war.

Today the hypocrisy of our Western partners keeps surprising us. The topic of United States and Western aggression in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yugoslavia and the inglorious campaign in Afghanistan, not to mention what happened prior to those events — for example, in Viet Nam — seems somehow to have faded away. Those tragedies are somehow forgotten today. It is as if they never happened and as if they are ancient history and the West had nothing to do with them — of course not. It was a struggle for democracy back then. However, that struggle cost the lives of millions of people and

destroyed cities and countries, and all that thousands of kilometres away from home.

Instead, today we hear delusional talk about sponsors of terrorism. Let me ask a rhetorical question: where did the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) come from? ISIS appeared as a result of the invasion of Iraq by the United States of America. Its core backbone is made up of former members of the Iraqi army. Who therefore is the real sponsor of terrorism?

Today we live in a state of information, or rather disinformation, warfare. Its target is Russia. We have already said more than once what immense psychological operations special forces are being deployed on the information battlefield. They seek not only to denigrate the enemy, but also to disarm it, depriving its media of access to the world community and accusing it of propaganda in the process. The world community should hear only one version of events — the one about so-called atrocities committed by Russian military, the deliberate shelling of residential houses and the killing of civilians and the completely delusional idea about the genocide of Ukrainian people. The West has been preparing for this information warfare for many years. However, if in the past the information war accompanied a real war, now the very opposite is true.

By contrast, the world community should hear nothing about Ukrainian provocations, such as in Bucha or Kramatorsk, about how Ukrainian nationalists shield themselves with civilians by placing gun posts near schools, hospitals, kindergartens, near people's homes and in citizens' flats, and about how they keep people in basements and do not let them out, not allowing them to leave through the humanitarian corridors provided daily by the Russian military. If someone comes out, they are shot in the back by their own people. There is plenty of evidence provided by Ukrainians themselves. It is just that members do not want to hear it. Have they ever seen the testimonies of Russian prisoners of war or the footage of their torture by Ukrainian nationalists posted on social networks?

Have they ever seen something like that from Russian soldiers towards Ukrainian prisoners of war? Have they seen the reports of foreign correspondents who are brought by the Russian military to liberated Ukrainian cities and allowed to look around and talk to anyone? Have they ever heard what people from those towns say and how the Ukrainian nationalists acted and behaved towards them?

I cannot fail to note that the Secretary-General's trip to Russia and Ukraine was presented by both the media and Western politicians in a completely distorted way. The impression is thereby deliberately created that Ukraine and the United Nations managed to persuade Russia to open a humanitarian corridor for the evacuation of civilians from Azovstal. However, the Russian side regularly opens humanitarian corridors there, and, incidentally, they remain open today.

The problem lies in the following: the Azov fighters who are at Azovstal prefer to use civilians as human shields, and this is openly talked about by those who have managed to flee. Contrary to the mendacious allegations of the Ukrainian authorities, many of those who have exited Azovstal have preferred to remain in the Donetsk People's Republic or voiced a desire to return to liberated Mariupol. And, today, the Azov fighters have definitively cast off their masks, demanding that they be provided with one ton of foodstuffs and medicine for each of the 15 hostages liberated at Azovstal. Before them, only terrorists from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Al-Nusra Front acted in this way.

Earlier, the Permanent Representative of Albania quoted Trotsky, who said that the army is a copy of society. Is this episode what he was talking about?

Tomorrow we will hold an Arria Formula meeting on Ukraine's violations of international humanitarian law, and it will not be us, but witnesses — Ukrainians and foreign journalists — who will describe to the Council what they have seen. Anyone who has the inkling of a desire to hear objective information should come and listen.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, let me thank Ambassador Barbara Woodward, and the delegation of the United Kingdom for their able stewardship of the Security Council in April, and I wish the United States success in its presidency this month and offer our full support.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and updates on his visit to Russia and Ukraine, as well as for his exercise of his good offices in this conflict. We fully support his continued effort and engagement. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, High Commissioner Bachelet and Ms. Luzan for their briefings.

As the Secretary-General noted last week, civilians always pay the highest price in war. As the conflict

moves into its third month, its repercussions have far exceeded many worst-case projections made at the start of hostilities in February. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees now believes that more than 8 million Ukrainians could end up fleeing the country — double the initial estimates. At the same time, the United Nations Development Programme forecasts that the war will soon erase nearly two decades of progress in the development of Ukraine. And we have not yet fully absorbed how the impact of this war is reverberating globally, although there are already clear repercussions being felt — through rising commodity prices and supply disruptions, and disruptions to the global financial system on which we are all dependent for shared stability and development.

We remain deeply concerned by reports of rising civilian casualties and the ongoing destruction of civilian infrastructure. It is imperative to underline once again that all parties must abide by their obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. This necessarily includes respect for the fundamental international-humanitarian-law principles of necessity, proportionality and distinction.

The Council has built a framework to strengthen the protection of civilians and civilian objects, including its unanimous adoption of resolution 2573 (2021) just over a year ago. Attacks on civilian infrastructure can undermine the provision of essential services to the civilian population and have horrifying knock-on effects. We appreciate the efforts of international actors to provide tools and mechanisms to operationalize this framework, and we call on the parties to engage in the design of urgently needed solutions, including for safe and voluntary passage. We are encouraged by the recent progress with regard to safe passage from Mariupol through coordinated action by the United Nations, the authorities of both Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and we are hopeful that it can be built upon.

However, as we have underscored before, initiatives like corridors do not alter the obligations of the parties to uphold international humanitarian law. The Secretary-General's proposal to create a contact group is a welcome starting point to implement additional measures supporting the implementation of international humanitarian law, and we hope to hear more details about the proposal in the near future.

As the conflict continues, we join others in emphasizing the critical importance of increased humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and to the neighbouring countries hosting refugees. As part of our ongoing support, the United Arab Emirates most recently dispatched a plane, on 28 April, carrying 30 additional tons of food supplies to support refugees from Ukraine and Moldova, and we are committed to continuing to work with international partners on relief efforts. In addition, we emphasize the need to systematically take into account needs based on gender, age and disability in providing humanitarian assistance, not least as it also supports longer-term recovery efforts.

Finally, we reiterate that the protection of civilians can only be ensured with a cessation of hostilities and a diplomatic solution to the conflict. We call on both sides to remain committed, despite the difficulties, to direct dialogue and for the international community and the Security Council to create the conditions to help halt the war and ultimately bring about a lasting peace in Europe and stability to our international order.

The alternative — increasing polarization and the resulting ruptures — are in no country's interest, neither today nor in future. We must step back from this brink.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I congratulate you, Madam President, on the United States presidency of the Security Council this month. I thank the Secretary-General for his poignant briefing. I also thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Mr. Martin Griffiths and Ms. Tetiana Luzan for their inspiring briefings.

We salute the Secretary-General's boldness in seeking a solution to end the war in Ukraine and provide assistance to those caught in the crossfire. His recent visit to Moscow and Kyiv, and the humanitarian mission coordinated by United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, demonstrate a remarkable commitment that we support.

The war continues in Ukraine and with it a humanitarian situation that has been steadily deteriorating 71 days since the war began. Civilians continue to pay the highest price, and attacks and bombings of civilians and civilian infrastructure are also rampant. Water shortages, lack of access to health care and energy threaten the daily lives of those who have decided to stay in their country. More than 13 million people have been forced to move, including nearly

5.5 million who have had to leave Ukraine since the war broke out on 24 February. Many cities in Ukraine are almost completely destroyed, and communication routes, including some railroads, are being bombed.

We reiterate our condemnation of the war and the attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure. We call on the belligerents to strictly respect international humanitarian law and ensure the respect and protection of all medical personnel and humanitarian agencies. Essential infrastructure, production and distribution facilities for electricity, gas and the supply of drinking water should never be targeted.

We encourage people to allow the evacuation of civilians who wish to leave combat zones. In this regard, we note Russia's announcement of a ceasefire and the establishment of a humanitarian corridor for the evacuation of civilians who are amassed in the Azovstal metallurgical complex in Mariupol. However, it is essential that the ceasefire is effective and sustainable.

The shockwaves of the war are now being felt by many countries beyond the immediate borders of Ukraine. Pressure is mounting in many economic sectors. Uncertainty over the delivery of agricultural inputs and other products — wheat, grain, cooking oil — is causing concern for many businesses and families around the world.

If the war does not end immediately, there is a risk that countries already facing serious humanitarian emergencies will be left in a state of collapse. Indeed, the prices of food, fuel and other energy resources are reaching unprecedented heights, and we are all already, wherever we are, collateral victims.

Diplomatic and political signals do not suggest a real commitment by the stakeholders to ending this war. On the contrary, the verbal escalation is rising, at the same pace as the fighting on the ground, the movement of arms and the high-level visits. Yet a way out can be found only through dialogue. My country calls on the parties once again to exercise restraint and to seize all opportunities to meet to resume dialogue. We call for a firm commitment to a return to peace and security in Ukraine.

The Council cannot content itself with recording the numbers of dead and counting the wounded while also reconciling contradictions. It is vital that the end of the war be the driver behind all of the diplomatic efforts envisaged by the parties. The war must be ended

as swiftly as possible. We are horrified by the atrocities that have been reported and ask that independent and impartial investigations be conducted in order to shed light on the facts, establish responsibility and guarantee accountability.

In closing, we would like to say that it is high time for the fighting to stop. It is time for diplomacy to prevail over weapons. Our energies must be directed at achieving a political settlement of the situation. We owe that to the Ukrainian people.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Before I start, may I thank you, Madam President, and others for your kind words towards me and my team and wish you a successful presidency.

On this subject, I would like to start by thanking the briefers for their statements, and I welcome the Secretary-General's participation in this meeting.

On 4 April, the Russian Permanent Representative told the United Nations press corps that what was happening in Ukraine was warfare and that in warfare it cannot be excluded that civilians are dying. The truth is that it is not just that civilians are dying in Russia's illegal war of aggression, but that Russia is deliberately waging a war designed to terrorize and kill Ukrainian people. Civilians have been executed and dismembered in Bucha and Irpin. No distinction has been drawn between military targets, hospitals, schools or the Mariupol theatre, outside of which the word "children" was clearly written and where the latest reporting suggests that as many as 600 people were killed.

Russia's actions are clear violations of international humanitarian law, including, but not limited to, resolutions 2286 (2016), 2417 (2018) and 2573 (2021).

I should like to make three points on the issue of the protection of civilians in Ukraine.

The first and clearest solution to end the suffering of civilians is for Russia to end its illegal war and withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Unless it does so, civilians will continue to die, and many millions more will be put at risk across the globe owing to the food and energy shortages resulting from the invasion. That is what the Secretary-General referred to as the limitless potential for global harm.

Secondly, while the invasion continues, international humanitarian law must be strictly observed and full humanitarian access to civilians

facilitated. We commend the Secretary-General and his team on the efforts that led to the evacuation to safety of about 500 civilians from the Azovstal works. But it should be a matter of profound concern to the Council that humanitarian supplies were not allowed into the city and that the shelling of the steelworks restarted immediately.

Thirdly, we are deeply concerned that Russia's war is accompanied by a propaganda campaign, including in the Council, designed to dehumanize and demonize Ukrainians by labelling them as neo-Nazis. That hate speech is extremely dangerous. And, as we near the anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it disrespects the sacrifices of those Russians, Ukrainians and many other nationalities who fought to end Nazism.

Finally, I want to assure the Council that the United Kingdom continues its help and support to Ukraine. Today we announced a further £45 million for humanitarian and United Nations organizations to support the vulnerable and provide medical equipment.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet and Tetiana Luzan for their sobering but very important insights into the daily reality of millions of Ukrainians. I also extend special thanks to the Secretary-General for his briefing and for his recent visits to Russia and Ukraine. He has our strong support to use his good offices in the quest for a peaceful solution to the senseless and horrific war in Ukraine.

Norway recalls that all Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, have the obligation to settle their international disputes by peaceful means. We support all sincere efforts towards political dialogue, negotiations and mediation. But it is Russia that has chosen to start an unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine and must take steps to end it.

We welcome yesterday's joint statement by a cross-regional group of freedom of expression mandate-holders. We agree that it is precisely during times of war and armed conflict that the right to freedom of expression and free access to information must be vigorously defended. It is instrumental for the promotion of lasting peace, understanding the causes of conflict and ensuring accountability.

We continue to be alarmed by the humanitarian situation, including in Mariupol. As United Nations High Commissioner Bachelet highlighted, it seems that

international humanitarian law has not merely been ignored but seemingly tossed aside. Safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to people in need must be allowed immediately.

While we are relieved that the safe passage operation to evacuate civilians from the Azovstal steel plant was successful in bringing some to safety, the poor condition of many of the evacuees shows the urgent need to allow for the humanitarian voluntary safe passage of thousands of civilians and hundreds of wounded out of the city.

Norway is deeply worried that Russia's intensified hostilities in eastern Ukraine will lead to a fresh besiegement of entire cities and towns and that the suffering and bloodshed that has engulfed Mariupol may be repeated elsewhere. We call on Russia to immediately end its relentless attacks on civilians. The continued bombardment of civilian infrastructure must also stop. Ukrainian ports must be reopened to allow wheat and grain to reach those in need globally. The crippling impact of Russia's war on the food security of millions is unacceptable.

There are abundant indications that massive-scale war crimes are being committed. Those atrocities will not be forgotten. Individuals at all levels will be held to account. There must be accountability for the sake of the victims and all the people of Ukraine.

We welcome the fact that the International Criminal Court and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine will continue to coordinate, cooperate and work together with others to investigate possible violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Also, earlier this week the United Nations signed a framework of cooperation with Ukraine on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence. That is a key example of the positive partnership that the Secretary-General's good offices can provide. We strongly support all efforts made to bolster accountability, risk mitigation against trafficking and access to comprehensive services for survivors.

I started my remarks today recalling the obligation of Member States to settle their disputes through peaceful means. Russia started this senseless war. Russia must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw

all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Allow me, at the outset, to thank the United Kingdom for a successful presidency. I wish the United States every success in its presidency.

Let me thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his presence and remarks on the situation in Ukraine. I thank High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for their updates. I also thank Ms. Tetiana Luzan for her insights.

Ever since the commencement of the conflict in Ukraine, India has been consistently calling for a complete cessation of hostilities and for pursuing the path of dialogue and diplomacy as the only way out. However, the conflict has resulted in the loss of lives and countless miseries for its people, especially for women, children and the elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries.

India has strongly condemned the killing of civilians in Bucha and supported the call for an independent investigation. We support all efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people of Ukraine. India remains on the side of peace, and therefore believes that there will be no winning side in this conflict. While those impacted by this conflict will continue to suffer, diplomacy will be a lasting casualty.

We welcome the visit of Secretary-General to Moscow and Kyiv and his engagement with the leadership of the Russian Federation and Ukraine. We agree that the immediate priority is to evacuate innocent civilians from areas witnessing intense fighting. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the United Nations in evacuating the civilian population from Mariupol. We hope those efforts will extend to other areas as well.

The conflict is having a destabilizing effect with broader regional and global implications. Oil prices are skyrocketing, and there is a shortage of food grains and fertilizers. That has had disproportionate impact on the global South and developing countries. We acknowledge the efforts made by the Secretary-General, particularly the findings of the Global Crisis Response Group Task Team. We welcome its recommendation for exempting purchases of food for humanitarian assistance by the World Food Programme from food export restrictions with immediate effect. It is important that similar

such exemptions be provided to all Member States and relevant stakeholders that are contributing to the global humanitarian effort.

The food security challenges emanating from the conflict require us to respond by going beyond the constraints that bind us presently. Energy security is equally serious as a concern and needs to be addressed through cooperative efforts.

India has been sending humanitarian supplies to Ukraine and its neighbours. We are also providing more medical supplies to Ukraine. We support calls for guarantees of safe passage to deliver essential humanitarian and medical supplies, including through the establishment of humanitarian corridors. We hope the international community will continue to respond positively to the evolving humanitarian requirements.

We reiterate the importance of the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian emergency assistance. Humanitarian action must always be guided by the principles of humanitarian assistance, which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Those measures should never be politicized.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that the contemporary global order has been built on the Charter of the United Nations, international law and respect for the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States.

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

First, let me sincerely thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and for his update from the region. I am so glad that he has returned to us safe and sound, and I know that he must be jet-lagged after his trip practically around the world. But his being at this meeting shows us the commitment that he has to this institution.

I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths and High Commissioner Bachelet for their remarks. And I thank our civil society briefer, Tetiana Luzan, for joining us at this late hour for her and for her powerful testimony today. I welcome the representative of Ukraine, as well as His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister of Poland and other speakers who are with us today.

There are no signs that Russia's war against Ukraine is abating. Russia's forces may have abandoned their attempt to capture Kyiv, but Russia continues to conduct missile strikes against Kyiv and terrorize citizens

across Ukraine. Independent media reports have laid out a deadly pattern of attacks in the past two weeks.

On 23 April, reports indicate that Russian missile strikes killed civilians in Odesa, including a three-month-old girl. Then, Russian missiles hit a thermal power plant and oil refinery in Kremenchuk the next day. The day after that, Russian forces attacked five railway stations across Ukraine. The following day, two rockets flew dangerously close to a nuclear power plant, posing colossal safety risks to the region. That string of attacks culminated on 28 April when Russia had the audacity to attack Kyiv while the Secretary-General was there to discuss humanitarian aid and peace.

Russia has violated the Charter of the United Nations. Russia has ignored our unified, global call to end this war. The message we continue to hear loud and clear from Moscow is that Russia does not respect or believe in the United Nations or its Charter and will not be a responsible actor in the international system.

Over the past 10 weeks — just 10 weeks — we have seen Russia continue to wage an unprovoked war against a smaller neighbour. We have seen Russia brutalize civilian populations and attack thousands of civilian-used buildings, structures and vehicles, apartment buildings, schools, shopping malls, markets, cafés, trams, heating plants, grain silos, food storage facilities, hospitals, orphanages and a maternity ward. The list goes on.

Russia has lied to the Security Council repeatedly with a wild string of conspiracy theories and disinformation, every falsehood more ridiculous than the last. Three months ago, Russian representatives told the Security Council they had no intention to invade Ukraine. Now Russia claims the attacks are not real or never happened. Russia has even claimed that Ukraine is attacking itself, that it bombed its own buildings, attacked its own people and assaulted its own democracy. Those lies defy all logic, all evidence and common sense. Russia is spreading pure disinformation. The truth is well known. Russia is the only perpetrator of this war. So, it is hard to understand why some Council members continue to call on all parties to desist. Let us call a spade, a spade. Members should call on Russia, explicitly, to stop its aggression against Ukraine.

We have imagery that confirms the presence of mass graves in Bucha, and that is not just an unverified accusation on social media. It is a horrifying fact,

one the world must now reckon with. Russia alone started this war, and Russia alone can end it. Silence the guns, withdraw from Ukrainian territory and embrace diplomacy.

Recently, the eyes of the world have been trained on Mariupol, where hundreds of civilians have been taking shelter in a steel plant besieged by Russian forces. We all watched in horror as Russia laid siege mercilessly against civilians trapped inside and underground for weeks. This week, the United Nations and President Zelenskyy announced that over 100 Ukrainians had finally been rescued and reached relative safety. We applaud the role of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in that rescue, and we strongly support the five convoys that the United Nations has sent to besieged areas. But we are concerned that attacks on the plant have reportedly resumed, with civilians still inside, and we will be following this situation closely.

What we truly need is unhindered access throughout Ukraine so that the United Nations and its partners can reach everyone in need, and people of all nationalities can flee to safety. Convoys and evacuations take days and weeks, or months, of intense negotiation. They cannot be the norm. The only norm we should accept is Ukraine returning to its normal life, without Russian forces illegally on its territory, terrorizing and killing civilians, including so many innocent children.

Here in the Security Council and at the United Nations, we can help Ukraine return to normalcy. We can do that in two ways: by supporting the Ukrainian people and their efforts and by holding Russia accountable.

On the first point, we must address the immediate and dire humanitarian situation, both in Ukraine and outside of it. For our part, the United States announced this morning at the pledging conference in Warsaw that we will provide an additional \$387 million in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine. That brings the total we have committed thus far to over \$688 million since Russia's further invasion. That money will help our brave partners rapidly distribute food, clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene kits, critical medical supplies and even cash to those who need it most in Ukraine.

We must also be attentive to the way Russia's war of choice is harming countries beyond Ukraine's borders, from the arrival of millions of refugees in Europe to the global food crisis that is hitting African and

Middle Eastern markets particularly hard. I suspect we will hear more details about that from our colleagues who are joining this meeting today. Russia is actively halting Ukrainian agricultural production and blocking the ports that once provided food to those in dire need. While we work to stop that blockade and hold Russia to account for its actions, we will all be called on to step up to prevent looming famines and provide more food and funding in the name of decency and humanity. We will focus the attention of the Council on that and other aspects of global food insecurity during the open debate we will convene later this month.

On the second point, we must hold to account those in Russia who unleashed, perpetrated and ordered the war crimes committed in Ukraine. The United States supports a range of international investigations into the atrocities in Ukraine, including efforts by the International Criminal Court, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others. Make no mistake — we will see justice served.

The Ukrainian people are fighting for their lives, for their future and for all of the values the United Nations holds dear. We stand with them and with the overwhelming majority of the international community in defence of sovereignty, liberty and democracy.

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

I would like to again draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I recognize the representative of Putin's regime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

At the outset, let me express gratitude to Secretary-General Guterres, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, High Commissioner Bachelet and civil society representative Luzan for their briefings. I join all previous speakers in expressing appreciation for a very successful presidency of the Security Council by the United Kingdom last month.

Last week the Secretary-General visited Ukraine at a time when my country continues to defend the very principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It was important for António Guterres to visit the suburbs of Kyiv and see with his own eyes the horrific war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine.

I am grateful to the Secretary-General for the clear and unequivocal position on the war against Ukraine as a violation of territorial integrity and the Charter of the United Nations. I appreciate the efforts to use the good offices mechanisms for de-escalation. Every opportunity must be used to achieve peace.

On behalf of the President of Ukraine, I would like to thank the Secretary-General, the United Nations team and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which demonstrated the possibility of making progress and saving civilians from Mariupol, which is blocked by the Russian army. In the President's words:

“The whole world has learned about the role of the United Nations and the ICRC in this. This has shown that international organizations can be effective”.

The second stage of the evacuation operation from Mariupol was completed, with 344 people rescued from the city and its suburbs, in addition to more than 150 people taken out of the Azovstal steel plant. However, there are still civilians there — women, children. Therefore, the evacuation operation must continue.

Russia has shelled Ukrainian cities with almost 2,000 missiles. Most of them hit civilians, not military infrastructure. Russia struggles to advance and suffers terrible losses. That is the reason that they resort to this desperate missile terror across Ukraine. They want to break us down, but the only thing that will break down in the end is Russia and its capacity to invade, bomb, murder, loot and rape.

I would like to recall one of my compatriots, Oleksandr Makhov, a well-known journalist in Ukraine, born in the Luhansk region. In 2017, he was the first Ukrainian journalist to visit our station in Antarctica. When the coronavirus disease came, he was not afraid. For two weeks he lived in Sanzhary, where Ukrainians were brought to from China. From the first day of the full-scale war, he was on the front line as a volunteer, an anti-terrorist operation veteran and a warrior of the 95th assault brigade. He was killed in the Kharkiv region in the battles near Izyum. He was 36 years old.

My sincere condolences go to his family and friends. Russia will bear responsibility for that death, as well as for that of every hero who gave their life for Ukraine.

Ukraine is not afraid, and the world should not be afraid either. Russia's missile terrorism must be punished and responded to with stronger sanctions and increased military assistance for Ukraine.

On 1 May, the Russian Ministry of War declared that more than 1 million people had been transferred to Russia, including 193,000 children. Most of them, in particular those transferred from Mariupol, undergo "filtration" camps with mandatory procedures that constitute violations of their human rights— being stripped naked, fingerprinting and interrogation. Eyewitnesses testify that Russian soldiers kill those whom they consider suspicious.

There have been multiple reported cases of the kidnapping or hostage-taking of Ukrainian civilians by Russian troops. There are numerous cases of the mistreatment of forcefully displaced Ukrainian citizens in the Russian Federation, including depriving them of their Ukrainian passports and preventing them from leaving Russian territory. We reiterate that all Ukrainian citizens forcefully transferred by Russia must be granted safe return to the territory of Ukraine.

Food security in Ukraine and worldwide appears to be another deliberate target of Russia. As of now, Russia has stolen about 400,000 tons of grain from the temporarily occupied parts of the Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, Donetsk and Luhansk regions — a third of all reserves in the regions. Given that the stolen grain was to be used before the next harvest, it has already increased the threat of famine.

In addition to stealing grain, Russia attacks grain silos, farming infrastructure and fertilizer stores and continues to steal farm vehicles. The looting of grain from the occupied part of Ukraine, the blockade of shipments from Ukrainian ports and the mining of shipping routes endanger global food security.

Russia is in fact harming not only Ukraine, but also the world population through its illegal actions. According to the United Nations, more than 1.7 billion people may risk poverty and famine as a result of disruptions in the food production system caused by Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. Furthermore, Russia continues to intentionally block sowing in Ukraine.

We demand that Russia stop illicit grain theft, unblock Ukrainian ports, restore freedom of navigation and allow trade ships to pass. We urge the international community to strengthen economic sanctions against Russia in order to stop its military aggression against Ukraine to avert a humanitarian disaster and the world's food security crisis.

Today the State of Israel is celebrating the seventy-fourth anniversary of its independence. On 29 November 1947, Ukraine, as a Member of the United Nations, voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 181 (II). The following year, in May, Israel declared its independence. Taking this opportunity, I wish peace and prosperity to Israel and all Jews around the world.

As we approach 9 May, the threat of new provocations and a raising of the stakes by Russia is increasing. In that regard, I would like to condemn the anti-Semitic attacks by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on the President of Ukraine and all Jews. Such attacks are absolutely unacceptable.

Lavrov could not help revealing the deep-rooted anti-Semitism of Russia's elites. It demonstrates to the world that Putin's Russia is purposefully cultivating Russian supremacy and hatred of other peoples. Russia is already too deeply bogged down in uttering nonsense aimed at justifying its barbaric aggression against Ukraine.

In fact, the Russian Foreign Minister questioned the existence of not only the Ukrainian nation, but also the Holocaust. Lavrov deliberately insulted the memory of millions of Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis during the Second World War.

At this point, I would like to bring the Security Council's attention to one of the most recent examples of Russian atrocities in Ukraine. On 4 May, the bodies of two young men, aged 22 and 23, were exhumed in the village of Rudnya-Talska in the Kyiv region. On 25 February, the Russian invaders shot at a car with them inside. However, it was not enough for the so-called Russian soldiers to kill innocent civilians. They decided to run the car over with heavy equipment, while the two men were inside. That is insane. That is inhumane.

While we are in this meeting, the Russian terrorist practice of shelling Ukrainian cities throughout the entire country with long-range missiles continues. The Secretary-General had a chance to witness that practice

last Thursday during his visit to Kyiv. However, there was no strong reaction from the Security Council regarding such deliberate attacks.

In that regard, the inaction of the Security Council and its ability only to express deep concerns continues to irritate the international community, undermine its authority in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and create an atmosphere of impunity.

As it appears, this Chamber has turned from a venue of diplomatic debates into a biological hazard site. There is a trail of blood and a sickening smell of the smouldering bodies of women, men and children that a Russian envoy leaves lingering behind him when entering and leaving this Chamber. The air that we inhale is filled with poisonous spores of turpitude when he drivels torrential lies as his lips begin moving.

Victory over the Russist army comes closer by the day, as does the time when Putin's henchmen will sit on the bench at a trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Punishment is imminent. Milošević will not stay lonely for too long.

The President: I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland.

Mr. Gliński (Poland): Let me start by expressing Poland's appreciation and support for the Secretary-General's recent trip to Moscow and Kyiv. Each and every effort to restore peace in Ukraine is meaningful, even if we have to deal with an aggressor who shows very little goodwill and trustworthiness, as demonstrated by the very symbolic Russian shelling of Kyiv during the Secretary-General's stay in the city.

I was also in Kyiv and Borodyanka less than two weeks ago and witnessed this war with my own eyes.

We Poles were very happy to facilitate the Secretary-General's trip and to host him on his way from Moscow to Kyiv, especially because he had a chance to meet with the Polish President, Andrzej Duda, and to stay in the city of Rzeszów, which has become a crucial hub for the delivery of assistance to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. As President Duda assured the Secretary-General personally, Poland will not cease to both deliver aid on its own and to be a reliable partner for all United Nations system institutions involved in providing support to Ukraine.

The number of persons in need and the volume of assistance that they require increase with every day that the Russian aggression continues. We therefore all need to contribute to the relief efforts alongside the growing Polish aid for both the refugees from Ukraine who are staying in our country — as the Council is probably aware, more than 3 million war refugees have crossed our border during the past two months — and those hiding from bombs in Russian-shelled cities and towns.

Today in Warsaw, Poland and Sweden co-hosted a high-level international donors conference for Ukraine. The event, which was organized in cooperation with the President of the European Commission and the European Council, was meant to serve as a platform for pledging the much-needed additional funds to sustain immediate, life-saving humanitarian assistance for Ukraine. According to early estimates, the conference brought in \$6.5 billion in pledges.

We are all still struggling to grasp the full implication of the war, but we already know that its consequences go far beyond Ukraine and Europe. The Secretary-General has accurately called the damage to multilateralism caused by the ongoing invasion of Ukraine a three-dimensional crisis that impacts global food, energy and financial security. The full effects of the Russian invasion will be felt in economies and societies around the whole world. The international community needs to engage in devising immediate long-term policies that will mitigate the impacts of the war and contribute to long-term resilience to global shocks.

In five days' time, on 10 May, representatives of some 50 countries of Europe and Central Asia will gather in the Polish city of Łódź, at the thirty-third session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Regional Conference for Europe, to discuss the very pressing issue of food security and the transformation of agrifood systems.

However, we will not solve the food, energy and financial crises if we do not address their root causes. Those are the crisis of values, as you already mentioned today, Madam President, and the crisis of peace. So, in fact, we are facing not just a three-dimensional but a five-dimensional crisis. Therefore, the very first step that must be taken right now is very simple. It requires that Russia stop the war and withdraw all its forces from the territory of Ukraine. Once peace has been secured, the international community must turn its efforts to developing more effective measures

to protect the fundamental values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. They have been trumped by a permanent member of the Security Council, and we must ensure full accountability for the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed in Ukraine by the Russian Federation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Greece.

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): We are thankful to the United States presidency for having organized this meeting. Allow me also to thank the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet for their insightful remarks and their immense efforts. I also thank Ms. Tetiana Luzan for briefing us.

The consequences of Russia's continuing military aggression against Ukraine and its civilians are dire, especially in Mariupol and near the former line of contact in Donbas. Greece has a particular interest in the Mariupol area, which is home to an established, centuries-old Greek community of more than 120,000, which is a productive part of local society. Regrettably, those people, along with so many other civilians — families, women and children — face the horror of Mariupol being almost entirely destroyed.

That is why our consuls in Odessa and Mariupol, demonstrating unprecedented courage, strength and altruism, stayed behind and carried out a total of six operations called *Nostos* — the Greek word for homecoming — for the evacuation of Greek citizens and diaspora Greeks from Ukraine.

We have repeatedly called for an immediate ceasefire and for the swift operationalization of humanitarian corridors. It is of utmost importance to scale up humanitarian operations by enhancing the supply-chain capacity and providing targeted humanitarian assistance to the people affected. The recent evacuation of the Azovstal plant in Mariupol, achieved thanks to the persistent efforts of the United Nations, demonstrated in the clearest way possible that when there is a will, there is a way. We hope to see additional similar initiatives.

Greece has been actively engaged in providing humanitarian assistance. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikos Dendias, himself spearheaded one of Greece's assistance operations to the historic city of Odesa. At the same time, we are all witnessing the huge

wave of migrants that the war has provoked. Greece is showing solidarity with Ukraine as well as with front-line Member States, welcoming thousands of refugees from Ukraine.

The amount of devastation and destruction is inconceivable. Greece remains engaged in the reconstruction of Ukraine and will be present, in coordination with our partners, in order to do everything possible to bring those two cities back to their previous state and to facilitate the diaspora Greeks' return to normal life after this tragedy. Our Prime Minister has already announced that we are ready to rebuild the maternity hospital destroyed by Russian shelling in the city of Mariupol. In the same vein, Minister Dendias has reiterated our support for the reconstruction of Odesa.

There can be no peace and no reconciliation without accountability. We will continue to actively raise the issue of Mariupol in all forums and to emphasize that the perpetration of war crimes should be thoroughly investigated.

Only peace can put an end to this immense tragedy, which is having far-reaching repercussions throughout the world. We commend the recent visit of the Secretary-General to the region and his efforts towards peace. We stand firm in our call for dialogue and diplomacy to prevail.

Greece, a pillar of stability in the region of the eastern Mediterranean and beyond, reiterates its unwavering commitment to international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Refraining from the threat or the use of force is the guiding principle underpinning our Charter. We are steadfast in our support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as of every State Member of the United Nations. Those are fundamental norms of international relations. Their violations — no matter who they target — are threats to us all. There is no room for exceptions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic states — Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia.

I thank the Secretary-General António Guterres, High Commissioner Bachelet and Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, as well as the representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

and the non-governmental organization for their insightful, but sobering briefings.

We appreciate the important visits of the Secretary-General to Kyiv and Moscow, in particular his humanitarian plea and engagement, which have resulted in very practical life-saving humanitarian action on the ground, notably in Mariupol.

We also positively note the close cooperation between the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross in that regard. In the future, the United Nations should build further on that, although limited, success.

Unfortunately, those achievements are far from solving the tragic security and humanitarian crisis caused by the Russian aggression. Moreover, many more people remain trapped in the Azovstal iron and steel works complex, in conditions that humanitarian workers have described as hell. Yet it has again been under heavy fire from Russian air strikes. We call on Russia to immediately cease all hostilities and allow the safe evacuation of the remaining civilians trapped in the complex. We also call on all relevant United Nations mechanisms to maintain their focus on the situation of civilians affected by the Russian aggression in Ukraine, especially on their rescue and evacuation from areas of persistent hostilities.

It has been more than two months since Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, launched its aggression against Ukraine in grave violation of international law, including the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Russia has persistently ignored the calls by the General Assembly, as well as the order of the International Court of Justice, to cease aggression and to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. We strongly condemn Russia's contempt for the Court, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, as well as the involvement of Belarus as Russia's accomplice.

Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has triggered one of the fastest-growing displacement and humanitarian crises on record. Over 17 million people inside and outside Ukraine now are in need of humanitarian assistance. There are 7.7 million people who are now internally displaced, and more than 5 million refugees have fled into countries neighbouring Ukraine and beyond. Ninety per cent of refugees are women and girls. They need urgent humanitarian

assistance, a cessation of hostilities and safe passage, including through the creation of humanitarian corridors to allow those who wish to do so to leave voluntarily to the destination of their choice. In that light, we are concerned about the reports of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including children, forcibly moved to the so called "filtration camps" and then to the territory of the Russian Federation, often unaccompanied by their parents.

Russia's denials, deceptions, lies, disinformation, war propaganda, incitement to violence and dehumanizing language against Ukrainians do not change the fact that Russia is committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law against the civilian population in Ukraine. As underlined by the Secretary-General, those directly responsible for those war crimes and violations on Ukrainian soil must be held accountable. There will be no impunity. There will be accountability for that horror, and international justice will be done.

The Baltic States will continue to steadfastly support all efforts to ensure independent and effective investigations into crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were among the first to refer the situation in Ukraine to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, and we will continue to support the Office of the Prosecutor in its investigation concerning alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Ukraine.

The impact of Russia's war against Ukraine is reaching beyond Europe. Millions of people globally are already on the brink of famine. Russia's invasion will further exacerbate the negative impact on global food security and prices on the world market, thereby, increasing the threat of hunger for many countries. Ukraine is the world's fifth-largest exporter of wheat. However, the shelling and bombing makes it almost impossible for Ukrainian farmers to sow. On top of that, the Russian Federation is blocking hundreds of ships filled with wheat in the Black Sea. Twenty million tons of grain from last year's harvest have been trapped in Ukraine owing to Russia's blockade and bombardment of Odesa's sea port and the military closure of the sea lanes in the Black Sea. That is the result of the Russian aggression and not sanctions or anything else, as Russia's propaganda suggest.

We call on Russia to unblock Ukrainian ports and to restore the freedom of navigation. And we encourage the Security Council and the relevant United Nations agencies to consider ways to ensure the safe passage for grain-carrying ships from Ukraine's territorial waters to the Black Sea.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Massari (Italy): Today's interventions by the Secretary-General, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the High Commissioner for Human Rights confirmed the extraordinary gravity and the multidimensional character of this senseless war. This is, at the same time, an unprovoked military aggression, a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council, as well as a humanitarian and human rights crisis of dramatic proportions.

From a political perspective, we cannot but reaffirm the fundamentally illegal nature of this war, which violates the prohibition of the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of a sovereign country, the obligation to settle disputes peacefully and the prohibition on targeting the civilian population.

For that reason, while we reiterate once more our unwavering support for Ukraine's full independence within its internationally recognized borders and condemn the Russian military aggression, we appreciate and strongly support the diplomatic initiative taken by the Secretary-General with his recent mission to Moscow and Kyiv. Let me reaffirm our conviction that we need to take urgent steps towards peace, in the words of Secretary-General Guterres. Achieving a broad and sustainable ceasefire would be the first of those steps.

From a humanitarian perspective, the conflict in Ukraine is not only fuelling one of the most severe humanitarian crises in Europe since the Second World War; it is also exacerbating a global food security crisis. Italy renews its call on Russia to ensure safe, rapid and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance and to allow the export of crucial Ukrainian agricultural goods, including in order to alleviate the challenges faced by numerous States of the global South depending on those products.

We also strongly support the Secretary-General's proposal for a humanitarian contact group, composed of Russia, Ukraine and United Nations officials.

Italy has stood by Ukraine and its people since the beginning of the crisis, with general budgetary support, loans and support for the humanitarian activities carried out by the United Nations system and the International Committee of the Red Cross in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. However, as humanitarian needs continue to increase as we speak, we are evaluating additional humanitarian initiatives, in terms of funding and in-kind donations.

From a human rights perspective, this aggression is dramatically affecting defenceless and innocent civilians, including those in the most vulnerable situations, such as women, children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. As documented by the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, Russian armed forces have indiscriminately shelled and bombed densely populated areas. That is unacceptable, and we strongly advocate the establishment of safe passages for the evacuation of civilians.

We are also particularly concerned by the large-scale destruction and damage of civilian infrastructure, including medical and education facilities, the number of journalists and media workers killed and injured since the start of the conflict, and sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls.

Italy welcomes all measures to ensure full accountability for human rights violations as well as violations of international humanitarian law occurring in Ukraine, and fully supports the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the Human Rights Council, and the investigation launched by national authorities and the International Criminal Court (ICC) on war crimes. That is why Italy, together with more than 40 States parties, has indeed referred the situation of Ukraine to the Prosecutor of the ICC.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We would like to express our full support for your work and initiatives for the remainder of the month. You can count on our continued support.

I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and all other briefers for their sobering presentations that unfortunately confirmed our grave concerns about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, in addition to many other aspects of the ongoing war. High Commissioner Bachelet mentioned that today is the seventy-first day of the war.

As we have remarked in previous meetings, even one more day of this terrible tragedy is one too many. It is therefore regrettable that we have to continue counting the days, and we truly hope that the tragedy will stop as soon as possible.

We thank the Secretary-General for his recent visits and his intervention. His work has been extremely important. That includes the locations outside of Kyiv that he visited on 28 April. After his visit there, he said:

“there is something everybody should remember, everywhere in the world. Wherever there is a war, the highest price is paid by civilians.”

I would like to bring that to the attention of the Russian Federation and call on Russia to immediately cease its hostilities against Ukraine, in particular its attacks against civilians and civilian objects. I call on Russia to hear the countless calls, including from the Secretary-General, and unconditionally withdraw all troops from the whole territory of Ukraine.

Today we once again heard a victim-based narrative from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation. This is completely out of place in this context. I would also like to call on Russia to immediately stop this false narrative and distortion of facts. The facts are clear. It is clear to us who the aggressor is and who is suffering. The only thing that is not clear to us is why innocent civilians have to continue suffering as they have been for the past 71 days — and counting.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as of 4 May there have been 6,635 civilian casualties — 3,238 killed and 3,397 injured. I am mentioning those statistics to again remind the aggressor that we know the facts. They are all clear, and there will be no impunity for the crimes committed. But what is worse is the reason for the human suffering. We already condemned the Russian decision to start the senseless war under the pretext of the “special military operation” and the so-called need to de-Nazify and demilitarize Ukraine. But

what we recently heard from Foreign Minister Lavrov, who claimed that Adolf Hitler was part Jewish, is particularly hideous and confirms our approach based on fiercely combating the disinformation of the Russian Federation concerning the war in Ukraine.

As a neighbour, partner and directly affected country in the context of fleeing refugees, Slovakia is particularly alarmed by the crisis resulting from the Russian aggression. Almost 5.7 million refugees have fled the country. Since the beginning of the aggression of the Russian Federation, about 394,000 refugees have entered Slovakia so far. We have welcomed them and will continue doing so for as long as necessary. We will continue to stand in solidarity with them, as a close friend and a good neighbour in these most challenging times.

Let me conclude by reiterating our ongoing support for Ukraine. In that regard, Slovakia is one of the largest donors per capita with regard to military, humanitarian and financial assistance. We would rather not be; we would rather focus our efforts on other issues, but it is extremely important for us to reach out in this time of need. As they say, a friend in need is a friend in deed. This was also mentioned during today’s high-level international donors conference for Ukraine in Warsaw, where the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Mr. Eduard Heger, announced an additional financial contribution of half a million euros for international organizations in order to bolster humanitarian assistance to Ukraine.

I would like to add my wish that — at least for the rest of this month or for the upcoming period — that this will not have to be repeated again in a similar fashion, but, of course, if we have to gather again, we are ready to do so, and will continue working closely with the Council.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): I thank the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, High Commissioner Bachelet and Ms. Luzan for their insightful briefings.

Furthermore, I want to thank the Secretary-General and all United Nations staff for their tireless efforts to alleviate the human suffering in Ukraine and neighbouring countries. Germany strongly supports those efforts. We were relieved about the successful evacuation operation from Mariupol. The people still

trapped need to be safely evacuated as soon as possible to their chosen destination.

In a few days, the world will commemorate the day when the Second World War, unleashed by Nazi Germany, ended. Seventy-seven years after that watershed moment of world history, Russian propaganda is now trying to create an outrageous link between the truly heroic fighting then of the Red Army, including many Ukrainian fighters, against the Nazi regime and the Kremlin's current aggression against Ukraine. This apparently aims at creating an alternate reality, in which Ukraine's President leads a failed State that needs to be "de-Nazified". This utter nonsense is beyond cynicism.

The whole world can see what so-called Russian liberation looks like. The pictures from Mariupol, Irpin and Bucha speak for themselves. These mass atrocities and crimes against humanity have to stop. The perpetrators must be held accountable in accordance with international law. To that end, Germany will send experts and contribute additional funding to the International Criminal Court. Meanwhile, the German Federal Public Prosecutor General has opened structural investigations, preparing the ground for indictments on charges of war crimes.

Even if Russia again tries hard in tomorrow's Arria Formula meeting to impose its narratives on the world outside, it will not succeed in altering reality. Rapes, torture and killings will be brought to the fore, and those responsible will be brought to justice one by one.

Millions of people are fleeing from attacks, bombing and shelling. Germany has so far recorded more than 600,000 refugee arrivals, and over 90,000 Ukrainian children are attending German schools, at least temporarily. It is children who suffer the most from Russia's war of aggression. Their schools are being destroyed. Those children's peaceful lives have been disrupted, and many had to leave their families behind. All they want is to go home and return to their loved ones. In that connection, reports about the Russian Parliament planning to ease rules for the adoption of Ukrainian children are extremely concerning. We will follow that ideologically motivated motion with extreme scrutiny and will hold Russia accountable for its deeds. United Nations agencies should also play an active role in that regard.

The war in Ukraine has dramatic consequences for humanitarian crises in other parts of the world and for global food security. Russia is ravaging agricultural potential in Ukraine, while, at the same time, preventing grain exports by blocking the Black Sea. It absurdly tries to blame Western sanctions for increasing food prices. Currently, an estimated 4.5 million tons are stuck in Ukrainian ports. In this meeting, the Ukrainian representative reported that Russia had stolen tons of grain from Ukraine. With the expected delays of the next planting season and shortages of seeds, we are standing on the brink of an unprecedented global food security crisis. Germany is strengthening its humanitarian response, especially through the World Food Programme. We are also committed to putting global food security, among other issues, high on the agenda at the upcoming meetings of foreign, development and agricultural ministers of the Group of Seven. The German Government also already announced €430 million in additional funding for the crisis response outside Ukraine. That is in addition to the means that we pledged for Ukraine, including at the Warsaw conference. My message to the countries economically affected by the repercussions of Russia's war of aggression is that they can count on our support.

The food security crisis proves that the war transcends the borders of Europe. A permanent member of the Security Council is trying to annex new lands by force. If we allow Russia to set a precedent, who will be next? Which former empire will feel encouraged to attack its weaker neighbour, justifying it by a distorted notion of history? If we do not want to open flood gates for recolonization, the world must stand united in rolling back Russia.

We once again call on Russia to stop its aggression immediately. Russian troops encounter fierce resistance, not only from the brave Ukrainian military but also from a huge block of States that stand up for the Charter of the United Nations and the rule of law. Continuing the senseless war will lead only to more bloodshed.

It is never too late to change course. Russia must withdraw its troops now and for good. The upcoming day of liberation that we all commemorate will provide an excellent opportunity.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.