



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**9033**<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Friday, 13 May 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Mills . . . . . (United States of America)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Ms. Opong-Ntiri
India . . . . .	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Moran
Kenya . . . . .	Mrs. Toroitich
Mexico . . . . .	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Norway . . . . .	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia/Mr. Polyanskiy
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Eckersley

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

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

**The President:** In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thomas Markram, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Markram.

**Mr. Markram:** I would like to extend my appreciation to Council members for the opportunity to brief them this morning.

I am aware that the Russian Federation has submitted new information regarding allegations of biological weapons programmes in Ukraine.

I wish to note that Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu informed the Council in her respective briefings on 11 and 18 March (see S/PV.8991 and S/PV.8999) that the United Nations was not aware of any biological weapons programmes in Ukraine. That remains the case today. I would like to note that the United Nations currently has neither the mandate nor the technical or operational capacity to investigate that information.

I recall that the relevant instrument of international law is the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. The Russian Federation, the United States and Ukraine are all States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Biological Weapons Convention does contain several measures to which concerned States parties can have recourse in order to address situations in which they have concerns or suspicions about the activities of their peers. For example, pursuant to article V of the Convention, its States parties undertake to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of the provisions of, the Convention. Such consultation and cooperation can take place through

appropriate international procedures, including on a bilateral basis between the concerned States parties.

One such international procedure that has been elaborated within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention is the convening of a consultative meeting. Other possibilities for addressing concerns between States parties also exist under article V of the Convention, as well as under article VI. I would therefore encourage any States parties with compliance concerns to use the procedures available under the Convention.

The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support any procedures under the Biological Weapons Convention that States parties may decide to use.

As Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu had mentioned in her previous statements to the Council, the Biological Weapons Convention needs to be operationalized and institutionalized to ensure that it is properly equipped and resourced to face future challenges. The Convention's upcoming Ninth Review Conference in November and December presents an ideal opportunity for its States parties to strengthen the Convention.

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

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia has requested a meeting on the military and biological activities of Ukraine for the third time. Let me explain why.

We continue to receive very disturbing documentary evidence that the United States Department of Defense is directly involved in carrying out dangerous biological projects in that country that appear to be a secret biological-military programme. Those activities are being conducted in the centre of Eastern Europe and near Russia's western borders, posing a real threat to the biosecurity of our country, the region and, given the cross-border nature of those biothreats, the entire world.

As was confirmed by Mr. Markram, neither Ukraine nor the United States has provided any information about this to the United Nations, as is required under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Only our special military operation is able to prevent that dangerous activity.

Since the previous meeting (see S/PV.8999) on this topic two months ago, we have received much new evidence. We have circulated all that material within the Security Council. I would like to draw Council members' attention to the most striking evidence.

As follows from the documentation on project 3007, on monitoring the epidemiological and ecological situation regarding dangerous waterborne diseases in Ukraine, Ukrainian specialists, under the supervision of their American colleagues, have regularly collected water samples from the rivers flowing through Ukraine, including the Dnieper, the Danube and the Dniester as well as the North Crimean Canal. The objective is to determine the presence therein of specific dangerous pathogens, including cholera, typhoid and hepatitis A and E, and to evaluate the way in which they spread through water in order to draw conclusions about the abilities of those pathogens to incapacitate. A collection of those strains was then sent to the United States of America. It is reasonable to ask to what end. Why would the United States of America need a collection of dangerous pathogens that could spread into the rivers of that region? Even a cursory glance at the map of Ukrainian water resources is enough to understand that the results of such so-called scientific research could be used to create a biological disaster, not only in Russia, but in the entire area of the Azov and Black Seas and Eastern Europe, including Belarus, Moldova and Poland.

Documents suggest that the Kyiv regime has tried to gain access to the technical means for delivering dangerous bioagents by air. Last year, the Ukrainian side asked the Turkish drone manufacturer Baykar Makina about the possibility of equipping the Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with aerosol attachments that allow it to spray more than 20 litres of aerosol materials with a flight range of 300 kilometres. A copy of that letter can be found in the body of documents that we circulated in the Security Council on 19 April. A drone equipped with such a system at that range poses a real threat of the large-scale use of hazardous bioaerosols over the territory of the Russian Federation.

There is information that, in January this year, Ukraine purchased through intermediaries more than 50 such devices, equipped with biological and chemical dispersion systems. On 9 March this year, three such UAVs, equipped with 30-litre containers and a spraying system, were detected by our military in the

Kherson region. Another 10 were spotted in late April near Kakhovka.

Our Ministry of Defence has received shocking evidence that a number of projects that the Pentagon was implementing in Ukraine were putting the lives and the health of volunteer Ukrainian citizens at risk. The UP-8 project documentation stipulated that so-called minor incidents involving test subjects had to be reported to the United States Bioethics Committee within 72 hours and major incidents, including the death of volunteers, within 24 hours. In other words, those experiments were originally designed to be fatal, even though official project documents referred only to standard blood sampling procedures. What kind of blood sampling was it that could result in the death of those tested?

There is evidence of the direct involvement of the United States political establishment in the funding of bioweapons activities in Ukraine through Pentagon contractors, such as Black & Veatch and Metabiota. The aims were far from scientific. A letter from Metabiota's Vice-President, in particular, stated that its goal in Ukraine was "to ensure Ukraine's cultural and economic independence from Russia" — an unconventional objective for a biotechnology company, to put it mildly.

We informed the Council at previous meetings that, with the funding and direct supervision of the United States Department of Defense Defense Threat Reduction Agency, a network of biolaboratories was formed in Ukraine to conduct various military and biological-oriented research. According to previous data, it included Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, Ternopil, Uzhgorod and Vinnytsya.

Mariupol has now been added to that list. Evidence of the urgent destruction of documents confirming work with the United States defence agency was found in two biolaboratories in that city.

A preliminary analysis of the remaining documentation indicates that Mariupol was used as a regional centre for cholera-pathogen collection and certification. Selected strains were sent to the Public Health Centre in Kyiv, which was tasked with the further shipment of biomaterials to the United States. Such activity has been carried out since 2014, as evidenced by strain transfer certificates.

An official document of the destruction of the pathogen collection, dated 25 February, was found in the Mariupol sanitary and epidemiological laboratory, according to which cholera, tularaemia and anthrax pathogens, that is, potential bioweapons agents, were handled there.

In the rush, part of the veterinary laboratory collection was not destroyed. Among its contents, our experts found pathogens of diseases uncharacteristic of veterinary medicine — typhoid, paratyphoid and gas gangrene.

Previously, we spoke about the sharp increase in the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics in recent years in cases of tuberculosis caused by a new multidrug-resistant strain. There are reasons to believe that that is not an accident.

An investigation was conducted into a biological incident that took place in 2020 in the Slavyanoserbsk district of the Luhansk People's Republic. It turned out that counterfeit banknotes, infected with the tuberculosis pathogen, had been distributed to children in Stepove village. The assumption was that children, having touched the money, often pick up food with unwashed hands.

Testing showed that the banknotes were contaminated with a live, highly active tuberculosis pathogen resistant to most anti-tuberculosis drugs. The theory that the bacteria got onto the banknotes naturally, from a tuberculosis patient, does not stand up. The concentration of the pathogen is too high to survive in natural conditions where there is sunlight, which has a bactericidal effect. In other words, everything points to human laboratory contamination of the notes with a biomaterial of high pathogenicity. Fortunately, no one was directly harmed by those banknotes in Stepove. However, all those facts can collectively be considered confirmation of an extremely worrisome trend.

I would like to highlight another story, which is a further clear demonstration of how the Kyiv regime and its Western handlers really treat the people of Ukraine. There are reports that United States scientists at the Merefa laboratory tested potentially dangerous biological drugs on patients at the Kharkiv Regional Clinical Psychiatry Hospital No. 3. Similar inhumane experiments were conducted at Psychiatric Hospital No. 1 in Streleche village, Kharkiv region. The main category of subjects was a group of male patients, aged between 40 and 60 years and with a high stage of physical

exhaustion. All those studies were conducted secretly, with Ukrainian staff undertaking non-disclosure. In order to conceal their nationality, the American experts who carried out the research travelled through third countries.

As information about the activities of the biolaboratories in Ukraine becomes available, questions are also being raised about United States NATO allies. New documents reveal that, between 2016 and 2019 alone, 3,500 serum samples of citizens living in 25 regions of Ukraine were taken by military epidemiologists from the Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology. One wonders why the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany are collecting biomaterials from Ukrainian citizens.

There are documents confirming Poland's involvement in joint biological research in Ukraine with key Pentagon contractors, in particular the American Battelle institute.

I believe that today we will again hear accusations of propaganda and lack of evidence from our Western colleagues. That is why we pay great attention to documentation. We regularly distribute the original documents made available to our Ministry of Defence to the Security Council and the General Assembly. They are available to anyone who wants to see them. There are hundreds of pages of documents, signed by specific Ukrainian and United States officials. They give an idea of exactly what the Kyiv regime and its Western handlers would like to conceal from the international community.

The United States representatives refuse time and again to give explanations as to the nature and real aims of their biological activities in Ukraine and in the world as a whole. At the session of the Preparatory Committee of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), held in Geneva in early April, the American side again gave no intelligible answer except for the excuse that United States biological activities are, by definition, peaceful and so-called beneficial to the international community.

At the Arria Formula meeting on 6 April, independent journalists asked the United States to provide explanations, including why documents on United States-Ukrainian cooperation on biological research contradicted statements made by United States officials. But the United States and United Kingdom delegations simply did not come to the meeting.

There is another telling fact. During the above-mentioned Preparatory Committee session, the United States delegation once again rejected the proposal to establish an effective mechanism to verify BWC implementation. It refused to resume work on the relevant legally binding protocol to the Convention, which the United States has blocked since 2001. Our initiative to add to the BWC confidence-building measures with a protocol for reporting military biological activities outside the national territory was also rejected by the United States representatives. In other words, the United States is deliberately blocking efforts to strengthen the BWC regime so that violations of the Convention can effectively be identified.

Those are all extremely worrisome signals, especially given the fact that United States law permits military biological activities and the national legislation in that area takes precedence over international law in the United States.

Today I would once again like to ask the representative of the United States why, if its activities in biological laboratories around the world and in Ukraine in particular really are, as it claims, of an exclusively peaceful nature, does it refuse to place them under international controls and prevent the international community, in every possible way, from accessing the necessary instruments to that end? That would be the easiest way to dispel all doubts and accusations once and for all, if they are indeed totally groundless. Unfortunately, the only explanation so far is that the United States has something to hide.

We have already accumulated a significant number of materials directly indicating violations by the United States and Ukraine of the Biological Weapons Convention. We continue to collect and analyse those materials. Given the fact that the American side refuses to engage in any constructive discussion on the topic, we plan to use the mechanisms provided for in articles V and VI of the Biological Weapons Convention. As soon as the collection of materials is completed, we will submit them to the Council for investigation. We hope that will make it possible to permanently put an end to military biological activities threatening international peace and security and to hold the perpetrators accountable.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I wish I could thank the Department of Disarmament Affairs for its updated information, but I am afraid that falls short given

that we have heard nothing new. That is not the Department's fault. I will nonetheless thank it for its patience in coming here and repeating once again — for the third time in a few months — what we already have heard at the two previous meetings (see S/PV.8991 and S/PV.8999), namely, that the United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programme in Ukraine and that it has not been possible to give any credit to Russia's claims.

The Department must be surprised that we keep asking it the same question, on the same issue, hoping to receive a different answer. Therefore, I am seriously wondering whether we need to continue spending time on such nothingness. I say so with all due respect, since it is difficult to take such persistence seriously. With the world in turmoil, we should be able to devote our time to other pressing issues that need the Council's attention and action.

The Council relies on United Nations reports on all the issues that we discuss here. We listen carefully to the information provided by briefers from the Secretariat. We trust them because they do what we have asked them to do. Here we are, for the third time, presented with the same unverified, uncorroborated, unsubstantiated, non-factual claims of a non-existent biological programme in Ukraine.

It is therefore hard not to conclude that we are yet again witnessing a persistent attempt to spread a false narrative, to use the Security Council for propaganda purposes and divert attention from the terrible reality of the crimes committed in Ukraine. That must stop. It affects the Council's credibility and relevance. Let me recall the famous saying that one can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, but one cannot fool all the people all of the time.

We have no doubts that Russia knows better regarding chemical weapons and their use. Its protégé, the Syrian regime, used them against rebel forces. Chemical weapons played a decisive role in the campaign of the Syrian regime to suppress resistance in rebel-held cities, killing and incapacitating fighters and civilians alike. Let us not forget that the sarin gas attack in 2013 in the eastern Ghouta region, near Damascus, may have caused the deaths of some 1,400 people. Credible reports indicate that the regime has not abandoned such despicable behaviour.

The Syrian experience reveals the troubling truth that in a protracted war, when the attacking forces are

trying to break the will of those defending, chemical weapons are one hideously terrorizing weapon to achieve that. We hope that no one — not Russia, nor any other country — will ever reach that point.

Issues related to chemical and biological weapons should never be taken lightly, and we never do. We listened to our Russian colleague but remain unconvinced — with good reason. There is a solid international normative framework, and we know how it works. The Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention contain precise measures and protocols to which concerned States parties can have recourse in order to address situations regarding any suspicious or problematic activity.

Therefore, if there were reasonable doubts with regard to any allegations about any biological programmes in Ukraine, we have a path and should make use of it rather than come here with ill-conceived stories. As a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention, Russia may take the issue to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, addressing it properly and professionally by providing international and independent experts with the opportunity to investigate. Mr. Markram reminded us of that once again today.

There is no smoke without fire. But, in this case, there is no smoke because there is no fire. Nothing here is true. Documents were distributed earlier, but no one from the scientific community has substantiated any of them. There is only a smokescreen and, as we all know, smokescreens are fake and do not last.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to express my condolences and sympathies to our colleagues from the United Arab Emirates, Ambassadors Nusseibeh and Abushahab, following the passing of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. May his soul rest in peace.

The Council met on 11 March (see S/PV.8991) to discuss the risk of the use of chemical weapons in the context of the war in Ukraine. Our meeting very quickly turned into an exchange between several delegations making serious mutual accusations regarding allegations that evoke the greatest fear for humankind. We fear that the same will happen today.

It is absolutely awful to be adding the spectre of the use of biological weapons to the terrifying scenery of

war, as though the bombings, countless deaths, civilian distress and the destruction of essential infrastructure were not enough. Surely humankind should not be made even more afraid than it already is in the face of our inability, that is, the Council's inability to stop the war in Ukraine and contain all the other wars ravaging the world.

It is quite deplorable that the Council's examination of substantive questions relating to the security and dignity of the peoples of the world is very often bogged down in endless cycles of intimidation and even propaganda, where information is hardly distinguishable from disinformation. The Council cannot be the epicentre of fear for the world, much less a place for invectives between Powers. It must be higher ground where peace can take root; where the spectre of war is exorcised; and where the furrows of the security and dignity of the peoples of the planet are sown.

In the course of our meetings on the war in Ukraine, my country has observed with great concern the hardening of positions, the radicalization of rhetoric and the rise of verbal escalation. The prevarications and procrastination of the various parties involved are not only delaying the outcome of the war but are also contributing to the worsening, day by day, of the situation of millions of innocent civilians who continue to pay the highest price.

As a State party to the United Nations Biological Weapons Convention, we reaffirm our opposition to the use of all forms of bacteriological weapons and call upon the parties to the conflict to refrain from the use of such weapons and to comply strictly with the relevant provisions, in particular articles V and X of the Biological Weapons Convention and its regime.

We emphasize the desirability of activating the mechanism established by General Assembly resolution 42/37, reinforced by Council resolution 620 (1988), tasking the Secretary-General with the carrying out of urgent investigations into the possible use of bacteriological weapons that may constitute violations of the Geneva Protocol. Now more than ever, we need an impartial and independent investigation of the allegations made.

Gabon reiterates its commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes between States Members of the United Nations and continues to call on the parties to de-escalate and to seize every diplomatic opportunity

to engage in negotiations in good faith in order to end the war.

In conclusion, we once again call on the warring parties to put an end to the fighting. We call on all parties to work to silence the guns and to give peace and peaceful coexistence a chance.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Markram for his briefing.

We deplore the fact that Russia is once again using the Security Council as a propaganda platform. To justify its unjustifiable war against Ukraine, Russia is making unfounded accusations. It repeats that there are offensive biological programmes in Ukraine. Let us be serious and get back to the facts. The United Nations has made it clear on several occasions, including today, that it has no information on this subject — none. The repeated dissemination of false information about biological weapons will not turn those allegations into reality.

This is not the first time that Russia has spread lies to stir up confusion, sow fear and, above all, cover up its own responsibility. In 2011, it accused Georgia of developing a biological weapons programme, without any proof. For years, it has been conducting a smear campaign against the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It has done so primarily to protect its Syrian ally but also to cover up its own chemical attacks on European soil. France is very concerned that this disinformation campaign may be a prelude to the use of a chemical or biological weapon in Ukraine.

No one should be fooled about Russia's objective today. The Russian rhetoric is dangerous and particularly worrisome because it comes from a State party to the Biological Weapons Convention, which provides for a consultation procedure for States parties. We must focus all our efforts on safeguarding and implementing the Convention so that these shocking weapons are never used in future.

**Ms. Oppong-Ntiri** (Ghana): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the floor. I would like to start by conveying my delegation's — and indeed Ghana's — sincere condolences to the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates on the demise of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

I also join previous speakers in thanking the Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs,

Mr. Thomas Markram, for his briefing. We have taken due note of the information provided.

Like others, Ghana is deeply concerned that the conflict in Ukraine continues unabated and the cessation of hostilities remains elusive, despite the ongoing human suffering and the loss of precious lives, including those of women and children.

We also take seriously every report of the threat of use or the potential use of biological or chemical weapons and note that in all instances of chemical or biological activities the independent and impartial investigations conducted by the internationally recognized and mandated bodies should be the only way to establish the facts. The cruelty associated with the use of biological agents and toxins as instruments of war and the fact that the resulting diseases would not confine themselves to national borders justify the prohibition of States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention from the use of biological agents and toxins as instruments of war.

Ghana reiterates its call on both parties to exercise restraint and avoid the deliberate or accidental release of chemical or biological agents or other weapons of mass destruction given the immeasurable risk that those weapons pose to the lives of civilians and the environment. Historical events such as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and its lasting impact present enough evidence that averting the chances of a nuclear war in Ukraine and beyond would be in the interest of not only both parties but also of the global community. The risk of a nuclear exchange is real and would be catastrophic for the whole planet. Its effects would be felt not only in Europe but around the whole world. We therefore call on all actors to uphold their obligations and commitments under international law and international humanitarian law.

Ghana believes that the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine would not only be beneficial to both parties but would also bring much-needed respite to the global economy, especially to developing countries and small economies, which have borne the disproportionate impact of the ripple effects of this war while struggling with the socioeconomic consequences of the coronavirus disease pandemic.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that a sustainable solution to the conflict can be arrived at only through diplomacy and constructive dialogue among the parties and stakeholders.

**Ms. Heimerback** (Norway): First, let me express our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on the passing of their President.

I would like to thank Mr. Thomas Markram, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing.

Unsurprisingly, Mr. Markram repeated what we had previously heard from the High Representative — that the United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programme in Ukraine.

We are once more witnessing the Russian Federation using the Security Council as a platform for disinformation and seeking to divert attention from its unprovoked, unjustified and irresponsible warfare in Ukraine.

Norway is a firm supporter of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and we are determined — together with international partners — to uphold the total ban against biological weapons.

Therefore, let me be clear: allegations of violations of the BWC are extremely serious and merit scrutiny. Yet once again Russia has failed to offer any credible evidence for its accusations, providing us instead with unsubstantiated claims and mere insinuations. If Russia is serious about these accusations, they should use the proper procedure under the BWC and provide fact-based evidence.

In the meantime, we urge Russia to stop wasting the Council's time and resources on these meaningless meetings.

Let me end by reiterating Norway's condemnation of Russia's war against Ukraine. It is a blatant violation of international law and the very principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We demand that Russia immediately end its aggression, withdraw its troops and stop causing death, suffering and destruction.

**Mrs. Toroitich** (Kenya): I thank Mr. Markram for his briefing this morning. We would like to join others in expressing our deepest condolences to our United Arab Emirates colleagues and the Government and the people of that country on the passing of their President.

I reaffirm Kenya's firm belief that the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction by anyone, at any time, is appalling and can never be justified under any circumstance whatsoever.

The indiscriminate scope and nature of the deployment of such weapons would inevitably lead to immediate and long-term catastrophic effects on people, societies and the environment. Indeed, even the users of such weapons of mass destruction may not be spared their reach and devastating effects.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction remains the global norm against biological weapons and a fundamental pillar of the international community's efforts to prevent the use of such weapons.

As a State party to that Convention, Kenya believes that any allegation of a breach thereof must not be taken lightly. We also reiterate the need for all State parties to make the efforts necessary to strengthen the biological weapons regime and the norms that safeguard humankind from the threat of use of those repulsive weapons.

Kenya further reiterates its call on all State parties to the Convention to make use of the established mechanisms to ensure that there is no ambiguity as to the presence of those extremely dangerous weapons.

Without downplaying the importance of the matter under consideration, we all acknowledge that the issue of immediate concern to the Security Council is the armed conflict in Ukraine. That war is unfolding dangerously, with an unthinkable cost to the people of Ukraine and, increasingly, to the entire region and the world.

We therefore reiterate our call on the Council and all its members to focus its efforts on finding a path to negotiating peace for Ukraine and its people, who are bearing the brunt of the conflict.

Once again, we implore for its cessation and for meaningfully safe humanitarian passages for trapped civilians, particularly in eastern Ukraine.

**Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to state that Mexico extends its deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates on the passing of its President. May he rest in peace.

I wish to thank Mr. Markram for his briefing. We take note of the fact that the United Nations has



reiterated that it has no knowledge of the existence of any biological weapons programmes in Ukraine.

In keeping with my country's long-standing conviction against all weapons of mass destruction, Mexico categorically opposes any activity related to biological weapons. As rightly stated in the Biological Weapons Convention, the use of such weapons would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind. The Convention is a treaty that is key to the disarmament regime. Its article V clearly establishes that all States parties undertake to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems which may arise and that such consultations and cooperation may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter. We should therefore avail ourselves of those provisions.

The submission of annual reports is also an important confidence-building measure that can provide certainty as to activities in the area of biological materials.

Unfortunately, the Convention does not yet have a verification mechanism, as is the case with the Chemical Weapons Convention. We hope that at the next Review Conference it can be used as a framework for promoting effective means of strengthening the prohibition regime for biological weapons and that in the near future we will be able to provide the Convention with a verification mechanism.

Mexico firmly believes in safeguarding the peaceful uses of bioresearch while also preventing the risks of proliferation stemming from dual-use materials. That is why we firmly believe in promoting every possible synergy among the Biological Weapons Convention, export-control regimes such as the Australia Group, the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health in order to develop comprehensive and coherent public policies.

Given that that attention to new risks related to biological weapons has grown since the beginning of the pandemic and given the allegations that we have repeatedly heard, on which the United Nations has reiterated several times that it has no information, it is important that all international mechanisms aimed at preventing the proliferation of such weapons by non-State actors should definitely be strengthened.

We hope that as a result of the extensive review of resolution 1540 (2004) that is currently under way, we will be able to agree on measures to strengthen controls, especially with regard to dual-use materials, equipment and technology.

I will conclude my remarks by calling on the Council to prioritize putting an end to the hostilities in Ukraine and the suffering of its people. We hope that the next time the Council meets, it will be with that goal in mind.

**Mr. Raguttahalli (India):** We deeply mourn the passing of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. His Highness will be remembered as a great statesman and a visionary leader who modernized and empowered the United Arab Emirates. He laid the foundation for the transformation of the relationship between India and the United Arab Emirates. The people of India convey their heartfelt condolences to the people of the United Arab Emirates. May his soul rest in peace.

Turning to today's subject, I would like to thank Mr. Thomas Markram, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing.

India attaches high importance to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) as a key global and non-discriminatory disarmament convention prohibiting an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. The convention contains binding obligations on States parties to never develop, acquire, stockpile or transfer biological agents for purposes other than peaceful ones. We support the full and effective implementation of the Convention in letter and spirit.

We also believe that any matter relating to obligations under the Convention should be addressed as per the provisions of the Convention and through consultations and cooperation between the parties concerned.

India has been underscoring the need for the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding protocol providing for an effective, universal and non-discriminatory verification mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Convention by States parties.

We remain deeply concerned at the worsening situation in Ukraine. We have been consistent in calling for a cessation of hostilities and pursuing the path of diplomacy and dialogue to address the situation. In

that regard, we support the good-offices efforts of the Secretary-General. It is important to undertake those efforts keeping in mind the need to respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

**Mr. Eckersley** (United Kingdom): I should like to start by offering the United Kingdom's deep condolences on the death of the President of the United Arab Emirates.

I should like to thank Mr. Markram for his briefing.

As we have heard from the United Nations today, there is still no independent evidence whatsoever for any of these bizarre conspiracy theories. In the United Kingdom's view, this meeting is a complete waste of the Council's time. It does tell us one thing, though: the fact that Russia is trying to distract us with this information suggests that it knows as well as we do that none of its other excuses for invading Ukraine has any solid foundation whatsoever.

The simple truth is that Russia is responsible for this horrific war in breach of the Charter and for the needless deaths of thousands of men, women and children.

**Ms. Moran** (Ireland): First, let me express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the United Arab Emirates on the passing of President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Our sympathies are with them.

I thank Mr. Markram for his very useful briefing.

I would begin by stating that the use of biological agents or toxins, or indeed chemicals, as instruments of war is abhorrent. They are rightly prohibited under international law, and there can be no impunity for those who use them.

It is essential that we collectively uphold the international legal norm against such weapons. Ireland looks forward to the Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention and will work with States parties to further strengthen that key international instrument.

It is deeply worrying that Russia is continuing to use this important issue in an attempt to justify unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. Despite the large amount of material Russia has shared, no substantive or credible evidence has been presented to support Russia's allegations. Rather, what we see are baseless and unfounded claims against Ukraine

and others, including the United States, from Russia to paint itself as the victim in the face of its horrific actions in Ukraine.

Quite simply, Russia must stop seeking to use the Security Council as a platform for its disinformation. Its actions risk undermining the essential multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments upon which all our security depends, as well as peaceful, legitimate cooperation and research supporting public health.

Biological threats do not discriminate between their victims, nor do they respect borders, carrying considerable human, social and economic costs. We must do all that we can, as global partners, to ensure effective disease monitoring, detection, control and prevention.

Efforts to misrepresent or undermine legitimate biosafety and biosecurity research in Ukraine and elsewhere are deeply regrettable and can only weaken efforts to prevent and control future outbreaks.

We again call on Russia to immediately end its hostilities, unconditionally withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine and refrain from further threat or use of force of any kind against Ukraine or any other State.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to start by expressing our deepest condolences to the people and the Government of the United Arab Emirates and to our colleagues from that country on the passing of President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

I listened carefully to the briefing by Mr. Markram, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, on the question of weapons of mass destruction and biosecurity. China's position has been consistent. We advocate the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons; firmly oppose the development, stockpiling or use of biological or chemical weapons by any country under any circumstances; and urge the one particular country that has not yet destroyed its stockpiles of chemical weapons to do so as soon as possible.

All States parties should scrupulously abide by the objectives and principles of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). An impartial, independent and professional multilateral verification system is an effective means to implement the Convention. The

BWC will hold its Ninth Review Conference at the end of this year. We expect the States parties to take the conference as an opportunity to restart negotiations on the verification protocol to the Convention, promote the early establishment of a multilateral verification mechanism and effectively enhance global biosecurity.

China notes with concern the new material released by the Russian side. Biomilitary activities jeopardize international peace and security, and information and leads about biomilitary activities, including the Russian material, should be of great concern to the international community. China once again calls on the relevant party to adopt a responsible attitude by providing timely responses to and comprehensive clarifications on the relevant queries in order to dispel the doubts of the international community. We welcome an assessment of the documents disclosed by the Russian side by the international community in the framework of the Convention and the United Nations.

Lastly, I wish to reiterate that the conflict in Ukraine has been going on for more than two months. The priority for the international community is to step up efforts to stop the hostilities and urge both countries to revert to the track of negotiations with a view to establishing the political conditions for negotiations. China supports the Secretary-General's efforts to bring about peace. We urge all parties of the international community to try to establish positive conditions for peace between the two camps.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil):** Before I start, I join other delegations in expressing my condolences to the people and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on the passing of President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

We have taken due note of the information provided by the delegation of Russia and of the fact that documentation has been made available. I also thank the briefer for the information that he presented.

My delegation takes very seriously allegations of the existence of biological weapons. Such allegations, with the gravity that they carry, must be thoroughly substantiated by solid evidence, which must be presented and confirmed by an independent and impartial authority, as foreseen in article VI of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

In 1972, the Biological Weapons Convention finally established clear obligations binding all States parties

to never, under any circumstances, develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire such weapons. The principle behind those prohibitions is simple: the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose the methods and means of warfare is not unlimited and certainly cannot encompass weapons with indiscriminate effects or of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.

Unfortunately, 50 years after having adopted the Biological Weapons Convention, we still have not been able to agree on a multilateral mechanism to verify compliance with the provisions of the Convention. The absence of such a mechanism hobbles the transparency of international biosafety and biosecurity research initiatives, as the international community has no effective means of discerning between legitimate scientific and technological cooperation and possible violations of the prohibition against the development and production of biological weapons.

Brazil favours the resumption of negotiations with a view to the adoption of a binding verification protocol that strengthens the implementation of the Convention and contributes to building trust among State parties regarding the exclusively peaceful use of knowledge and technology in the field of life sciences.

The next BWC Review Conference represents a unique opportunity for us to re-engage in such discussions without delay. While such protocol is not adopted, we invite State parties to strengthen the confidence-building measures system established at the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention by sharing the widest possible range of information regarding research projects on topics related to the objective of the Convention within and outside their territories.

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

Let me begin as well by joining colleagues in expressing my deepest condolences to the United Arab Emirates on the death of its President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

I thank Mr. Markram for his appearance at this morning's meeting and for the always credible, objective and sober contributions of the Office for Disarmament Affairs to the Security Council's discussions. But I also regret that he was asked to join us today as part of this truly farcical conversation.

As other speakers said, Russia is once again using the Security Council as a platform to spout disinformation and conspiracy theories about Ukraine, even as Russia continues its brutal and inhumane assault on the Ukrainian people. Russia repeatedly debases the Council through these absurd meetings and endless claims about chemical and biological weapons programmes in Ukraine, which are categorically false and ludicrous. They follow a well-worn pattern in which the Russian authorities accuse others of the very violations that Russia either has perpetrated or intends to perpetrate.

We should not lend Russia's outlandish claims any credence beyond watching closely for the possibility of a false-flag chemical or biological attack by Russia's forces as the Kremlin continues to perpetrate its premeditated, unjustified and unprovoked war against Ukraine.

We heard this morning fanciful claims about poisoned banknotes, secret treatments on psychiatric prisoners and non-disclosure agreements. It is as if the Russian representative's talking points came from a bad spy novel. But what is not fiction, and what we must not forget, is that Russia has a long and well-documented track record of using chemical weapons, including in attempted assassinations and the poisoning of Putin's political enemies, such as Alexei Navalny. It is Russia that continues to support the Al-Assad regime in Syria, a regime that has repeatedly used chemical weapons. It is Russia that has long maintained a well-documented biological weapons programme in violation of international law, including the Biological Weapons Convention. Those actions are unacceptable, and we will not stand for them.

I reiterate the position of the United States that any use of chemical or biological weapons by Russia will result in severe consequences. We expect the Russian Government to publicly and unequivocally state that Russian forces and its proxies will not use chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine or anywhere, ever, in accordance with Russia's international legal obligations.

What we are seeing today from the Russian Federation is not the behaviour of a responsible country seeking to address serious concerns in this organ. Even the documents that Moscow circulates do not support their allegations. That is merely an attempt to distract us from the awful violence that Russia is perpetrating in Ukraine. It is an effort to make us turn away from the

suffering inflicted by Putin's war, the horrors of Bucha, the brutal siege of Mariupol and the bombardments killing civilians across the country.

But the United States is not fooled, neither are Council members, and we are not going to look away. Instead, we will continue to hold Russia accountable, and we join others in continuing to call on Putin to end his war of choice.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): There are once again attempts to divert the discussion, move the focus away from the topic that we initially put forward and mix together chemical and biological weapons. Those are different things. You, Mr. President, talked about both, but we are talking about specific facts that we have uncovered about specific documents that indicate that the United States is carrying out military biological programmes at biological laboratories in Ukraine. We have distributed several hundred documents. There are specific data, cases, companies and people in them. If it is thought to be insufficient evidence, then what is sufficient evidence? Our questions are not answered, not only within the Security Council.

In our statement, we already said that the United States had not provided any information or clarifications about the nature and the real aims of its biological activities in Ukraine, including within the Preparatory Committee of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention in Geneva, which is a specialized forum. The United States tries to pretend that nothing serious is happening, but, unfortunately, it is. We want clarifications from the United States. We mentioned the mechanisms that we may utilize. We will not leave this subject. The United States attempts to turn our specific objections and questions into empty talk by talking about Russian propaganda will not work. The United States will have to provide specific clarifications about the criminal activity in which it is involved in Ukraine.

**The President:** The representative of the United Arab Emirates has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): I take the floor to thank colleagues for their words of condolence to my country over the passing away of our President, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. May he rest in peace. We thank Member States for such

expressions, both here at the Council and bilaterally. We have already requested the United States presidency to schedule a moment of silence sometime next week.

*The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.*