



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

**9254**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 6 February 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

---

*President:* Mrs. Frazier/Ms. Gatt . . . . . (Malta)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. Costa Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Biang
Ghana . . . . .	Mr. Agyeman
Japan . . . . .	Mr. Ishikane
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Afonso
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Switzerland . . . . .	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America . . . . .	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

## Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

---

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

23-03434 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.*

### **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 Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** For almost a whole year, the Secretary-General, I and many others have briefed the Security Council repeatedly on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. We have warned about the toxic brew of death, destruction, displacement and deprivation that the war has caused. We have spoken about the psychological trauma it has left behind. We have condemned its deadly toll on civilians. Yet the tragedy continues to unfold with no end in sight. As we near the one-year mark of this war, allow me to remind the Council of some facts.

Almost 40 percent of Ukraine's population—17.6 million people—need humanitarian assistance. More than 7,000 civilians have been killed. Those are only the figures confirmed by the United Nations; I am sure that the true figures are higher. Nearly 8 million Ukrainians have fled to neighbouring countries. In addition, 5.3 million people have become internally displaced, many seeking shelter in collective centres. Countless numbers of people have hunkered down in basements for days and weeks on end to seek protection from bombs—a new way of life. Homes, schools, hospitals and other critical civilian infrastructure have been destroyed. Entire cities, towns and villages have been heavily damaged.

This violence, as you know, Madam President, shows no sign of abating. Only last week, air strikes hit hospitals on both sides of the front line, causing death and injury among dozens of civilians. I personally saw evidence of that relentless violence when I visited Ukraine in December. I saw the devastation in the countryside around Mykolayiv, riddled with mines. I saw agricultural land destroyed, entire communities cut off from electricity and essential supplies.

But in the midst of that tragedy, I also saw the remarkable drive for survival by the people of Ukraine. In Mykolayiv, I visited a bakery led by women that had continued working throughout the war, although with reduced capacity. With help from the World Food Programme, the bakery has increased production and now produces thousands of loaves every day that are distributed to people in Kherson, the neighbouring oblast, as well as Mykolayiv. People went back to work—eagerly, avidly—when the opportunity arose. In Kherson city, I saw volunteers, municipal employees and local authorities working hand in hand with humanitarian partners to provide a command centre.

In short, the people of Ukraine have left the whole world in awe of their resilience. Resilience despite the deadly violence. Resilience despite the power cuts and the damaged energy sector, in the middle of a savage winter. Resilience despite the mines and explosive remnants of war, which are driving displacement, preventing safe returns, hindering humanitarian aid, interrupting agricultural activities and delaying the restoration of essential services. Resilience despite the sexual violence, the trafficking, the sexual exploitation and the abuse. The people of Ukraine have been spared none of the horrors of war. And the humanitarian community has been doing its best to help to mitigate those horrors.

Over the past year, we have provided 15.8 million people with assistance, including more than 1.3 million people who are in areas outside the control of the Government of Ukraine. We have delivered winter clothes—I saw it—heating appliances, albeit not enough them, and solid fuel and building materials. Of course, the Ukrainian authorities themselves—national, provincial and local Government—are doing all that and more. We have delivered generators to hospitals, shelters, heating points, water pumping facilities, schools and places hosting internally displaced people. We have delivered life-saving aid to villages near the front line in rural parts of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya,

Kherson and Kharkiv oblasts, using inter-agency convoys, which are now increasing in numbers, to provide a comprehensive package of support, facilitated by our constructive partnership with a wealth of national, regional and local authorities.

Our operations have expanded exponentially in the past year. The 2023 humanitarian response plan for Ukraine, which I will launch next week in Geneva, requires \$3.9 billion to bring assistance to more than 11 million people. We should remember, lest it be lost in history, that before February 2022 humanitarian partners were already delivering assistance mainly in the east, on both sides of the front line in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts for many years. More than 650 humanitarian organizations are operating today across all of Ukraine's 24 oblasts. That is not to say that we should not reach more people, more frequently. Humanitarian access to areas under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation has become increasingly unpredictable and difficult to achieve. Despite repeated attempts and negotiations, we have been unable to launch cross-line convoys to go from one area to another, from north to south.

At the risk of repeating myself, I would like to remind everyone of some basic rules of war. All parties in Ukraine or any other such context should take constant care to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout their military operations. They should allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, wherever they are. That is something we must continue to staunchly advocate from all angles, and we must insist on the prerogatives that are enshrined in the Geneva Conventions and international law. And we need to address the war's profound global implications for global food and energy prices, trade and supply chains and questions of nuclear safety. We are making progress where we can. The Black Sea Grain Initiative is enabling food exports to continue to reach global supply chains, helping to lower prices and maintaining an essential source of the World Food Programme wheat supplies. The extension of the Initiative beyond March, when it comes up for renewal, is of critical importance. As part of the package, the United Nations will also continue to press for the facilitation of food and fertilizer exports, including ammonia, from the Russian Federation, which remain a key part of our broader effort to address global food insecurity.

On the eve of this horrific one-year milestone, which comes on top of the previous eight years of conflict, we have a lot to do, we have a lot to do together and we can do better. I therefore conclude by calling on us all to remain in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, just as we do all over the world, in their time of need.

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

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

**Mr. De Rivière (France)** (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Griffiths for his briefing. As we approach 24 February, the tragic one-year anniversary of the war, Russia has continued its strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure. There was a new wave of bombings on 26 January, during the visit of France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs to Odesa, which as of Saturday still had no electricity. Before that, on 14 January, Russian strikes led to the death of 46 people in Dnipro. France condemns in the strongest terms this strategy of systematically targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure, attacks that constitute war crimes. Ukrainians will soon have been facing such suffering for a year. It is high time that it stopped. According to the statistics available to us, in one year the war has killed more than 7,000 Ukrainian civilians and injured more than 11,000. The actual numbers are undoubtedly much higher. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recently pointed out that the intensified fighting will lead to a further increase in the number of refugees. Approximately 8 million people have already left the country, and more than 6 million are internally displaced in Ukraine.

Russia has banked on using the winter to bring the Ukrainian people to their knees. It is redoubling their suffering and attempting to deprive them of heat, electricity and water. We cannot allow that strategy to succeed, and we will continue to support Ukraine's legitimate efforts to defend itself. The Ukrainian people are not alone. The overwhelming support of the international community is undiminished. We stand by them and will continue to do so. In that spirit, on 13 December 2022 France organized the Standing with the Ukrainian People conference, which raised more than €1 billion to help Ukraine meet its most urgent needs. We remain fully ready to help today. To name just a few noteworthy projects, in the past few weeks France has delivered 63 high-voltage generators and 5 million LED bulbs. All of our commitments will be fulfilled by mid-February and will have a concrete impact on the daily lives of millions of Ukrainians.

The consequences of Russia's aggression extend far beyond the borders of Ukraine. It has caused global food insecurity whose severity has reached unprecedented levels. We urge Russia not to hinder the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative next March. In the face of this aggression, France will continue to stand by Ukraine. We will never resign ourselves to a world in which force prevails over law or in which a country that is a permanent member of the Security Council can violate the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations with impunity. We will continue to support the investigations led by the Ukrainian justice system and international courts to combat impunity, as well as to provide the Ukrainian people with all the humanitarian, economic and military support they need to exercise their legitimate right to self-defence and preserve their freedom.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his briefing and for the valuable work he and his team are doing on the ground.

As long ago as the 28 February 2022 meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.8983), only four days after the military operation against Ukraine began, Mr. Griffiths was already giving the Council a view of a humanitarian landscape marked by horror, devastation and death. He warned how brutal and protracted urban warfare and bombing could be and therefore called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. In just those few days more than 500,000 people had already fled, and thousands of African, Latin American and other students from all over the world were affected, including some from Ecuador, which provided services to and evacuated nearly a thousand of them through a series of humanitarian flights. Russia's repeated denials that it would carry out military strikes limited the possibilities for their safe evacuation and exacerbated the impact on the civilian population.

In condemning the constantly deteriorating humanitarian situation, Ecuador was therefore one of the 17 countries that called on 20 March 2022 for a resumption of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly to advocate for efforts to alleviate the serious consequences of what was then a month-long siege, invasion and bombardment of densely populated cities. Through General Assembly resolution ES-11/2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, of which we were

a sponsor, we demanded that civilians, objects vital to their survival and the infrastructure necessary for the provision of essential services be fully protected. One year later, it remains incumbent on the Security Council and its members to continue to comply with and ensure others' compliance with those provisions, in line with the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its Additional Protocol I of 1977.

With more than 6 million people internally displaced in Ukraine and almost 8 million refugees in Europe, Ecuador is deeply concerned about the situation of women and girls, who are most exposed to violence and abuse, including sexual violence. We are also saddened that criminal human trafficking and smuggling organizations have taken advantage of the risk environment created by the military aggression. In accordance with the principles of responsibility and accountability, none of that can go unpunished.

We condemn the continuing escalation in attacks and bombings targeting critical infrastructure, which is further jeopardizing access to basic services. Attacks on energy infrastructure, hospitals, homes and schools have particularly adverse effects women, children and the elderly. The essential pillars of life are being destroyed, in addition to cultural heritage, which is a source of identity. The bombings are also poisoning Ukraine's fertile land, which is critical to global food security. We reiterate that there is an obligation to ensure humanitarian access and that the attacks on civilian targets must stop.

More than 9 million people are in need of humanitarian and livelihood assistance; nearly 15 million people in need of health care; and 16 million people are in need of water, hygiene and sanitation — Ecuador's population is 17 million people, so that is the equivalent of my entire country being in the same situation many Ukrainians are in today. Many people are in also need of heating. And all of that requires the continued mobilization of the international community. We therefore welcomed the convening on 13 December in Paris of a conference to support civil resilience, which must remain the priority of the United Nations system.

How many more people must die? How many more women and girls must be abused or raped? How much more misery and hunger must occur for the invasion to stop? The longer this war goes on, the more destruction and pain it will cause. Therefore, the best

way to honour the victims of this senseless tragedy, including every one of the thousands of children who have been orphaned or killed, is to put an end to the military aggression in order to give way to dialogue and enable the restoration of peace within the framework of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. That will also enable progress towards reconstruction and reparations in accordance with international law.

Ecuador supports and will continue to support the work of the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice. And we insist that the International Court of Justice's order for Russia to immediately suspend its military operations that began on 24 February 2022 in Ukraine be complied with.

Finally, in recognizing the Black Sea Grain Initiative's contribution to alleviating the global consequences of food insecurity, we hope that the Council will reaffirm its support for the work of the Secretary-General and effectively crystallize the Initiative. We believe that the Initiative should be renewed automatically and that its implementation should continue unhindered.

**Mr. Biang** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my compassion to the many people who are working in the rubble of the earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria this morning and which has already claimed thousands of lives.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his update on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine.

This February, we will mark 12 months since the war in Ukraine began — 12 months of deadly war that have shaken and posed serious challenges to the entire international system; 12 months of humanitarian distress that have made death, destruction, fear and exodus the backdrop of daily life for people in cities and in the countryside; and 12 months during which humanitarian personnel have shown remarkable courage in providing assistance and protection and in meeting the urgent needs of the population in terms of medical care, water, food, electricity generators and other basic necessities. In Ukraine and in the countries hosting refugees, humanitarian aid also includes cash donations and educational assistance to children with a view to mitigating the effects of war on the schooling of young children.

In paying tribute to the valiant humanitarians who risk their lives in the trenches and devastated ruins to keep the flame of hope alive for the sake of humanity,

we once again call on the parties to the conflict to strictly respect international humanitarian law and urge them to grant unhindered access to those in need of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian assistance must never be subject to politicization or bargaining.

We call on the parties to strictly adhere to their international commitments to protect civilians, especially children, women and vulnerable persons, and to refrain from any attacks that target civilian infrastructure. The allegations of sexual violence being committed and used as a weapon of war are particularly alarming. We condemn all such attacks and underscore once again the obligations of the parties under international law. My country also condemns the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects, such as cluster munitions, anti-personnel mines and guided weapons, which primarily target civilians.

Despite the outpouring of solidarity shown since the beginning of the war through the provision of multifaceted assistance, the humanitarian needs in Ukraine have yet to be fully addressed. The recent visit to Kyiv by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi demonstrated the magnitude of the needs that have arisen because of the ever-increasing bombings. There is also a need for ever-higher funding, as Under-Secretary-General Griffiths just confirmed in highlighting the scope of the funding needed to meet the humanitarian response plan.

Many signs are signalling a trend towards a war of attrition. The prospects for dialogue between the parties are slow to emerge. Neither of the parties seem ready to sit down at the negotiating table. On the contrary, each side is sharpening its weapons, refining its tactics and toughening its rhetoric.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is being torn apart, with tens of thousands of refugees, in addition to internally displaced persons and huge economic losses. In just a few months, the cost of rebuilding the country increased from \$350 billion to \$700 billion, according to the latest estimates. The economic repercussions of this war, which have an impact on most of the world's nations directly or indirectly, have exacerbated pre-existing vulnerabilities.

It is time to envision an end to this war and to stop its barrage of death and destruction. It is time to activate the diplomatic channels and to silence the guns in Ukraine.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): I join the previous speaker in conveying our deep condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Syria and Türkiye in the light of the death and destruction brought about by an earthquake in their countries earlier today.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing, and I commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the professionalism with which it has conducted operations in Ukraine under extremely difficult conditions and, at times, with enormous risk to the personal safety of humanitarian workers.

We welcomed the arrival in January of the first humanitarian convoy to the Soledar region, one of the hardest hit by the fighting. Those efforts have been critical to the survival of a significant portion of Ukraine's population, which is threatened by bombings and missile attacks in residential areas, as well as the destruction of energy infrastructure and hospital facilities amid the rigours of winter.

Brazil reiterates its condemnation of attacks on civilian targets, in violation of international law and international humanitarian law. We urge all parties to allow and facilitate rapid, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those in need, and to protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel and people in vulnerable situations, especially children. There must be no politicization of humanitarian assistance or selective application of international humanitarian law.

We are particularly alarmed by the recent signs of an escalation and are following with concern news about the launch of a new military offensive at a time when shipments of weapons and ammunition to the region are also increasing. Reports have revealed the use of anti-personnel mines in combat, in violation of the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Brazil condemns the use of such destructive weapons. History has shown that it has lasting consequences that Ukrainians will have to deal with long after the war is over. The parties are still operating based on the logic of a military solution to the conflict, and Brazil is concerned about the possibility that the conflict will become more deadly if more weapons are sent to the battlefield. As President Lula said, "Brazil is a country of peace. At this stage, we must find those who want peace, a word that so far has not often been used". The unwillingness of the 1990s

and 2000s to create a sustainable European security architecture was a ticking time bomb, and we are now seeing the consequences. Only a political solution agreed by all can bring lasting peace to the region and offer both sides an opportunity to coexist in harmony.

It is regrettable that transfers of arms and ammunition are dominating the public debate on the conflict in Ukraine. In the light of the report we just heard about the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the Council and the regional actors should be prioritizing an immediate cessation of hostilities and the start of peace negotiations. We renew the call for a ceasefire without preconditions and reiterate our support and willingness to participate in mediation efforts.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): First, on behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to join others in offering condolences to the people affected by the earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Our thoughts are with the families in mourning on this sad day, and our appreciation goes to the many who are contributing to the rescue and relief efforts. The United Kingdom is contributing immediate support and we are in close touch with those responding on the ground.

Focusing on Ukraine, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing today. As the United Nations has set out in many briefings in the year since Russia started the war, Russia's invasion has been devastating for the Ukrainian people. We receive daily reports of families, children and elderly and disabled people struggling to make ends meet while sheltering from relentless firing. A staggering 17.6 million people will require humanitarian assistance in 2023.

The ongoing insecurity across the front lines has prevented humanitarian organizations from establishing a sustained presence and access to those who need it most. The United Kingdom's support for neutral, impartial humanitarian action in Ukraine is clear. We commend the efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, but we know that in the territory controlled by Russia there is limited access for humanitarian organizations and sometimes none at all. The systematic denial of humanitarian access must end. That ongoing attitude is consistent with Russia's behaviour throughout the war, including the deliberate and callous targeting of civilian infrastructure and the instrumentalization of access to food and energy, which has had implications for vulnerable people in Ukraine and across the globe.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative has helped increase vital supplies and reduce global food prices. The global demand for Ukraine's grain remains strong. And yet in recent weeks, Russian inspections of ships have slowed and the backlog of waiting ships has increased. Exports under the Initiative have fallen. We join others in calling on Russia to fulfil its commitments, in line with the memorandum of understanding with the United Nations to "facilitate the unimpeded export of food" from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. That means renewing the Black Sea Grain Initiative next month and scaling up inspections at a rate that better meets the global demand.

The world needs just and sustainable peace in Ukraine. Russia must stop seeking to shift blame and face up to some very basic truths. First, it must acknowledge the immense suffering its war is causing its own people, the people of Ukraine and others around the world. Secondly, it must recognize that there is one clear solution to end the suffering — a unilateral withdrawal of Russian troops in line with the Charter of the United Nations, and an end to its futile war.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I would like to join my colleagues in expressing our most sincere condolences to all affected by the devastating earthquake in Türkiye and Syria.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for the updated information and for the excellent work being done to meet the humanitarian needs of the people in Ukraine.

This is the 348th day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, an ongoing catastrophe made by one man, which, as we heard and as we know, continues to wreak havoc on an entire country, claim innocent lives and keep the world in uncertainty. The data are as depressing as the situation remains desperate. With no end in sight, the bloody conflict is transforming by the day into a horrifying war of attrition. The widespread and repeated targeting of Ukrainian energy and other civilian infrastructure continues to create victims among some civilians and make life difficult if not impossible for others. Millions of displaced people are unable to return to their homes. Others are forced to live in dire conditions, deprived of access to electricity, water, heat and related vital services in the midst of a very cold winter. Odesa, a city newly inscribed on the World Heritage List, finds itself in darkness.

The barrage of missiles and drone attacks has become Russia's signature punishment, aimed at instilling terror in the civilian population. Where Russian missiles fall, horrors follow and life ends. Protecting civilians is a legal obligation that is solidly enshrined in international humanitarian law. If observed, it would represent one of the most important ways to help Ukrainians rebuild their lives. It is not happening. When we hear claims that Russian forces are not attacking civilians, we wonder which reality they are referring to, since those on the ground — humanitarian workers, reporters, human rights activists and the Ukrainians who are the victims — see the exact opposite.

As highlighted many times, this war is having a terrible impact on the most vulnerable, who are precisely those we are legally and morally bound to always shield and protect from any harm: the children. Millions cannot attend school, as their schools have been damaged or demolished — a courtesy from their brothers on the other side of the border. Countless children are going hungry and are continuously exposed to the risk of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. For 50 consecutive weeks, children in Ukraine have not gone to sleep with bedtime stories. Instead, they endure nightmares, traumatized by the sounds of sirens announcing shelling and the fear of death coming through the roof.

As we all know, the impact and ripple effects of the war are not limited to Ukraine. According to UNICEF, the economic downturn caused by the war and rising inflation have caused child poverty across Europe and Central Asia to increase by 19 per cent. Of course, those estimates are always conservative and the actual data may be far worse. Outside Ukraine, some 20 countries, including my own, continue to pay the price. It comes as no surprise that Russia itself has experienced the most significant increase in the number of children living in poverty during this time, with an additional 2.8 million children now living in households below the poverty line, according to UNICEF figures.

Where does that leave us? Nearly 5,000 children may die before their first birthday, while close to 120,000 children have dropped out of school, leading to severe learning losses. What a tragic conclusion: if you do not die in the war, you will die because of the war.

We must not let ourselves become familiar with the horrors of the war. We must not let ourselves be impregnated by the so-called fatigue from continued

exposure to endless human suffering, destruction and loss, counting the number of victims. We must not become victims of powerlessness because, for the first time in modern history, a permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear Power is waging a war — we now know why — to grab territory by force. We must not tire or surrender to the aggression, but continue our efforts to get Russia to come to its senses and put an end to its war. We must continue to oppose firmly, denounce openly and strongly and counter resolutely that business of death.

We must continue to document, nationally and internationally, every violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law: the killing of civilians; the illegal transfer of populations, including children; the use of torture and sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon; and the deliberate destruction or damage of civilian objects to force an entire population into submission. We must remind ourselves that we have resolved, collectively, to live in the era of accountability, not in the realm of impunity. The perpetrators must know that they will be held accountable.

We will continue to support and to stand for Ukraine, as we stand for fundamental rights and respect for international law. We reiterate our call on Russia to stop, to put an end to its war and to withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. That is how life, which is being destroyed every day in Ukraine, will be restored. That is how dialogue may be possible, and that is how the peace we want will prevail.

**Mr. Ishikane** (Japan): On behalf of the Government of Japan, I also join my colleagues in extending our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the victims of the huge earthquake that hit Türkiye and Syria.

I thank Mr. Martin Griffiths for his briefing.

It is truly regrettable that we have to state what has already been said by the overwhelming majority of Member States so many times, but Japan once again reiterates our condemnation, in the strongest terms, of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which is a clear and flagrant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We also condemn Russian attacks against civilian infrastructure and cities across Ukraine. Russia's deliberate attacks on hospitals, schools and energy and other critical infrastructure threaten the lives and future

of the Ukrainian people. The humanitarian situation has been aggravated by the harsh winter. Any continuation of those attacks is completely unacceptable. We recall that indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilian populations constitute a war crime.

We condemn all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, and call upon all parties to the armed conflict to strictly respect international humanitarian law. We underline that there can be no impunity for war crimes and other atrocities, including sexual and gender-based violence. The international community must hold those responsible to account in accordance with international law.

We commend the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and urge all parties — the Russian Federation in particular — to further facilitate grain exports from Ukraine without any obstructions.

In response to the dire needs of the Ukrainian people, Japan has been strongly pushing forward our initiative to provide assistance to the people of Ukraine with the international community. Specifically, we have provided a total of \$1.5 billion in humanitarian, financial and food-related aid, including further winterization assistance, to Ukraine and other countries affected by Russia's aggression. We have also warmly accepted people who have fled from Ukraine and provided assistance for a safe life in Japan.

Going forward, the Government of Japan continues to work with international organizations, the Japan International Cooperation Agency and non-governmental organizations, focusing on emergency humanitarian assistance, recovery and reconstructing the livelihoods of Ukrainian people from the viewpoint of ensuring human security. That will include assistances in such areas as mine action, debris removal, housing, hospitals, schools and electricity, in addition to winterization assistance. In order to implement further support, Japan welcomes efforts by the countries concerned to coordinate their assistance to Ukraine in a consistent, transparent and comprehensive manner.

The suffering in Ukraine must end. Japan hereby renews its firm commitment to providing our utmost support and will continue to stand by the people of Ukraine.



**Mr. Afonso** (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to align itself with the remarks by other Security Council members in expressing our deepest condolences to Türkiye and Syria for the loss of human life as a consequence of the terrible earthquake that took place today.

We wish to express our thanks to Mr. Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for his useful briefing. We also welcome the participation in this Security Council meeting of the Permanent Representatives of Ukraine, Estonia, Italy, Poland, Germany and Denmark, as well as the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union.

The recent developments in Ukraine are a matter of great concern to Mozambique. We are witnessing an increase in the intensity of the armed confrontation. We are deeply saddened to see that this war has already caused enormous destruction in terms of economic and social infrastructure in Ukraine. The war has claimed the lives of thousands of innocent people and deprived people of their basic needs, such as food, water, electricity and education. As in every war situation, women and children are the greatest victims. In that connection, the international community must continue to pull together its efforts to extend much-needed humanitarian assistance to the suffering people of Ukraine.

We profoundly regret that, day after day, the logic of war has been escalating and the prospects for a negotiated settlement on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations are dimming and even vanishing.

It is therefore our duty to call on the parties in conflict to come to the negotiating table in order to find a solution to this tragic situation. As members of this organ mandated to maintain international peace and security, we are obligated under the Charter to cooperate and support efforts in that direction. We are duty-bound to explore avenues that can lead the parties to an understanding.

We know, from our own experience, the heavy costs of war. We also know from our long and protracted conflicts in Africa and elsewhere that humanitarian problems can only have a political solution. We therefore reiterate our call to the parties to show restraint and engage in a frank and constructive dialogue conducive to a negotiated and lasting settlement of the conflict.

We strongly appeal to the parties to bear in mind and abide by their obligations under international law and international humanitarian law.

We wish to conclude by reiterating our strong support and encouragement for the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and his team for their important work in this challenging situation of war in Ukraine.

**Mr. Dai Bing** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China expresses its deep condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Türkiye and Syria for the heavy loss of lives and properties caused by the powerful earthquakes. We express our sympathy to the bereaved families and the injured. China will provide emergency humanitarian assistance based on the needs of the two countries, and we sincerely hope that the peoples of Türkiye and Syria will overcome the disaster and rebuild their homes.

Over the past year, since the Ukraine crisis broke out, the humanitarian situation there has always tugged at our heartstrings. Conflicts on the ground show no signs of easing up, the logic of military solutions still prevails, and a large number of heavy weapons keep pouring into the battlefields. The international community deplores the humanitarian cost of the conflict.

But the parties concerned have failed to demonstrate their sincere desire to promote peace talks and their determination to resolve the issue politically. China once again calls on the relevant parties to bear in mind the interests of the people, strive to promote peace and do everything possible to push the parties to the conflict to resume peace talks and end the war at an early date.

During armed conflicts, priority should be given to humanitarian issues. China has always stressed that parties to conflict must abide by international humanitarian law, adhere to the humanitarian bottom line of respecting life, refrain from attacking civilians and civilian facilities and ensure the safe evacuation of personnel and the smooth delivery of humanitarian relief. We appreciate the enormous work by international humanitarian agencies and neighbouring countries to ease the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, especially the help provided to vulnerable groups such as refugees and displaced persons. We encourage the international community to continue to uphold the humanitarian spirit, scale up relief to all affected people and speed up the repair of civilian infrastructure in order to mitigate the impact of the conflict on people's lives.

The safety and security of nuclear facilities in Ukraine leave no room for mistakes. Any accident could result in a tremendous humanitarian and ecological catastrophe. China calls for an immediate stop to the shelling of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, the earnest implementation of the seven pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security proposed by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and maximum efforts to stop the conflict from escalating to a nuclear crisis. We welcome the fact that the IAEA has sent experts to all nuclear power facilities in Ukraine and appreciate the Agency's efforts to ensure the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. We support the Agency's efforts to remain engaged with Russia and Ukraine on the issue of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant so as to reach meaningful arrangements acceptable to both sides as soon as possible.

On issues related to global food, energy and financial security, all parties should demonstrate their humanitarian responsibilities and manage and control the spillover effect of the crisis in a responsible manner. In an era of increasing integration and globalization, wilful sanctions and the artificial blocking of the flow of the industrial and supply chains will only exacerbate the ripple effect of the crisis and inflict a heavy cost on the whole world, especially developing countries. The continued implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is key to expanding the food supply and stabilizing global food prices. At the same time, we also hope to see practical results in removing obstacles to Russia's grain and fertilizer exports, and we support the United Nations in stepping up its coordination role.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that on the Ukrainian issue, China always stands on the side of peace, dialogue and humanity. We are ready to work with the rest of the international community to support all efforts to resolve the Ukrainian crisis peacefully and help all people trapped in the war to return to peace at an early date.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I wish to join others in expressing our sincere condolences to all of the victims of the devastating earthquake in Türkiye and Syria. Switzerland is deploying rescue teams to the affected zones and pledges to contribute to humanitarian aid to the population in need.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his remarks and for the briefing following his trip to Ukraine. His testimony underscores the magnitude

of the humanitarian crisis, the serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and the heavy toll being placed on the civilian population.

That is reflected in the massive humanitarian needs. According to an assessment by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, nearly 18 million people will need humanitarian assistance in Ukraine in 2023. Thousands of people have been killed or are severely injured, both physically and psychologically. Millions of people have been driven from their homes and have no access to basic infrastructure, such as electricity, water or health services. The most vulnerable people, such as the disabled and the elderly, are particularly affected. For children, war causes enormous mental distress. That is compounded by the fact that, according to UNICEF, 5 million children no longer have access to education. Their future plans have been turned upside down overnight.

Attacks on civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools and homes, further worsen the situation of the civilian population. Switzerland recalls that international humanitarian law and human rights must be respected. In this winter period, we are particularly dismayed by Russia's indiscriminate attacks on energy infrastructure. We reiterate our call on Russia to immediately de-escalate the situation, cease all combat operations and withdraw its troops from the entirety of Ukrainian territory without delay. Those responsible for the aggression and all the crimes committed must be brought to justice.

We commend the tireless work of humanitarian actors in Ukraine. In order for them to continue to meet the urgent needs of the population, safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access must be ensured throughout Ukraine, including in the areas occupied by Russia. Nearly a year since the conflict started, humanitarian access remains a priority.

Switzerland will continue its support to the affected population with, among other things, the delivery of winter supplies and the repair of housing and energy infrastructure. In addition to meeting the urgent humanitarian needs, it is now necessary to move forward with the reconstruction process in an inclusive and transparent manner, as provided for by the Lugano principles.

The humanitarian consequences of the war are felt beyond Ukraine. The war must stop immediately. In the meantime, diplomatic solutions such as the Black Sea

Grain Initiative, facilitated by the Secretary-General, have helped to mitigate some of those impacts. We encourage all parties to pursue all such efforts.

The protection of the civilian population is an urgent humanitarian imperative. As members of the Security Council, we must work tirelessly for a just peace, consistent with international law, and for the protection of civilians.

**Mr. Agyeman** (Ghana): At the outset, we would like to join other delegations in expressing our deep sympathies to the Governments and the peoples of Türkiye and Syria over the devastating effects of the recent earthquake, which led to the loss of many lives and the destruction of a number of properties. I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Martin Griffiths, for his extensive and informative briefing.

Ghana, like other members of the Security Council, continues to be concerned by the extremely difficult and worsening humanitarian conditions in Ukraine. We reaffirm our complete commitment to upholding and respecting the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We reiterate our support for all international efforts aimed at ending the war.

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which begun in February last year, has created one of the fastest-growing humanitarian crises in Europe since the Second World War. It has entailed extreme suffering, destruction and the loss of lives and livelihoods for many Ukrainians.

Having closely followed the developments of the war over the past 12 months, we are of the view that peace efforts in Ukraine must be anchored on the realities of the millions of Ukrainians affected by the war. That is particularly important, as some 18 million people, representing 40 per cent of the population, stand in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance.

To date, more than 18,000 civilian casualties, caused largely by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects, have been recorded. Such an assault on non-combatant, innocent civilians in any conflict situation is morally unjustifiable. It also constitutes a serious violation of the legal protections afforded to civilians under international humanitarian law.

We reiterate the obligations of the warring parties to take specific actions aimed at preserving lives and upholding human dignity amid the irrationality of

war. We strongly urge all parties to grant unimpeded humanitarian access and to refrain from further targeted missile attacks on residential facilities, energy installations and other civilian infrastructure. Respect by the parties for the principles of proportionality and distinction is crucial to saving lives and, in this case, would help to keep hospitals, schools and markets open and functioning.

The impact of violent conflicts on children, in particular, is an indictment on the promise of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The future of Ukraine's children is dependent on the actions that we take today to promote international peace and security, and we must spare no effort in helping to end the war and restoring the promise of a peaceful tomorrow to the children.

We commend the several initiatives spearheaded by UNICEF in the areas of delivering primary health care, mental-health and psychosocial support, nutrition, safe water, sanitation and hygiene support. We also note the important measures being undertaken to safeguard the rights of children through the strengthening of critical support systems and essential services.

The multiplicity of the challenges presented by the war demands a holistic and effective humanitarian response, involving a multisectoral approach and coordination among various United Nations agencies. We are therefore appreciative of the efforts of the United Nations and its partners as they continue to provide much-needed assistance and protection for those affected. The Security Council must remain supportive of the work of all agencies operating in Ukraine in a manner that ensures optimal assistance and protection for all those in need. We also reiterate the calls made by the various agencies for increased donor funding to support the scaling-up of assistance to areas where they are most needed.

Concerning the reports of gross violations of international human rights law, including conflict-related sexual abuse, human trafficking, "filtration" processes, torture and summary killings, we maintain the view that there must be accountability, established through the thorough, transparent and independent investigation of all claims. The international community must work in a concerted and coordinated manner to ensure accountability for such violations and the rights of victims to remedy and to reparations through the strengthening of the international justice system.

We believe that diplomatic efforts in Ukraine must be intensified to align with the growing complexity of the war, and, in that regard, we call on the members of the Council to work in a united manner to support the de-escalation of tensions and work towards the cessation of hostilities. We must intensify peace efforts and help to bring the parties together to address their concerns through dialogue and a negotiated settlement.

Lastly, we wish to reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to bring an end to its actions in Ukraine with the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its forces from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine. We urge the Russian Federation, as a member of the United Nations and the Security Council, in particular, to conform its actions to the principles of international law and the core values of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to express our deep and sincere condolences to the Governments and the peoples of Türkiye and Syria with regard to the numerous casualties as a result of the devastating earthquake that has occurred in those countries. Our rescuers have already flown to Syria, and we are ready to provide the necessary support to our Turkish friends.

Today, at the initiative of a number of our Western colleagues, we are once again discussing the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. By raising that topic, they clearly hope to present our actions in Ukraine in as unflattering a light as possible, and they want to highlight the suffering and deprivation of the civilian population of this country, while keeping silent about what the residents of Donbas have suffered during nine years of Ukrainian shelling.

However, as the Ukrainian crisis develops, it is becoming increasingly difficult for our former Western partners to paint such a black and white picture. After all, it is increasingly clear that the civilian population of Ukraine would have long since ceased to suffer if the Kyiv regime and its Western masters had been interested in peace.

The former Israeli Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, told us all the other day how the Ukrainians had been sidelined by Washington and London and prevented from agreeing realistic peace terms a month after the start of the special military operation. Efforts to find a solution for peace would also have been more successful today if the Ukrainian nationalists and

Nazis had not violated international humanitarian law by using their own civilians as human shields. It is also of course extremely repugnant for the Kyiv regime and the collective West to try to ignore the long-standing criminal actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the nationalist battalions against the residents of Donbas and other areas that became part of Russia following last September's referendums.

Evidence of violations of international humanitarian law and deliberate attacks on civilian facilities by Kyiv increases on a daily basis. On 28 January, an American HIMARS multiple-launch rocket system targeted a hospital in the town of Novoaidar in the Luhansk People's Republic. As a result of that tragedy, 14 people were killed and another 24 received injuries of varying levels of seriousness. Needless to say, there was no reaction to that crime from Western countries, since at that moment they were busy trying to "groom" the tragedies, first in Dnipro and then Kramatorsk, where thanks to the emplacement of Ukrainian air-defence systems in residential areas, in violation of norms of international humanitarian law, missiles fell on residential buildings. The intentional shelling of working civilian medical facilities and the deliberate killing of civilians represent serious war crimes by the Kyiv regime and its Western masters. The worst is that children are dying as a result of the Kyiv regime's artillery strikes on the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics and the liberated areas of Kherson and Zaporizhzhya. Because of the actions of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, in 2022 a total of 4,574 civilians died, including 153 children, and 279 children were wounded.

The Ukrainian forces are targeting not merely civilian objects but the infrastructure that ensures children's lives and welfare. Schools and children's hospitals are being destroyed by the Kyiv regime's strikes. To cite some examples from just this past week, school No. 66 in Donetsk was shelled and its interior seriously damaged. In mid-January Ukrainian forces shelled a Donetsk mother-and-child care centre. We regularly send Mrs. Gamba de Potgieter, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, data on crimes committed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine against children, particularly killings, maimings and attacks on schools and hospitals. The lack of a reaction from the United States and the other NATO countries that are supplying Kyiv with long-range artillery and missile systems to Kyiv's repeated and monstrous trampling of international humanitarian

law once again confirms their direct involvement in the conflict and their complicity in the crimes being committed. As to how that affects the prospects for peace in Ukraine is something that we will discuss separately and in detail at another Security Council meeting that we will be convening on 8 February.

The selective blindness and cynicism of Western countries in the face of indisputable facts was particularly evident during the Arria Formula meeting of the Council on the shelling of Donbas by Ukraine that we held on 20 January. Council members had the opportunity to see and hear from people who had just been in Donetsk, those who live, or rather who survive there, every day under the Ukrainian strikes, strikes that began much earlier than last February — more than eight years ago, in fact. One of those who specifically addressed the Council was Maya Pirogova, whose daughter died during one of those inhumane attacks by the Ukrainian army with the help of American long-range weapons. And what did they find to say when they looked her in the eye? Merely hackneyed mantras about “Russian propaganda”. As far as our former Western partners are concerned, the inhabitants of Donbas do not exist, and they have been doing everything they can to shamelessly consign to oblivion what has been happening to them since 2014. But that will not work. We want to once again affirm that every act of criminal abuse committed by Ukrainian armed forces under the auspices of the West will be carefully recorded and will not go unpunished.

Given the scale of Kyiv’s crimes, it is becoming increasingly difficult for international human rights organizations with any claim to objectivity to ignore them. For example, the most recent report from Human Rights Watch, which can hardly be suspected of sympathizing with Russia, confirmed what we have stated repeatedly in this Chamber, which is that Ukraine has been systematically using banned anti-personnel “petal” butterfly mines against civilians in Donbas. As the report indicates, the mines are deployed remotely, using rocket projectiles, or by scattering mines from aircraft or with special types of remote mining devices. On the ground they are unnoticeable and can therefore easily maim both adults and children, who can mistake them for toys. We have demonstrated models of this barbaric device a number of times. Another teenager was blown up by a mine of this type in Donetsk on 2 February, and there have been 89 such tragic detonations altogether.

Kyiv’s shelling also is also threatening civilians in Russia’s border regions. In the Belgorod, Kursk and Bryansk regions, 700 houses have been destroyed and dozens of civilians have been killed or injured as a result of strikes by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The Western media is either deliberately ignoring it or hypocritically presenting it as deserved revenge on the part of Ukraine. However, we should not confuse civilian casualties that occur as a result of the mistaken and sometimes criminal actions of Ukrainian air-defence systems with Ukraine’s intentional shelling of civilian infrastructure that is nowhere close to military objectives.

We are also seeing the Ukrainian army target infrastructure of significance for Europe generally. A few days ago a Ukrainian missile hit the Druzhba oil pipeline in the Bryansk region. A huge crater was left at the site of the strike, but fortunately the pipeline was not badly damaged. I should point out that this pipeline system, one of the world’s largest, is still supplying Europe with oil from Kazakhstan as well as Russia. Europe’s politicians and taxpayers should consider whose interests their Governments are serving by covering up such crimes by the Kyiv regime.

Russia takes a responsible approach to issues relating to the detention of prisoners of war and strictly complies with its obligations under international humanitarian law, ensuring their humane treatment, among other things. The same cannot be said of Ukrainian nationalists, whose horrific footage of torture of Russian prisoners of war and killings of civilians has been seen all over the world. In addition, we often hear terrible admissions from captured Ukrainian soldiers themselves, as well as their relatives, about their conditions of service and how they are treated by their commanders. People are used as cannon fodder as they fight to the last Ukrainian. It has reached a point where mothers and wives of Ukrainian soldiers are appealing to the Russian human rights ombudsman for their loved ones to remain in our country so that they will not be forced back to the front again. It is revealing that as soon as international non-governmental organizations have the courage to advertise the clear facts of Ukraine’s violations of international humanitarian law they are immediately subjected to intimidation that verges on harassment. We all remember how Amnesty International was punished for telling the truth about the torture of Russian prisoners of war.

For the people of many Member States, any mention of Ukraine is associated with double standards, and not only because of the terrible situations I have

mentioned. After all, thanks to the generosity of those same Western countries that are supplying arms to Ukraine, the United Nations emergency response plan for Ukraine for 2022 received 79.2 per cent of its funding, substantially more than the funds received by the United Nations for humanitarian assistance for the long-suffering population of Afghanistan, at 62 per cent, or Syria, at 47 per cent, countries that have suffered directly as a result of the actions of the United States-led international coalition. In general, we never cease to be amazed by the two-faced positions of the major donor countries. Contributions for development assistance, like those for the regular budgets of United Nations agencies, have plummeted, while the money for arms supplies to Ukraine is reaching ever new heights.

Anyone with common sense can see that the military action that is now going on is not between Ukraine and Russia but between Russia and the collective NATO West, which is using Ukraine merely as a tool in its geopolitical crusade against Russia — a crusade that started at least nine years ago, in 2014, when as a result of the anti-constitutional coup d'état in Kyiv, a hostile, neo-Nazi, Russophobic hornet's nest began to form on Russia's borders and almost immediately launched a deadly attack on the Russian-speaking population of the country, which the residents of Crimea and Donbas immediately rose up against.

In the past few months we have come to believe that the anti-Russian mindset of our former Western partners is not going anywhere. The most zealous of them are the young Europeans who surreptitiously want to resolve the so-called Russian issue once and for all. How else, for example, can we explain what was written by Anna Fotyga, a Polish member of the European Parliament, in an opinion piece that was published on the EURACTIV.com website:

“There are no such things as Russian gas, oil, aluminium, coal, uranium, diamonds, grain, forests, gold, etc. All such resources are Tatar, Bashkir, Siberian, Karelian, Oirat, Circassian, Buryat, Sakha, Ural, Kuban, Nogai, etc;

“[w]e should discuss the prospects for the creation of free and independent states in the post-Russian space;

“[t]he rupture of the Russian Federation will bring unquestionable benefits”.

One could consider those words to be nonsense and just the position of a single Pole, if those ideas were not constantly repeated in Warsaw, Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius and a number of Eastern European capitals, and if the European Parliament, one of the key structures of the European Union, did not take action to promote the collapse of Russia.

What conclusions should we draw? What should we think when, several days ago, live on a French State television channel, inveterate commentators fantasized about cleansing Crimea of ethnic Russians after its future liberation, arguing that maintaining the peninsula as part of Ukraine would involve repatriating most or a significant part of the Crimean population because people there are almost universally loyal to Russia and support President Putin?

Therefore, with regard to Russia, it does not seem to be a sin for sophisticated European audiences to nurture plans of ethnic cleansing, just like German fascists did with regard to our country in the past. These are the same fascists whose descendants, in violation of the Constitution of their country, which has repented of its terrible sins against humanity, now once again send tanks into Ukraine to kill Russians, as they did in 1941. Furthermore, some Ukrainian public activists are asking those who are supporting Russians to wear a red star in public. What should we think of that? What other historical associations are going to crop up because of all of this?

The answer is obvious. As we did 80 years ago, we are once again facing a treacherous enemy that is trying to destroy our country and our culture. Ukraine is just a blind pawn in that enemy's hands. We are therefore obligated to stop the Kyiv regime for the sake of our future, the future of our children and the future of Ukrainian children whose fathers are being sent by Zelenskyy's criminal regime to certain death as cannon fodder in this fratricidal war. It is our duty to stop Kyiv's terrible nationalist crimes — and most Ukrainians understand that perfectly well.

How else can we explain that, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, out of the 8 million who have left Ukraine, almost 3 million people have gone to Russia? Given the fact that some more people went to Russia at the time of the Maidan madness, their total now is more than 5 million people. This is neither the forced repatriation nor the deportation that our former Western partners

speak, unwilling to believe that millions of former Ukrainian citizens, who were oppressed by the Kyiv regime, have now chosen to align their future with Russia.

We also believe in that future, and we will do everything in our power to make it a reality. Of course, it is best if we use peaceful means. That is our preferred approach, as is well known to everybody. But if the collective West continues through its arms supplies to hamper prospects for peace in Ukraine, then, of course, the aims of the special military operation will have to be achieved through military means, no matter how hard our former partners from the West and their Ukrainian minions try to prevent us from doing so.

**Mrs. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates): I begin by extending the heartfelt condolences of the United Arab Emirates to Syria and Türkiye over the devastating earthquake this morning; We have dispatched search and rescue teams and field hospitals to both countries and offer our full support at this difficult time. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his informative and sobering briefing.

This month marks one year since the war in Ukraine began, and these meetings serve as an important reminder of the price being paid. In that time, the war has killed more than 7,000 civilians, and a third of the Ukrainian population has fled their homes. Ongoing strikes against critical infrastructure have damaged Ukraine's power system, making life particularly grim as the country's notoriously tough winter drags on.

The statistics paint an appalling picture: in 2023, 17.6 million people will rely on humanitarian assistance. Nearly 14 million are displaced, 4.4 million returnees need assistance, and 3.6 million are at risk of gender-based violence. These numbers are likely to grow amid freezing weather conditions and severely damaged electricity and heating infrastructure across the country.

It is therefore all the more necessary for Ukraine's neighbours, the United Nations, donor countries and humanitarian actors to continue support for the response. On the ground, aid workers are carrying out their vital work in difficult and often dangerous settings. The war has seen hospitals, aid convoys and distribution centres damaged in military attacks. In this context, we underscore the urgent need to ensure the respect and protection of humanitarian personnel and operations. As stated by Under-Secretary-General Griffiths, we need to insist on respect for international humanitarian law and, in particular, the special protections accorded by the Geneva Conventions.

In addition, the conflict's impact beyond Ukraine's borders is well documented, as it has exacerbated an already acute global food crisis. Accordingly, we reaffirm the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the Memorandum of Understanding between Russia and the United Nations to facilitate the export of fertilizers. These efforts are alleviating considerable pressure on global food prices and supplies. In this context, we recall to this Chamber the World Food Programme's dire warning that failure to address global food insecurity may result in mass destabilization across the planet.

We strongly urge the Initiative's swift renewal next month. We also encourage the removal of any obstacles to the full implementation of the Initiative and the memorandum between Russia and the United Nations to facilitate the export of fertilizers.

The United Arab Emirates recognizes the scale of the humanitarian devastation in Ukraine. We are working on the delivery of the \$100 million assistance package that we announced late last year. We remain in close contact with Ukraine on support for post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.

We also strongly commend the international effort aimed at alleviating the suffering of the Ukrainian people, in particular Ukraine's neighbours, who have provided a vital lifeline to civilians affected by the conflict. The remarkable international solidarity on display since the outbreak of the war has sheltered and saved millions, and it reminds all of us of the urgency, consistency and generosity that all humanitarian crises, without distinction, demand.

Nevertheless, we stress once again that there is no alternative to a peaceful resolution to this conflict. Ukrainian civilians will continue to bear the brunt of this devastating war until the hostilities in Ukraine cease, the pursuit of complete military victory by both sides is abandoned and peace talks begin. To that end, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its readiness to continue offering its assistance through constructive mediation efforts that produce tangible positive outcomes — as has happened over the weekend, with the most recent prisoner exchange. We must support all efforts that put us on a path towards a just and lasting peace — one that respects Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and establishes sustainable regional security and stability.

**Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield** (United States of America): Like others, let me also express our condolences to Türkiye and the people of Syria who have experienced today's devastating earthquake. The United States stands ready to provide any assistance needed. Let me congratulate you, Madam, on presiding over the Security Council, as this is the first time I have spoken in the Council since Malta assumed the presidency. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his sobering briefing.

The humanitarian horrors of Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine continue to cause massive human suffering both in Ukraine and around the world. Within Ukraine's borders, more than 17 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian aid. Nearly 6 million people are internally displaced, forced to flee their homes in search of safety and shelter. Russia's forces have launched barrage after barrage of missiles and drones on Ukraine, hitting cities and infrastructure, killing and injuring civilians and damaging roads, homes, schools, medical facilities, farmland and power systems. Millions of Ukrainians are now without food, power, access to water or proper heating, even as temperatures drop below freezing. That is unconscionable. On his recent visit to Ukraine, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Grandi saw the destruction and the attacks on civilian infrastructure for himself. He called it appalling. And of course we have heard similar condemnations from Under-Secretary-General Griffiths today. Russia must stop bombing critical infrastructure and killing innocent civilians. Until then, global humanitarian donors must stand by the Ukrainian people. We need to prioritize winterization assistance to address the immediate humanitarian needs and support the Government of Ukraine's efforts.

Humanitarians from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are on the ground right now trying to help. Sadly, even those groups — just trying to help save lives — have not been spared Russia's attacks. On 24 January, Russia's artillery fire injured two local NGO employees while they were transporting aid on the front lines. Fortunately, the very next day, a United Nations convoy was able to provide vital humanitarian aid to the town of Siversk in Donetsk, marking the first successful United Nations trip to the heavily damaged town near the front line. But that is far from sufficient. Humanitarians must be allowed access to those in need, unimpeded and unharmed. Russia has also brought such horrors to the areas that it controls. It

is engaging in extensive and unacceptable relocations of Ukraine's children to Russian-controlled and -occupied territories of Ukraine. Imagine their terror. Russia is also transferring and deporting Ukraine's children to Russia itself, giving children away to families in Russia and attempting to separate them permanently from their families. That is a violation of the principles of child protection and it must stop. It is difficult to imagine the cruelty of being forced to live in the country that killed your parents or to have the propaganda that has personally caused you so much suffering parroted back to you. Mr. Grandi also noted and was appalled by the practice of issuing Russian Federation passports to Ukrainian children.

Beyond the borders of Ukraine and Russia, President Putin's war is devastating to so many others. Nearly 8 million refugees from Ukraine, a majority of them women and children, are sheltering all over Europe. Countries across Europe have striven to provide their Ukrainian neighbours with equitable access to education, labour markets, social protection and health care. Russia's war has also greatly exacerbated the global food security crisis. We support the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has helped meet the urgent needs of the world's most vulnerable and has benefited middle-income countries by stabilizing world grain prices. But unfortunately, thanks to Russia, the movement of grain from Ukraine's ports has slowed and the backlog of ships waiting for grain is growing. Russia signed an agreement with the United Nations. It committed to facilitating "the unimpeded export of food, sunflower oil and fertilizers" from Ukraine's Black Sea ports. Russia would have us believe that it is the aggrieved party here, ignoring the fact that it is the aggressor. Russia must fulfil its commitments and allow the Initiative to work at the pace that meets global demand. We cannot allow Russia to continue its weaponization of food, energy and winter, which, while it hurts us all, is killing Ukrainians. Russia's actions — deporting children, stalling ships with food from leaving Ukraine and bombing civilians and critical infrastructure — are not the actions of a country ready for peace or that one would expect from a member of the Council.

We have heard Council members' compassionate calls for negotiation and a cessation of hostilities. That is in the hands of one person and one person alone — President Putin. Putin started this war, and he can end it today by pulling his troops out of Ukraine and



genuinely allowing peace to take place. For Ukraine, this is a matter of survival. Today's meeting is an opportunity to affirm the protections granted to civilians and critical infrastructure. We have an opportunity to help those whom Russia has harmed by stepping up and reaffirming the Charter of the United Nations and international law's most fundamental principles. It is an opportunity to support humanitarian actors and their right to safely reach those in need without being impeded or attacked. In the immediate term, we urge all countries to support the 2023 humanitarian response and regional refugee response plans of the United Nations, which are expected to be unveiled in Geneva next week to meet the growing demand. And in the long term, we look forward to working with our fellow members to hold Russia accountable for its appalling actions against the people of Ukraine.

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

I would like to start by joining others in expressing our condolences to the people of Syria and Türkiye on the death and destruction caused by today's earthquake and commending all who are providing humanitarian assistance in this time of need. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing today. As always, Malta remains grateful for the work of his team and the humanitarian partners on the ground.

This month we will mark one year since the start of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which has created an acute humanitarian crisis and has brought profound misery to millions. Every day we see images that demonstrate the toll taken by Russia's aggression, which affects communities that had lived in peace but are now seeing their lives virtually destroyed as a result of the ongoing senseless bombing and violence. Today 17.7 million Ukrainians are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance, 6 million have been internally displaced and 8 million have sought safety in European countries. Just a little more than a year ago those statistics would have been unimaginable to nearly all of us around this table. The constant attacks by the Russian Federation on Ukrainian energy and civilian infrastructure continue to disrupt the power supply, leaving millions of Ukrainians without electricity, water or heating as winter temperatures plunge below freezing. The attacks, and the wide-scale blackouts that they cause, are a blatant violation of international humanitarian law, as is Russia's use in populated areas of indiscriminate munitions such as explosive

weapons with wide-ordnance effects, which have levelled residential buildings and medical facilities and caused death and catastrophic injuries for thousands of civilians trapped in the fighting. Whether it be older persons brutalized by soldiers in their homes, civilians shot at while fleeing warzones or the many reports of sexual violence perpetrated against Ukrainian women and girls, civilians are being actively targeted in this war.

Children have not been spared either, and a generation boys and girls has been traumatized by war. UNICEF estimates that, since 24 February 2022, 1,148 children have been killed or injured; education for 5.7 million children has been disrupted; and 1.5 million children face mental health issues. Moreover, thousands of Ukrainian children have been abducted, deported and forcibly adopted to the Russian Federation, breaking family ties and placing children in vulnerable situations while denying them the right to family life. Malta reiterates that halting the war of aggression against Ukraine is the only way to cease that cycle of violence and horror. Nevertheless, all those who have committed atrocities, including sexual violence in conflict, must be held accountable for their actions in accordance with international law.

It is essential that all those in need across the country have access to humanitarian assistance. We regret the insecurity and obstacles that continue to restrict humanitarian access along the front lines and in areas that are not under Ukrainian control. Such denial of humanitarian assistance is unacceptable. Malta also deplores the fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) still does not have unimpeded and repeated access to all Ukrainian prisoners of war. Under the Third Geneva Convention, prisoners of war are entitled to receive regular visits from delegates of the ICRC. Notwithstanding the reports of recent, modest progress in that respect, we call for the rights of all prisoners of war to be swiftly realized by the parties to the conflict.

In conclusion, we express our full support to the United Nations, its affiliated organizations and all humanitarian workers who are working in extraordinarily challenging operational environments and demanding circumstances on the ground. We also extend our condolences to the families of those humanitarian workers killed in Ukraine over the past 12 months. We reiterate our determined call on the Russian Federation to stop this senseless war, withdraw

its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine and turn to dialogue and diplomacy. It is never too late to turn back or to do what is right.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I express our sincere condolences to the people of Türkiye and in the region and to the friends and families of the victims of this morning's earthquake. Our thoughts and prayers are with them at this difficult time. We are ready to provide the necessary assistance to help them overcome the consequences of that disaster.

I also recognize the presence of Putin's regime, or rather what is left of him, in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union — an acolyte of two Josephs, Stalin and Goebbels, who never let truth interrupt their endless flow and prolixity of lies.

We appreciate the convening of today's meeting, given the fact that civilians, particularly women and children, remain the most vulnerable to Russia's inhumane war against Ukraine. At the previous meeting on this topic (see S/PV.9243), we briefed the Security Council on the outcomes of a barbaric Russian missile attack that killed 46 people in their apartments in Dnipro on 17 January. What is most outrageous is that the tragedy in Dnipro is not an isolated incident, but rather part of the Russian army's deliberate strategy of targeting the civilian population in Ukraine.

A number of new shellings of residential buildings have been registered in recent weeks. On 29 January, a Russian missile hit a residential building in the central part of Kharkiv. On the same day, Russian artillery shelled a local hospital and residential areas Kherson. On 1 and 2 February, Russian missiles targeted a multi-story residential building and several private houses in Kramatorsk. On 3 February, the same thing happened in Donetsk. All those attacks left dozens of civilians killed and injured. As of now, Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have registered the damage or destruction of 77,463 civilian infrastructure facilities. More than 2.4 million Ukrainians have to live in damaged or destroyed housing.

Russia's missile and drone terror remains a major threat to the civilian population throughout Ukraine. On 26 January, another massive attack with 55 air- and sea-based missiles killed 11 people and injured 11 more.

Even if not followed by a strike, every single missile alert is accompanied by air-raid sirens, which disrupt the normal life of the civilian population throughout the country. In 2022, a total of 14,870 sirens sounded across Ukraine. Over the span of one year, the sirens sounded for an equivalent of 55 days in the Kharkiv region; 42 days in the Donetsk and the Zaporizhzhya regions; 37 days in the Dnipro region; and 27 days in Kyiv. Let me explain that. As soon as an air-raid siren is activated, schools, public services and businesses have to cease their operations and people must go to the closest shelters. The detrimental impact that has on both people's activities and their mental health can hardly be overestimated.

According to preliminary estimates by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, Russia's war of aggression has already resulted in the contamination of about 30 per cent of the country's territory. While retreating in the north and south, the Russian forces left Ukraine's territories heavily mined, including fields, roads, bridges and residential areas. The situation in the east, where the violent hostilities are at their height, is definitely even worse. However, the full picture will only be seen after liberation.

Ukraine, in exercising its right to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, is fully implementing its international obligations, while the Russian occupants are committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against the Ukrainian people.

I would like to remind the Security Council that, according to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction — the Ottawa Convention — which Ukraine has been a party to since 2005, we have destroyed 3 million anti-personnel mines, including stockpiles of extremely hazardous POM-2 mines. In its attack on my country, Russia has used, and continues to use, the whole spectrum of prohibited mines, including a battalion with POM-3 mines, which have seismic sensors and are highly dangerous for civilians. The Armed Forces of Ukraine, the State Emergency Service and other structures risk their lives on a daily basis carrying out demining operations in the liberated territories. However, the main part of that work is still ahead of us and will begin after the complete withdrawal of Russia's troops from Ukraine.

By turning fertile Ukrainian soil into minefields, Russia further aggravates the global food crisis already fuelled by its war against Ukraine. Russia regularly resorts to cynical attempts to minimize the detrimental impact of its aggression on global food security and pose as a damaged party. In response to that mockery, let me reiterate that not a single warship has blocked the flow of Russian exports. Not a single missile has targeted Russian seaports. However, those problems are still a reality for Ukraine, and even the Black Sea Grain Initiative, a temporary and very limited solution for both Ukraine and those reliant on Ukrainian food exports, is facing serious impediments from the Russian side. In particular, we are concerned about the fact that Russia has continued to hamper the inspection procedures. Immediately after the exports of Ukrainian foodstuffs began to increase, Russia reduced the number of inspection teams from five to three and artificially increased the length of each inspection. It is also regular practice for Russian inspectors to refuse to work on various pretexts while all the other parties are ready to perform their duties.

As of 1 February, due to impediments from the Russian side, 114 vessels were awaiting inspection in Türkiye's territorial waters, and the number of departures from ports remains critically low, at no more than three vessels per day. Those actions have resulted in a drop in exports of almost 30 per cent compared to the previous month. The solution to the problem is quite simple — we just have to increase the number of inspection groups and inspections per day. I should point out that in November of last year, the United Nations and Türkiye were able to carry out 86 inspections in just two days.

Ukraine's tireless efforts have enabled 1,762 people to return home from Russian captivity, with the most recent exchange taking place on Saturday. However, Russia is still holding thousands of Ukrainians captive in terrible conditions. The Russian occupation authorities have prevented United Nations officials from visiting Ukrainian prisoners of war, while the United Nations has documented facts of torture, poor treatment and a lack of food, water, health care and sanitation at the sites where they are held, as well as an absence of contact with their families.

Another serious threat for the population in the occupied territories of Ukraine continues to be their deportation to remote regions of Russia, as well as the forced adoption of Ukrainian children. The Ukrainian

authorities have identified 16,011 children forcibly deported to date. Ukraine expects the United Nations to pay more attention to the issue and calls for an all-for-all prisoner-of-war exchange, as well as for the release of all adults and children deported to Russia from the occupied parts of Ukraine. That is one of the elements of the 10-point peace plan that Ukraine has proposed to ensure a peaceful resolution to the conflict based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is a comprehensive plan aimed at laying a solid foundation for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We appreciate the positive reflections that we have heard from many members on the plan and reiterate our hopes for their active engagement in order to bring back peace and restore respect for the Charter.

As we approach the anniversary of Russia's launch of a full-fledged war that plunged the centre of the European continent into violence, bloodshed and devastation, the needs and the suffering of people on the ground should be our primary focus. To that end, on 22 February Ukraine, together with more than 30 Member States, will initiate a high-level event addressing the gross human rights violations resulting from the aggression against Ukraine. We invite members to take part in it and to take a resolute stance on the urgent need to end the Russian aggression. We urge Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine and halt the enormous human suffering in my country and abroad.

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

**Mr. Tammsaar** (Estonia): Let me start by offering our heartfelt condolences to Türkiye and Syria and to the families of the victims of today's devastating earthquake. We stand in solidarity with them and are ready to provide assistance.

I speak today on behalf of the Baltic States — Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing. I also want to express our thanks to all the United Nations agencies for their relentless work to ease the immense suffering of the Ukrainian people caused by Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion, begun nearly 12 months ago. It is hard to overstate the heavy humanitarian toll inflicted on the Ukrainian people by the full-scale war of aggression on Ukraine launched by Russia and aided by Belarus. Month after month we have witnessed appalling levels of destruction,

as Russia has indiscriminately attacked civilians and civilian infrastructure and reduced entire cities, towns and villages to rubble, causing death, displacement and human suffering. The Russian forces are systematically and deliberately shelling and destroying energy and water supplies. Ukrainians have been left in freezing cold, deprived of shelter, light, heat and safe drinking water. Russia has caused the biggest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War, forcing millions to flee their homes, with more than 8 million seeking protection across Europe.

The effects of Russia's invasion on Ukrainian children have been especially appalling and will be long-lasting. Thousands have been separated from their families and deported to Russia from the occupied territories of Ukraine. We echo the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees when he says that giving nationality to and opening avenues for the formal adoption of children in a situation of conflict are violations of international norms and practices. Russia must stop those illegal practices immediately and ensure that those children, some of whose parents have been killed by Russian strikes or murdered by Russian troops, are safely returned to Ukraine and to their families and loved ones.

We are deeply troubled by the risks of sexual violence and human trafficking to which unaccompanied displaced children are exposed. Credible allegations indicate that rape is being used as a weapon of war by Russian forces in Ukraine, including against children. We underline the need for the United Nations to continue monitoring and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine. For those who have suffered from such crimes, we must redouble our efforts to provide them with the necessary comprehensive services, including physical protection and psychological support.

We remain highly concerned about the reported mistreatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russia's armed forces, as well as by the Russian paramilitary Wagner Group. We demand that Russia stop those illegal acts and treat Ukrainian prisoners of war in full conformity with international humanitarian law. Russia must provide the International Committee of the Red Cross with immediate and unconditional access to all Ukrainian prisoners of war.

It is imperative to continue documenting and properly storing evidence of all atrocity crimes committed throughout Ukraine. There can be no

impunity for Russia's crimes in Ukraine at any level. We strongly support the establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine that has unleashed all the war crimes and crimes against humanity that have followed. The people who decided to wage the illegal war against Ukraine cannot go unpunished.

We approach the tragic one-year anniversary of the start of Russia's war of aggression in Europe in the hope that it will also be the last and that in 2023 we will see the end of this brutal war. The way to peace must be just and based on respect for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and international law. What is at stake is not just Ukraine's existence and its status as a sovereign nation, but the survival of the international rules-based order and the Charter. If we let the aggression succeed, the global consequences will be much worse. That is why Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania strongly support President Zelenskyy's vision for peace contained in his 10-point peace formula, which is based on the Charter of the United Nations and international law. If we want a just and sustainable peace, it is time for the United Nations community to support that vision and start implementing it.

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

**Mr. Massari (Italy):** Italy sends its deepest condolences to the people of Türkiye and Syria, especially the victims' families, following today's devastating earthquake. Italy is sending rescue teams to Türkiye.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his sobering and alarming update. Let me also express our sincere congratulations to Malta on its assumption of the presidency of this important organ for the month of February.

Sadly, February is also the month that will mark the passing of an entire year since Russia began its brutal, illegal, unjustifiable and unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. Russia should understand that even after a full year we will continue to stand together with the Ukrainian Government and people, more united than ever, to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the multilateral order, as recognized in the Charter of the United Nations, to which we are all signatories. For that reason, Italy fully aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union, to which I would like to add some considerations in my national capacity.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's inhumane attacks on critical infrastructure, particularly energy and water facilities in cities across Ukraine. Those are not military objectives but merely indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population and civilian objects that constitute war crimes and brutal violations of international humanitarian law. Russia will be held accountable for those crimes and will also have to pay for reparations to critical infrastructure damaged or destroyed in its brutal war. We emphasize that there can be no peace without justice, and no impunity for war crimes and other atrocities.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has left roughly 40 per cent of the Ukrainian population in need of humanitarian assistance. Italy has worked promptly to bring support to Ukraine by contributing to the humanitarian response, both through financial allocations of tens of millions of dollars and tons of in-kind donations. This very week we are also distributing a significant number of generators to help the Ukrainian population face the harsh winter, since Russia's shelling of their electrical system has left them without the heating they need.

Looking at the bigger humanitarian picture, we are also funding the Grain from Ukraine initiative launched by the Ukrainian Government to provide vital food directly to the most vulnerable countries, especially in Africa. However, only the continued renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative — for which we reiterate our support for the outstanding work of the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator — can ensure that the world will not find itself in a serious famine emergency. We therefore call on Russia to avoid any disinformation or politicization of that beacon of hope.

At the end of the day, the only real way to alleviate people's suffering in Ukraine and tackle the global humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression is to end the war. To date, unfortunately, we have seen no evidence that Russia is committed to genuine and sustainable peace efforts. It can end the war immediately by ceasing its attacks and withdrawing its forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. With a view to achieving a viable post-war peace settlement, Italy welcomes Ukraine's ideas and vision for a just peace and remains ready to support arrangements for sustainable security that can help Ukraine defend itself, secure its free and democratic future and deter future aggression, in line with its rights as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

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

**Mr. Gonzato:** I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States.

Let me start by congratulating Malta and you personally, Madam, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to express the EU's solidarity with all who have lost loved ones in the devastating earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria this morning. Our search-and-rescue teams are mobilized to support first responders and we are coordinating further support with the Turkish authorities.

It has been almost a year since the Russian Federation launched its unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine. That blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations has led to senseless suffering for a sovereign and independent nation that was simply looking for prosperity and democracy. It threatens not only Ukraine, but the entire rules-based international order. I want to emphasize three points today.

First, Russia's massive air strikes, often in densely populated areas, are inflicting immeasurable suffering. Those attacks are not only destroying critical civilian infrastructure, they are destroying civilian lives. The findings of the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine are shocking, documenting cases of sexual violence, torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment as a tactic of war. The perpetrators of such crimes must be held accountable without delay. The EU welcomes all efforts to ensure full accountability for war crimes and the other most serious crimes in connection with Russia's war of aggression, including ways to secure accountability for the crime of aggression itself. We also reaffirm our support for the investigations of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The vast majority of refugees have found safe haven in EU countries. The EU's humanitarian response has already helped to alleviate the needs of almost 14 million people. The key priority now is winterized shelter to help the population survive the freezing temperatures. We are assisting in the restoration of Ukraine's energy infrastructure and delivering equipment to keep the electricity grid functioning.

Solidarity for Ukraine goes beyond Europe. At the international conference held in Paris in December, 47 States pledged an additional €1 billion. We welcome

the humanitarian support mobilized from around the world and call on all States to continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. Russia must enable full humanitarian access to the temporarily occupied territories through the front lines. Human suffering is inflicted not only through direct attacks but also by purposely withholding aid from people in need. Our humanitarian partners are ready to provide assistance wherever aid is needed. We note the impressive efforts by Ukraine's Government and civil society, which have provided a significant share of the humanitarian response. We commend the United Nations for its coordination work, despite the significant challenges to the provision of aid, particularly in newly liberated areas and those close to the front line that are subject to constant shelling. Russia's aggression has led to high landmine contamination, which poses a major threat to human security, limiting the delivery of relief aid and preventing civilians from returning home safely.

We are gravely concerned about the Russian armed forces' continued attacks around Ukrainian nuclear sites and the illegal seizure of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The EU fully supports the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency to assist Ukraine in ensuring nuclear safety and security, as well as to maintain the implementation of safeguards pursuant to Ukraine's safeguards obligations.

Secondly, on a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, the first step towards peace will be for Russia to immediately cease all hostilities and unconditionally, completely and immediately withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Until then, the EU remains committed to providing the support that Ukraine needs to defend its population from Russia's indiscriminate attacks, as well as to supporting its desire for a just peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations. Ukraine is defending not only itself and its people but also the fundamental principles of the Charter. The General Assembly has stated that clearly in successive resolutions, adopted by an overwhelming majority of Member States. The EU supports Ukraine's initiative for a just peace and President Zelenskyy's peace formula, and will work to garner the broadest possible international support for it.

Thirdly and lastly, I want to mention the continued efforts to address the global consequences of Russia's war. We support the extension and full implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The prolongation

of this agreement beyond March 2023 is crucial to stabilize prices and allow the continuous flow of grains, including for humanitarian purposes. It is important that Russia fully commit to its implementation and scale up the inspections.

The EU-Ukraine solidarity corridors have already allowed the export of approximately 23 million tons of Ukrainian grains between May and December 2022. The EU is also the world's first provider of food and development assistance. Together with our member States, we have increased our financial support to address the global food crisis, providing approximately €18 billion this year.

We have stood by Ukraine since day one, and we will remain steadfast in our support for as long as it takes.

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

**Mr. Szczerski (Poland):** At the outset, I would like to join others in expressing our sincerest condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of the earthquake in Türkiye and in Syria. During this difficult time, we also wish to provide our full support. Polish rescue teams, comprising 78 people, aid dogs and 22 tons of equipment from the special heavy urban search and rescue team, have already been dispatched to reach those in need.

I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting, and I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his informative briefing.

It has been almost one year since Russia started yet another attack on Ukraine and its people, this time a full-scale war. Not a single day passes without new crimes and deliberate actions further exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine. From day one, the free world has provided those in need with material assistance and political and moral support. Let me use this opportunity to brief the Council on Polish humanitarian efforts over the past 11 months.

However, before I delve into data and numbers, I would like to reassure the Council that the Polish Government and society will continue to stand firmly with the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes. More than 70 per cent of Poles believe that Poland should support Ukraine in these dire circumstances of war, according to a December 2022 opinion poll. And for 97 per cent of Ukrainians, Poland is a friendly country.

Poland has supported Ukraine since the very beginning of the war on three fronts. First, we host and provide support to the largest community of Ukrainian refugees. Secondly, we operate as a hub for transferring international humanitarian aid through our land border with Ukraine. Thirdly, we deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine directly.

In 2022, Poland spent over \$9 billion — that is 1.5 per cent of our gross domestic product — on humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees, according to recent estimates by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. That is an average of over \$5,600 per capita, making our country one of the major donors to Ukraine.

We remain steadfast in our efforts to provide as much support as possible in order to secure energy supplies for the innocent civilian population suffering from Russia's attacks on critical infrastructure. Ukraine has requested over 25,000 generators and 1,500 mobile thermal stations. A number of private and public companies and the State Fire Service of Poland have offered hundreds of generators and energy-related equipment. And we have mobilized more generators through our Governmental Agency for Strategic Reserves.

Poland is in constant working contact with Ukrenergo to coordinate the supply of energy generators to Ukraine within the European Network of Transmission System Operators. In January of this year, a special logistics hub was established in Poland as part of the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism in the context of Ukraine's needs related to the challenges for the energy sector. The rescEU energy hub is being used to facilitate the transport and storage of energy equipment and assistance for delivery to Ukraine. That is the third hub devoted to providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and its citizens after the establishment of the logistics and medical rescue hubs.

More than 9.5 million people have crossed the border to Poland from Ukraine since 24 February 2022, of which more than 2.5 million have been evacuated. Ninety-five per cent of the evacuated were women and children, mainly Ukrainians, although more than 100,000 represented more than 190 nationalities.

There are more than 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection in Poland, according to the latest data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. They

were granted Polish personal identity numbers and enjoy the same public services — schools, health care and social benefits — as any other citizen of Poland. Approximately 450,000 refugees have taken up work in Poland, which represents 70 per cent of the eligible group. In all, 14,000 companies were established. That scale of economic activity for refugees is unprecedented. Some 190,000 Ukrainian children and 400 Ukrainian teachers are part of the Polish education system.

The Polish Government also delivers humanitarian aid directly in Ukraine. We have provided assistance to the health sector and to internally displaced Ukrainians by constructing temporary modular towns for 20,000 internally displaced persons, at an estimated cost of more than \$81 million and by opening mobile medical units. In 2022, Poland financed non-governmental organization humanitarian projects, contributing \$2.7 million in the areas of food, health, shelter, water, sanitation, hygiene, education and logistics.

Few know that Poland is the largest single payer for the Starlink terminals, enabling Internet use in Ukraine, both by the military and civilians. So far, the Polish side has provided some 20,000 Starlink terminals — two-thirds of those delivered — to Ukraine.

Poland will continue its support to Ukraine, as we believe that this is the only right thing to do. We are very proud to live up to our reputation as what some people call the “solidarity super-Power”, and we will not cease in our efforts until victory and a just peace are achieved.

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

**Ms. Leendertse (Germany):** I would like to join others in conveying our sincere condolences to the people of Türkiye and Syria in these tragic times. We stand ready to provide assistance as requested. Germany aligns itself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union.

I am grateful for the opportunity today to deliver some remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his sobering description of the situation in Ukraine. Russia's massive air strikes, often in densely populated areas, are causing indescribable human suffering in that they not only destroy critical civilian infrastructure, but also kill innocent men and women, boys and girls and leave others without

heating, electricity and water. Those facts have also been corroborated by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. It is clear that the perpetrators of such crimes must and will be held accountable as soon as possible.

We stand steadfast behind Ukraine, and we will continue our financial, humanitarian, diplomatic and military support to Ukraine for as long as it is needed. Since the beginning of the war, we have welcomed more than a million Ukrainian refugees into Germany. They join the 2 million refugees from other countries already residing there. And we have provided more than €2.5 billion in bilateral support to Ukraine's Government and its people. One of our primary concerns in Ukraine is humanitarian access, especially to its temporarily occupied territories. We thank the United Nations, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their tireless efforts to coordinate work to provide aid to newly liberated areas and areas close to the front line.

Another issue that worries us deeply are reports about the forcible deportations of children into Russian territories. There is credible evidence that the Russian Federation is infringing upon its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law. That must stop now.

The people of Ukraine are not the only victims of the war. The repercussions of Russia's illegal invasion of its neighbouring country are felt around the globe. In that context, we welcome and financially support Ukraine's Grain from Ukraine initiative to supply grain to those countries most in need. We also call on Russia to stop delaying the ship inspections, as agreed in the Black Sea Grain Initiative. In that vein, it is vital that the Initiative be continued and broadened beyond its March deadline so that crucial supplies can reach world markets and, in particular, the most vulnerable among us.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease all its hostilities and unconditionally, completely and immediately withdraw all of its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders in order to find a diplomatic solution. Sadly enough, this needless war might hit the upcoming one-year mark. It has already been ongoing for too long, and Russia must end it now.

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

**Mr. Hermann** (Denmark): Let me first congratulate Malta on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We also extend our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

At the outset, I want to say that we join other speakers in expressing our sincere condolences to the people of Türkiye and Syria affected by the recent devastating earthquakes.

Today marks 347 days of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine — 347 days of Russia's full-scale invasion and war of aggression against Ukraine and 347 days of destruction and suffering for Ukraine's population as Russia continues its relentless attack.

The unjustified and unprovoked attack by a permanent member of the Security Council is in blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. In the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion, we have witnessed systematic and widespread violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The war is of grave concern to us all. Its consequences are similarly felt far and wide, first and foremost, of course, by the Ukrainian people and Europe, but also in all corners of the world. In places far away from the European continent, people have suffered at the hands of Russia.

The list of concerns is long, but today the Nordic countries would like to highlight the following three areas of concern: first, Russia's ongoing blatant violations of international humanitarian law and the need to provide full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors; secondly, the negative consequences of Russia's war of aggression for global food prices and the important contribution of the Black Sea Grain Initiative to mitigating global food insecurity; and, thirdly and finally, the importance of accountability.

Russia's illegal war has imposed widespread human suffering on the Ukrainian people. It has led to the extensive destruction of critical civilian infrastructure



and shattered essential services. The human and economic costs are immeasurable, as is the destruction of the environment.

Currently, the greatest needs are felt in areas under the temporary military control of Russia. We call on Russia to respect its obligations as an occupying Power. We also call on Russia to enable full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to the people living in those territories, including through the front line. The obligations under international humanitarian law must be complied with by all.

I also want to say that we strongly commend international and national humanitarian responders for their bravery in delivering humanitarian protection and assistance to those in need. That includes the delivery of aid to newly liberated areas and areas close to the front line amid constant shelling.

As Russia's illegal war rages on, the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis induced by the war are felt across the world. Countries that were already struggling to recover from the negative economic effects of the pandemic now face severe challenges to food and energy security, commodity prices and public finances.

We risk seeing the effects lasting far into the future. Last week, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reported that severe war-induced impacts in Ukraine are estimated to reduce the winter-wheat area planting by about 40 per cent.

As a glimmer of hope, grain exports from Ukraine and Russia have increased substantially since the signing of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Following the agreement, we saw lower food prices globally and improved access to food for humanitarian actors.

As we approach the agreement's renewal date in March, it is of the utmost importance that we see a smooth extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. While we must come together to prevent famine in the immediate term, the war has brutally underlined the need to also accelerate the transition to more sustainable and resilient food systems.

Lastly, we would like to underline the critical role of accountability for the crimes committed in the context of the aggression. All reports of atrocities and human rights violations must be properly investigated, and perpetrators held to account through national or international justice mechanisms. We are alarmed by the very large number of war crimes reported since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukrainian territory. We are highly concerned about the appalling reports of conflict-related sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers in Ukraine. The true scale of that violence is not yet known. Russian attacks on civilian centres and civilian infrastructure may also constitute war crimes.

Ensuring accountability does not only contribute to justice and reparation for the crimes committed; it is also key to prevention through the deterrence of future atrocities. That is why we, the Nordic countries, welcome important initiatives such as the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the Human Rights Council, and why we continue to fully support the International Criminal Court (ICC). The work of the ICC is crucial to justice everywhere.

The current situation is very bleak. But let us be honest — the picture is also very clear. Russia must cease its aggression against Ukraine and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops from Ukraine. Russia must comply with the order on provisional measures, rendered by the International Court of Justice on 16 March last year, to suspend its military operation. Russia must respect the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Only Russia can end the war.

The Nordic countries will continue to stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, and we commend Ukraine's initiative for a just peace.

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*