



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

## 9208<sup>th</sup> meeting

Tuesday, 6 December 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mrs. Kamboj . . . . . (India)

*Members:*

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| Albania . . . . .  | Mr. Hoxha                |
| Brazil . . . . .   | Mr. Costa Filho          |
| China . . . . .  | Mr. Geng Shuang          |
| France . . . . .   | Mr. De Rivière           |
| Gabon . . . . .  | Ms. Koumby Missambo      |
| Ghana . . . . .  | Ms. Oppong-Ntiri         |
| Ireland . . . . .  | Mr. Mythen               |
| Kenya . . . . .  | Mrs. Toroitich           |
| Mexico . . . . .   | Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez |
| Norway . . . . .   | Ms. Juul                 |
| Russian Federation . . . . .                             | Mr. Nebenzia             |
| United Arab Emirates . . . . .                           | Mr. Abushahab            |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . | Dame Barbara Woodward    |
| United States of America . . . . .                       | Ms. Carty                |

## Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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*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 Germany, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

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

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

I give the floor to Mr. Griffiths.

**Mr. Griffiths:** I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to speak here on this very important occasion on issues of humanitarian assistance in Ukraine. If I may, our briefing today will focus on the widespread death, destruction, displacement and suffering caused by this senseless war, ongoing humanitarian operations and the challenges that the humanitarian community continues to face.

Over 14 million people remain forcibly displaced from their homes in Ukraine, including 6.5 million internally displaced persons and over 7.8 million others across Europe. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as of 1 December, 17,023 civilians had been killed since 24 February 2022, including 419 children. However, I think we all know that the real toll is far greater.

The World Health Organization reports at least 715 attacks on health care in the country, including 630 that impacted health facilities and 61 that affected personnel. Those attacks in Ukraine represent more than 70 per cent of all attacks on health-care infrastructure reported worldwide this year. Since February, 1,148 children have been killed or injured, while millions

have fled, been uprooted from their homes, separated from their families or put at risk of violence.

Winter has now arrived across Ukraine. Temperatures are already below freezing and are expected to drop to below -20°C. The attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, including power stations and heating plants, have left millions of people without access to heat, electricity and water, adding another dangerous dimension to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war.

As a result of the attacks on civilian infrastructure, people are being deprived of health care, and children of education. In Ukraine today, the ability of civilians to survive is under attack. Amid freezing temperatures and destruction, people at the highest risk are the already vulnerable — among them the elderly, those with disabilities and the many millions displaced — essentially because of a lack of essential services.

International humanitarian law speaks for itself: objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population must be protected. Constant care must be taken to spare civilians and civilian objects throughout all military operations.

Gender-based violence targeting women and girls continues to be pervasive and — to be very clear — the number of cases continues to be underreported.

Our work is to safeguard lives and preserve dignity. The humanitarian community remains committed to stay and deliver. Almost 690 humanitarian partners — the majority of which are local front-line organizations — continue to provide life-critical aid and protection to 13.5 million people in Ukraine — I do not apologize for this stream of really terrifying statistics. Those people continue to work against the clock to support civilians. Over the past few months, in preparation for the winter, humanitarians have provided more than 630,000 civilians with different kinds of direct winter assistance, and 400 generators have been distributed to critical facilities.

Since October, the sustained attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure have created a new level of need that impacts the whole country and increases and exacerbates the needs caused by the war. The scale of the destruction of the electrical and heating infrastructure requires the international community's enhanced support to the Government of Ukraine beyond what

humanitarians can provide. Indeed, discussions to that end are ongoing in Kyiv and elsewhere.

In recent weeks, more areas have become accessible in eastern and southern oblasts, thereby allowing humanitarians to reach entirely new communities with assistance. We are grateful for that. Our teams are responding, and inter-agency convoys are moving to bring aid to areas where Ukraine has recently regained control. In Kherson, for example, convoys have delivered much-needed potable water for thousands of civilians, medical supplies to treat 100,000 people for up to three months and assistance for women and girls' reproductive health. And food assistance has been delivered in Kherson for nearly 100,000 civilians.

Humanitarians working to respond to gender-based violence, including in particular local women's organizations, are also seeking to scale up the delivery of essential services for their clients. An integrated network of spaces and providers has been delivering survivor-centred services for women, girls, boys and men who have been subject to gender-based violence. Those efforts and activities, which began when the war started, continue.

It is very difficult to imagine, but 765,000 children have received psychosocial support to help them deal with the effects of war and displacement. Mobile teams are operating in centres for internally displaced persons and identifying, registering, assessing and providing direct support to children with protection needs.

None of that would be possible without the unprecedented support from Member States and other donors to the Ukraine flash appeal. As a result of that generosity, to date we have received \$3.1 billion of the \$4.3 billion requested through the end of the year. To date, we have transferred almost \$1 billion in humanitarian cash transfers to approximately 4.3 million people. Cash as a mode of delivery has reached maturity in the case of the tragic events in Ukraine. More must be done, of course, to continue to close the funding shortfall. We will soon be issuing plans for 2023.

While there have been improvements, as I have said, in humanitarian access, the biggest challenge remains impediments to reaching areas in Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya. Discussions continue between the United Nations and the parties to facilitate unimpeded access to those areas. It is vital that we get the convoys through to deliver relief items. As we have

discussed previously in this Chamber, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has a presence in Moscow, and I continue to personally engage key interlocutors for access in meetings in Moscow, Kyiv and elsewhere.

Today, of the 13.5 million people who have received assistance since February, 1 million of them are in areas outside of the Government of Ukraine's control. They have been reached thanks to humanitarian partners still positioned in areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, where humanitarian operations began in 2014 as a result of the invasion. While we continue to provide support in those regions through those local partners — and there are still international staff in those areas — our response is neither regular nor at the right scale. Under international humanitarian law, all parties should allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need and must ensure that humanitarian personnel have the freedom of movement required for their work.

In areas where the Government of Ukraine has recently regained control, the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war is a major concern — both for communities and for the humanitarians who serve them — as they cause delays to, and impede the restoration of, essential services, including electricity. States must bolster their support for clearance to prevent further casualties due to landmines. That will ensure quicker, more effective access to livelihoods and essential services. Information on mines and used or abandoned explosive ordnance should be shared by those in the know at the earliest possible time.

Last week, in Geneva, I launched the *Global Humanitarian Overview 2023*, which is our annual assessment of global humanitarian needs for next year and how to respond to them. At the beginning of 2022, 274 million people needed humanitarian assistance. For 2023, the projected number has grown to 339 million. That is an increase of approximately 24 per cent, with 65 million more people who have arrived on our doorstep. It represents 1 in every 23 people on the planet. As we have said publicly, that is equivalent to the population of the third-most populous country in the world. That is a record appeal, and it will be difficult to get the adequate funding. But it is also a stark reminder of how fast humanitarian needs are accelerating. That is especially true for Ukraine.

I conclude partly with the situation in Ukraine, of course, and the urgent needs that we are seeing as we move into winter and in the light of the damage to infrastructure and the potential for more displacement, but I place that within the larger context of a world gone mad, where 1 in 23 people around the globe are in need of humanitarian assistance. It is an unimaginable picture.

**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 and all United Nations agencies for the work they are carrying out in very difficult conditions in Ukraine.

Russia continues its aggression and is now using winter as a weapon of war. France condemns, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's ongoing massive attacks against Ukraine's entire territory. Yesterday, once again, such attacks claimed the lives of many civilians and damaged essential infrastructure. France expresses its condolences to the victims and their families. That systematic targeting, at a time when temperatures are now below zero, reflects a clear desire on the part of Russia to make the Ukrainian people suffer and to deprive them of water, heating and electricity in the hope of undermining their resilience.

The cost of the war for children is terrible. More than 500 medical facilities have been attacked or destroyed, according to the World Health Organization. According to UNICEF, 3.3 million children are in need of assistance today; two thirds of children have been displaced since 24 February; 2,500 schools have been destroyed or damaged; and 5 million children are out of school. France commends the work of UNICEF and UNESCO to provide those children who have been displaced with access to education, including via remote learning.

We condemn all deliberate attacks on schools and hospitals. Those acts are serious crimes punishable under international law and are among the grave violations established by Council resolutions. We rely on the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism to document those violations and to assign responsibility. Those who kill children and attack schools in violation of international humanitarian law belong on the infamous list of the Secretary-General's annual report. In that context, France will continue to

lend its full support to the Ukrainian justice system and to international courts, first and foremost the International Criminal Court.

We once again call on Russia to respect the order issued by the International Court of Justice on 16 March, to put an end to its unjustifiable and devastating war and to withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders.

France commends the efforts of the Secretary-General, United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, which have enabled the evacuation of several hundred civilians and wounded persons from the besieged areas. It is essential that those evacuations continue, leaving the evacuees the choice of their destination. Respect for international humanitarian law and human rights is non-negotiable. Humanitarian access must be guaranteed.

Ukraine is standing on the side of peace in the conflict. While the Ukrainian President presented his 10-point peace plan to the Group of 20, Russia responded with massive strikes on Ukrainian cities. Russia is standing in the way of peace, instead using escalation in an attempt to break the resistance of the Ukrainian people. We welcome President Zelenskyy's efforts to launch a pathway to peace. France stands ready to help build a just and lasting peace.

We remain fully mobilized in support of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. In view of the emergency and as winter sets in, France and Ukraine are organizing an international conference in Paris on 13 December in order to support Ukrainian civil society. The aim of the conference is to mobilize and coordinate assistance to help the Ukrainian population survive the winter, with a focus on five priority areas: energy, water, food and health infrastructure and transport networks.

**Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico)** (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing.

Mexico notes with great concern that, as expected, the cold temperatures are creating a new dimension to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Regrettably, the needs of the people will continue to grow as the conflict continues and winter advances.

This situation is also the result of the intense attacks on Ukraine's electricity infrastructure network, which have left more than 10 million people without electricity and many more without heating. Efforts to repair the damage have thus far been insufficient.

As we heard, the health sector is one of the most severely affected by the disruption to the electricity supply. Seventy per cent of attacks on health infrastructure around the world in recent months have occurred in Ukraine. Hospitals and medical centres are reported to be operating below minimum hygiene standards owing to water shortages and power outages. It is difficult to maintain the operation of such facilities without those basic supplies.

In addition, the large-scale destruction of basic infrastructure creates chains of obstacles to the production and procurement of medical supplies and medicines. Moreover, health workers have been forced to abandon their jobs, and even their homes, as part of the serious problem of internal displacement exacerbated by the energy crisis. As a result, the civilian population, the main victim of the conflict, is finding it increasingly difficult to access health services at a time when they are most needed.

We reiterate our urgent call to put an end to these attacks and to redouble efforts to rebuild the electricity grid in order to ensure the supply of priority services. It is particularly important to guarantee the electricity supply to the Zaporizhzhya and South Ukraine nuclear power plants in order to avoid a nuclear accident.

As we have stressed on previous occasions, international humanitarian law unequivocally provides for the protection of civilians and civilian objects. These attacks must therefore be stopped, and the effects of hostilities on the civilian population must be mitigated as much as possible.

The conflict has drastically changed the reality for millions of Ukrainian children. In addition to the lack of access to health services I noted, more than 3.6 million children are affected by the disruption of school services. Children also represent almost 20 per cent of the displaced population, thereby increasing the risk of them contracting diseases or becoming victims of violence or trafficking as they are separated from their families. Children will also pay the highest price in terms of mental health. Under-Secretary-General Griffiths briefed us all — 675,000 children have already received some type of psychosocial support. That support has been possible only through great effort. Nevertheless, we stress that at least double — an estimated 1.5 million children — are at risk of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions requiring long-term mental health interventions. Psychosocial support will therefore need to continue be a critical

part of the humanitarian response. We will therefore continue to insist on this issue and count on the support of the members of the Council.

It is also essential to ensure progress in the relevant investigations so as to ensure accountability. In that regard, we will closely follow the work of the International Criminal Court, which is responsible for such tasks.

In addition to the efforts and solidarity of the international community to assist the civilian population, we must explore new mediation options so that dialogue and diplomacy find greater scope for action. That was the case with the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has been a critical humanitarian effort and demonstrates that there is room for agreement at the negotiating table.

We reiterate our readiness to work for peace and stability in Ukraine, in full respect of its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

**Ms. Koumby Missambo** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing and welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Latvia, Poland, Germany and the European Union in this meeting.

We continue to follow the developments in the ongoing war in Ukraine. The scale of destruction is intensifying without the slightest encouraging sign on the horizon of the will, even if tiny, to silence the weapons. The war in Ukraine is clearly exacerbating the world's exponentially growing humanitarian needs. The failure of the belligerents to comply with international humanitarian law, including the use or threat of use of weapons of mass destruction, compounds the ravages of the war.

The results are well known: many displaced persons, mostly women and children, whose most basic needs are no longer met. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the Human Rights Council, cites the increased threat to the rights and lives of young people, compounded by attacks on civilian infrastructure, which in turn amplify immediate humanitarian needs. In addition, women and girls are exposed to greater risk of sexual violence.

As temperatures continue to drop, many families in Ukraine are without electricity, heating and drinking water. That will certainly complicate the situation of vulnerable people, as well as the working conditions of humanitarian workers on the ground. To date, nearly 9.3 million people are in need of food and livelihood



assistance, and 14.5 million people are waiting for health assistance, according to the latest report from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

This situation should concern us all. My country calls on the warring parties to respect their commitments under international humanitarian law. We also call on the parties to refrain from using weapons that have indiscriminate effects, which inflict additional suffering on civilians.

I would like to stress that landmines and unexploded remnants of war under snow and ice pose a particular threat to civilian populations, and I echo the appeal made by the International Committee of the Red Cross for the parties to “mark and clear the contaminated areas as soon as possible and inform civilians of the dangers”. It is critical for the parties to ensure that those unexploded remnants of war do not impede access to essential services or put populations and humanitarian workers at additional risk.

My country welcomes the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Agreement on the Initiative sends a positive signal offering hope that the parties can build on its momentum in order to negotiate an end to the fighting. We will continue to support the search for a solution and urge all the parties to commit to doing the same in order to put an end to the cycle of suffering, terror and belligerence. Prolonging the war would only add to the already horrific toll of devastation, loss of life, shattered lives and destroyed infrastructure. But worst of all, it would worsen the invisible wounds and stoke resentment and animosity, subsequently further decreasing the odds of achieving a peaceful coexistence.

In that regard, I would like to urge the parties to refrain from any radical rhetoric that could complicate the political outcome. I reiterate my country’s continuing call to the Security Council to keep the diplomatic channels open, as well as to encourage the parties to meet and engage in dialogue in order to consider all possible avenues for ending the conflict. We remain attentive to the various initiatives and other offers of mediation aimed at encouraging the parties to consider ending the war, with a view to achieving lasting peace and peaceful coexistence.

In the face of the turmoil and despair of the populations that have been weakened by months of war already, it is not enough for us to increase the number of Council meetings to hear the international community’s perspective without ever offering a real alternative to the war. It is time to negotiate an end to

the war. And it is time for the Council to return to the heart of its primary vocation to work to ensure global peace and security.

**Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil):** I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for updating the Security Council on the recent developments in the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, which helps us better understand the effects of the conflict, in particular on vulnerable parts of the Ukrainian population.

We welcome the recent visit to Ukraine by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry. Brazil fully shares the perception expressed by Commissioner Pablo de Greiff in a statement on Friday about the need for a victim-centred approach. From that perspective, nothing is more urgent than the establishment of a ceasefire between the parties, without preconditions.

We also take note of statements made by Western leaders over the past week about their willingness to engage in dialogue with Russia to end the hostilities. Although it is qualified by references to certain conditions, it is an important positive signal. Those declarations have to translate into the establishment of a mechanism for conducting negotiations in a pragmatic and objective manner. Brazil believes that the Council could — and should — serve as a platform to initiate that dialogue and to explore proposals presented by other members for that purpose.

Meanwhile, we have a priority to uphold the protection of the civilian population, particularly children, as well as full respect for international humanitarian law. Attacks against civilian targets constitute violations of international law and international humanitarian law. The condemnation of such attacks must therefore be accompanied by practical measures to end victims’ suffering and ensure lasting peace. Brazil is gravely concerned about the fact that serious violations against children may go unchecked in Ukraine.

The end of the conflict depends on a political solution that offers guarantees to ensure that the destruction we have witnessed over the past nine months is not repeated. The time has come for a deeper reflection on the European regional security architecture, taking into account the concerns of all States and the need to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing.

At present, the crisis in Ukraine is still unfolding. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating. And its spillover effects continue to increase. Conflicts and wars have no winners, and bloodshed and confrontation will only bring suffering to the people. Resolving the crisis in Ukraine through political means is in the best interests of the countries concerned and serves the common interests of all countries of the world. China calls on the international community to support all efforts to seek a peaceful resolution of the Ukrainian crisis, step up good-offices and mediation efforts and encourage the parties concerned to resume negotiations as soon as possible in order to reach an early ceasefire and cessation of hostilities. In the face of a global, compounded crisis such as the one in Ukraine, we must adhere to a people-centred approach, prioritize humankind and spare no effort to mitigate the spillover effects of the crisis. In that connection, I would like to highlight the following four points.

First, we need to reduce the humanitarian cost. The parties to the conflict should strictly uphold international humanitarian law, refrain from launching attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, ensure the normal operation of key public services such as energy, health-care and education services and strive to eliminate security risks in nuclear facilities and supplies. The recent widespread power outage in the Republic of Moldova was a cause for concern. The parties concerned must exercise prudence and restraint in order to prevent the war from spilling over into Ukraine's neighbours. In particular, they should refrain from causing misunderstandings or miscalculations, while also being vigilant against the risk of bloc confrontation.

Secondly, we need to step up humanitarian assistance. The people of Ukraine are experiencing the dual challenges of war and a tough winter, with severe shortages of water, electricity and heating supplies, resulting in a significant increase in humanitarian needs. The international community and humanitarian agencies should help Ukraine repair its damaged infrastructure as soon as possible, provide winter supplies and heating equipment to the Ukrainian people and address the basic livelihood needs of vulnerable groups such as refugees and displaced persons. Children are most vulnerable to attacks and

injuries in armed conflict and should therefore receive priority protection. China calls for the special needs of children to be fully taken into account in humanitarian operations, for targeted assistance to be provided to them and for efforts to be taken to prevent and eliminate violations against them.

Thirdly, we need to manage and control the conflict's spillover effects. The current global food and energy crises are not problems of production-and-demand — they are supply chain problems, in addition to the disruption of international cooperation. China firmly opposes any attempt to politicize food and energy issues and use them as tools and weapons and calls for the removal of unilateral sanctions. Instead, we should maintain the momentum of global economic recovery and reduce the impact of the crises on developing countries and focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are pleased to see the renewal and continued implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We welcome Russia's donation of fertilizers to developing countries with food shortages. We thank the United Nations for coordinating that work.

Fourthly, with regard to respecting the rights of prisoners of war, under the Third Geneva Convention, prisoners of war are entitled to humane treatment and protection from torture, ill treatment and other harm. The parties to the conflict should strictly uphold relevant international law and respect the basic rights of prisoners of war. China welcomes the recent periodic exchanges of prisoners of war between Russia and Ukraine and commends the United Arab Emirates invitation to both sides to discuss prisoners of war and ammonia exports. We hope that those positive contacts and interaction will help both sides build mutual trust and lay the foundation for the gradual resumption of negotiations.

I would like to reiterate that, with regard to the issue of Ukraine, China has always stood on the side of peace, dialogue and humanity. We will continue to work with all peace-loving countries to advocate the resolution of conflicts through negotiations and the settlement of disputes through consultations. We support all efforts that are conducive to a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine and to the restoration of peace and stability in Europe.

**Ms. Carty** (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing today.

Last Thursday, the United Nations released its *Global Humanitarian Overview 2023*, which set another record, with 339 million people in need of assistance and a price tag of \$51 billion. When the United Nations launched its humanitarian needs overview last year, we wondered how much worse it could get. Tragically, Russia's illegal war answered that question. Russia's aggression triggered one of the largest refugee and displacement crises since the Second World War. Hunger, already at extreme levels because of the coronavirus disease, other conflicts and climate change, has surged this year because Russia has disrupted the world's global food systems.

Russia turned Ukraine's rolling wheat fields into battlefields, and it intentionally destroyed the grain that Ukraine once supplied to the developing world. Now as Ukraine fights back to reclaim its sovereign territory and defend its people, President Putin has focused his ire and fire on Ukraine's civilian population. As temperatures plummet, Russia is launching a barrage of missiles at energy stations, adding to its destruction of critical infrastructure across Ukraine. The consequences are horrific and cause needless suffering. Roads, schools and medical facilities have not been spared. As a result of the repeated strikes, children cannot attend school, doctors cannot treat the sick and families are forced to make decisions about whether to freeze in their homes or join the millions of others already displaced in seeking safety from the horrors of war. We commend the Government and the people of Ukraine for their tremendous resilience and resolve in the face of the merciless aggression, and we commend the work done by the humanitarian community.

Over the past 10 months of Russia's war, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations have delivered principled humanitarian aid under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. We heard that in October when Denise Brown, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine, briefed the Security Council (see S/PV.9161) and described in sobering detail the human toll of the war. Humanitarian aid workers have shown that they are willing to stay and deliver in the face of considerable security risks that too often have ended in the loss of life.

It is notable that, despite all obstacles, aid agencies in Ukraine managed to implement the largest humanitarian cash assistance programme in history, transferring more than \$1 billion to 6 million people. Since 24 February, the United States alone has provided more than \$1.5 billion in humanitarian aid to support the displaced, including refugees and other vulnerable populations and communities inside Ukraine and around the region. But we know that more will be needed. We applaud France's initiative to hold an international conference focused on Ukraine's resilience on 13 December. The United States is also grateful for the United Nations efforts to continue the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has succeeded in getting desperately needed food from Ukraine ports to world markets. That has helped lower food prices and ensure that wheat purchased by the World Food Programme reaches vulnerable people in Yemen, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Somalia.

During her recent visit to Ukraine, President Zelenskyy told Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield that he seeks a just peace that is based on the Charter of the United Nations and its principles, which is what the Council is here to uphold and defend. President Putin's escalating barrages on Ukraine's infrastructure are evidence that he has no genuine interest in negotiations or meaningful diplomacy. Instead, he is trying to break Ukraine's will to fight by bombing and freezing its civilians into submission. But he will not succeed, because Ukraine is fighting for its freedom and for the future of its children. And we will do everything in our power to keep hope alive in Ukraine.

**Ms. Juul** (Norway): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his very sobering remarks.

Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine, in blatant disregard of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, has and will continue to have alarming humanitarian consequences. Russia's warfare has killed and maimed civilians, including children, and destroyed homes, hospitals and schools. Their cynical destruction of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, including yesterday's missile strikes, is already causing significant suffering and has the potential for further catastrophic consequences as the winter deepens. Children, persons with disabilities and the elderly are in a particularly vulnerable situation. Attacks on schools and other educational institutions are clearly in contradiction of resolution 2601 (2021), on the protection of education in conflict — a resolution Russia



voted in favour of and which was unanimously adopted by the Security Council. Those attacks also constitute violations of international humanitarian law. They must stop. Children and other civilians must be protected.

Russia's war has led to massive displacement. We are concerned about the risk of sexual and gender-based violence and human trafficking that displaced people, in particular women and unaccompanied children, are exposed to. Thousands of Ukrainian children have reportedly been transferred to Russia for adoption and naturalization through simplified and accelerated procedures, without the consent of their parents or legal guardians. We strongly condemn that inhumane practice. Nevertheless, throughout the war, the Ukrainian people have shown great bravery and resilience. We commend communities, local responders and humanitarian organizations that continue to serve people in need. We reiterate our call for safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need, and we underline the importance of putting children's needs at the centre of the humanitarian response.

Numerous reports already point to widespread violations of international humanitarian law committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, many of which possibly amount to war crimes. Individuals at all levels must be held to account. We are alarmed by the Russian Federation's use of the Wagner Group as part of its warfare. Its members have been accused of committing numerous violations of international humanitarian law, including torture, rape and looting. The Wagner Group is now reportedly recruiting convicted criminals from prisons in Russia to fight in Ukraine. We are concerned that soldiers with such backgrounds pose a particular risk to the civilian population.

In paragraph 313 of his annual report on children in armed conflict (S/2022/493), the Secretary-General makes clear that Ukraine will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect in next year's report. We welcome the engagement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict with all parties to the conflict. Child protection issues must urgently be addressed, including the prevention of violations against children, and we call on all relevant actors to support and facilitate the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Russia's war has also aggravated a global food and energy crisis. It dramatically affects the lives and futures of children and families in many regions.

We welcome the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the efforts of the Secretary-General to facilitate the availability of food and fertilizers to world markets. Let me end by reiterating that Ukraine can count on Norway's continued support, and we welcome President Zelenskyy's peace formula initiative. Russia must stop the war and fully, immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces and military equipment from Ukraine.

**Mrs. Toroitich (Kenya):** I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing.

We remain concerned by the persisting humanitarian suffering in Ukraine. It is a shocking statistic that an estimated 40 per cent of Ukraine's power-generation capacity has been damaged or destroyed by direct attacks. That means that the country's energy infrastructure will not meet the needs of civilians in the coming winter season, no doubt sharply increasing their suffering. We condemn all attacks on civilian infrastructure, in particular water and power infrastructure. We also note and condemn attacks on residential buildings and other civilian objects. Our repeated calls for a cessation of hostilities and for dialogue leading to a mediated settlement have not been heeded. Indeed, the strategic considerations of all the combatants and their allies indicate their continuing resistance to negotiation. If that persists, then we must insist on minimizing the harm to civilians by all actors agreeing to a humanitarian exception.

We welcome the recent agreement by all parties to roll over the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We also applaud the efforts of the Secretary-General to remove the obstacles to exporting food and fertilizers, including from the Russian Federation. The Initiative, which is anchored by Türkiye and the United Nations, is the clearest example of the humanitarian exception. The humanitarian consequences of the war are not limited to Ukraine. Our own food security in Africa has deteriorated and may get worse if fertilizer costs remain high owing to the war. The fact is that, since March, the transit and trans-shipment in ports of Russian fertilizers and raw materials through nearby countries have fallen by 90 per cent. Overall, Russian fertilizer supplies to world markets have decreased sharply, leading to the rise in prices. The consequences are being felt at families' dining tables, as farmers pass on their higher costs and grow less food.

The challenges will grow as the strategic grain reserves of several wealthy countries run low. They will probably return to the food markets to restock next year or in 2024, at a time when African farmers may still be struggling to afford fertilizers. The food prices in such a scenario will rise so sharply that widespread humanitarian suffering will be the result. We may recall the violent uprisings in 2011, which were credibly linked to high food prices. Similar protests may occur in the next few years, with results similar to the spread of terrorism that followed the political turmoil in 2011. In other words, higher fertilizer prices leading to further food insecurity and poverty may manifest as threats to regional and international peace and security. We therefore urge the Secretary-General, the World Food Programme and related institutions to link food and security. If they do so, they will realize the need to redouble their efforts to comprehensively open up the flow of phosphates, ammonia and other fertilizer components. The clearest metric of success is a return to the production levels prior to the war.

There must also be more visible action against the fear of sanctions exposure by the banking and insurance industries in dealing with food and fertilizer supply chains. Countries through which those goods are shipped must remove all official and unofficial blockading actions to reflect their humanitarian responsibility. Of course, the most humanitarian action would be for the military attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity to stop. As long as the war persists, it can easily escalate to the use of weapons of mass destruction. Such an escalation would no doubt further increase the suffering of Ukrainians and hundreds of millions of other people around the world.

It is time for responsible leadership that has an appetite for the prevention and mitigation of the risk of escalation. Such leadership will embrace discreet and even secret diplomatic channels. It will act on the understanding that peace in Europe requires a fundamental reset of the European security order. It will know the limits of using military means to rebuild that order, given the risks of escalation. It will have the political courage to pursue a practical strategic outcome for security and stability. Given the evidence since March, the Security Council will only endorse and give further legality to agreements reached. While waiting for such a welcome development, the Council must redouble its attention to the humanitarian situation arising from the war. Reports by the Secretariat need to inform the Council of the humanitarian impacts,

not only in Ukraine but globally with regard to food and energy security. If the blockages continue, then the Council should adopt a draft resolution that all countries remove all barriers to the export and shipment of food and fertilizer products as key to the prevention of insecurity and threats to international peace.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The topic of today's meeting, as established by its Western initiators, was to be the situation of children. Setting aside the tall tales about the fate of Ukrainian children and the insinuations about what Russia is allegedly doing to them, the fact that our Western colleagues are paying attention to that issue is positive. However, if representatives claim to be objective, they need to talk about the root cause of the crisis — Ukraine's long-standing crimes against civilians and children in Donbas. The West is shamefully trying to hide that. One can lose one's career for mentioning that in the media. It is much easier stay quiet, as otherwise the humanitarian nature of the Kyiv regime falls apart. That is clearly why the page about the Alley of Angels — the memorial in Donetsk to the children who have died in the war that Kyiv has been waging against the Donbas since 2014 — was recently deleted from the English version of Wikipedia. Why confuse Western readers in whom it might provoke uncomfortable questions?

In particular, why would the average Westerner want to know that Ukrainian shelling in the Donbas has killed more than 250 children since 2014, nearly 140 of whom have died since the beginning of 2022? Sadly, new names, including those of children, continue to be added to the list of those killed or wounded as a result of shelling by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. That is because they are firing at the peaceful towns and cities of the Donbas almost non-stop, although our Western colleagues would rather shamedfacedly turn their backs on these facts.

They also ignore the fact that while the children of Donbas have been the targets of Ukraine's neo-Nazis, for the past eight years their own children have become the target audience for disgusting neo-Nazi and Russophobic propaganda. There are numerous examples on the Internet of children participating in neo-Nazi mob rallies and torchlight parades and being trained in paramilitary camps in a spirit of rabid Russophobia and antisemitism. As a result, an entire generation of Ukrainian children and adolescents has grown up with a poisoned mentality and the belief that it is their job to

kill anyone linked to Russia. A telling example of this was some photos that ended up on social networks of letters to the Russian equivalent of Santa Claus asking for presents written by two boys, one from Donetsk and one from Ukraine. The child from Donetsk, who was born and had lived his entire life amid bombing, asks for just one thing — for the shelling to stop. The Ukrainian boy asks for a machine gun so he can kill Russians and set fire to the Kremlin. We all know that children's words reflect the values and mindset of an entire society. Draw your own conclusions.

In the context of respect for the rights of children in Ukraine, we cannot fail to mention the activity of the notorious Mirotvorets (Peacemaker) website, where nationalists post the personal information of people whom they consider enemies of Ukraine. The result of this exposure is that they can be persecuted, tormented and not uncommonly physically annihilated, as happened with the Russian journalist Darya Dugina. As Russian activists have established, 327 children's personal information was posted on this criminal website. As soon as we found out about it, as long ago as July, we immediately informed the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNICEF. We now have a question — what has UNICEF done since it received our request and what is its view of the publication of the personal information of minors on the Internet? Has there been any reaction to it from the Ukrainian authorities?

At the General Assembly debate on the Ukrainian crisis it has been clear that a significant majority of Member States are interested in seeing a diplomatic solution to the situation in Ukraine. We take that message extremely seriously and affirm our willingness to engage in negotiations to eliminate the reasons that forced us to launch the special military operation in Ukraine. That argument makes sense to almost every State except those of the collective West and the Kyiv regime. They are pursuing a different logic, despite the obvious military realities on the ground, one in which military action must lead to Russia's defeat. That is why what we are now seeing is the continuation of the West's war on Russia, to the last Ukrainian. The situation leaves us no option but to continue to work to fulfil the aims of the special military operation by military means, and the entire Ukrainian people are suffering because of it, as they are exploited by the West and the criminal Ukrainian regime as cannon fodder.

The fact that the West has no interest in a political and diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis was

emphasized by the outcome of the NATO Council meeting in Bucharest on 29 and 30 November. By increasing its supply of weapons to Kyiv, the West is attesting to its desire not only to further escalate the situation in Ukraine but to destabilize the situation in Europe generally. It is already becoming clear that the uncontrolled supply of weapons being pumped into the Kyiv regime is becoming a global problem, despite its failure to have a decisive impact on the ground. There is growing evidence that Western weapons destined for Ukraine are increasingly falling into the hands of various armed groups and terrorists, not only in Europe, but also in the Middle East and Africa. President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria has stated that the conflict in Ukraine is a major source of weapons for terrorists in the Lake Chad basin. Transnational criminal groups are involved in smuggling and money-laundering and officials in States that are sending weapons are clearly mixed up in their criminal schemes. The issue poses a real threat to international peace and security and merits the Council's focused attention, which is why we are asking the Indian presidency to convene a separate Security Council meeting about it on Friday, 9 December.

By some strange logic, Western countries are promising to continue supplying weapons to Ukraine "for as long as it takes", while claiming that they are doing it for the sake of peace. The European Union, for example, is even financing its supplies through the Europe Peace Foundation, apparently to confuse its own taxpayers. However, Kyiv has its own response to the question of why they need so many weapons. Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council, recently said openly that his country needs weapons because the Russians "must be destroyed so they cease to exist as a country". According to Mr. Danilov, sitting down with Moscow at the negotiating table is beneath the Ukrainian people.

I believe that there is no need to explain why we have to respond to such hateful rhetoric from Kyiv, and that we will counter its hostile actions, including by carrying out strikes on infrastructure that is used for military supplies, logistics and communications for the Ukrainian military formations. In other words, we will weaken the military capabilities of the Zelenskyy regime. The facilities referred to in this regard are being put out of commission by high-precision strikes. There would be no damage to the civilian infrastructure of Ukrainian cities at all if Ukrainian air-defence systems were not deployed in residential area. Despite the obvious reality, Russia is also blamed for the

consequences caused by falling Ukrainian air-defence missiles, which some would try to pass off as Russian attacks on civilian infrastructure. The Ukrainian anti-aircraft missiles that landed in Poland and just yesterday in Moldova are a clear demonstration of the danger posed by the weapons used by the Ukrainian Armed Forces not only to their own citizens but also to the people of neighbouring States.

By the way, I should point out that it was not we who came up with the truth that energy and transport infrastructure is part of a State's military potential. The Western countries that are now accusing Russia of deliberately harming civilians appear to have forgotten their own bombing of Yugoslavia's peaceful cities during Kosovo's forcible separation from it in the 1990s. I offer a very telling comment by Mr. Jamie Shea, the then-spokesperson of NATO at a briefing on 25 May 1999. I will quote the full question and answer of this official NATO representative. The question was:

“[I]f you say that the [Yugoslav] army has a lot of back-up generators, why are you depriving 70 per cent of the country of not only electricity, but also water supply ... because you say you [NATO] are only targeting military targets?”

The response was:

“Yes, I am afraid electricity also drives command-and-control systems. If President Milošević really wants all of his population to have water and electricity, all he has to do is accept NATO's five conditions and we will stop this campaign. But as long as he does not do so we will continue to attack those targets [that] provide the electricity for his armed forces. If that has civilian consequences, it is for him [Milošević] to deal with”.

That was how NATO formulated its position some 20 years ago on the significance of strikes on civilian infrastructure for a State's defence capabilities. But the standards being applied in Ukraine today are very different from the ones used in Serbia in the 1990s.

In breaking the military backbone of the Kyiv regime, we are taking into account the fact that its policies and most recent moves leave no doubt about its criminal and hateful nature. Besides continuing its cleansing of the political field before the very eyes of our Western colleagues and with their tacit consent, Ukraine's leadership has now turned to combating dissenters on the religious front as well. The mockery

that is the decision seeking to make it impossible for religious organizations affiliated with centres of influence in the Russian Federation to operate in Ukraine is in essence a ban on freedom of religion, a key right in a democratic State, which is what the Kyiv authorities so desperately want to seem to be. At the Holy Dormition Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra — an Orthodox monastery of immense significance for both Russian and Ukrainian believers — the security service of Ukraine conducted raids, in an attempt to find a so-called Russian world cell. What will come next? There will be a ban on praying in Russian. There have already been statements published on social media that, in certain churches, one can see warnings to worshippers praying in Russian that their prayers will apparently not be heard, and that they will be afflicted with illness and sorrow. That is an excellent illustration of precisely how low Ukraine is willing to stoop these days.

Over the past eight years, our Western colleagues have created an anti-Russian monster in Ukraine, turning a blind eye to the horrific crimes committed against its own citizens, including the murder of civilians in Donbas, the glorification of Nazi criminals and their accomplices and the persecution of the Russian-speaking population in their own country. The Kyiv regime was forgiven for all it has done in the expectation that someday, full of hatred, it would rise up against Russia and become an instrument in the geopolitical struggle of the United States and its NATO allies with Russia. The disruption of those aggressive plans is why such fierce criticism is being hurled at our country, but they come as no surprise and will not stop us. All the goals of the special military operation will be fulfilled, one way or another. If that cannot be done peacefully, with Ukraine becoming a normal, good-neighbourly State that poses no threat to Russia, then those goals will be achieved by military means. Due to the thoughtless actions of the Western countries' vassal regime, the responsibility for the suffering of the civil population of Ukraine lies with the Zelenskyy regime and its Western sponsors, who set out to defeat Russia on the battlefield. That is their choice, not ours, and until those in Kyiv and in the West finally see the light, we will defend our interests with all the means at our disposal.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I will not listen to the acerbic and eloquent remarks of the representative of the Kyiv regime, who Friday before last, one more time “diplomatically” tweeted on the



matter in such a spectacular way. If anyone present is unfamiliar with his creative comments, I thoroughly recommend that they read his tweets. As we said previously, they serve as a clear demonstration of the “high standards” of Ukrainian diplomacy.

**Mr. Mythen** (Ireland): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his very stark briefing on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, and indeed across the world.

Ukraine saw the season’s first falls of snow in November, just days after Russia launched new attacks on energy infrastructure and caused widespread blackouts across the country. Now, at the start of December, those attacks have continued as the harsh cold winter we feared begins to set in. It brings with it new dimensions to the humanitarian crisis caused by Russia’s war. Rather than herald the beginning of a peaceful and joyful season, this year’s winter threatens the lives of millions of men, women and children across Ukraine. Millions of civilians are being forced to endure plummeting temperatures without the basic necessities of heat, food or light.

Ireland condemns in the strongest possible terms the attacks by the Russian Federation on critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. We recall yet again the basic principles of international humanitarian law, which must be respected; they include the prohibition of indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and the obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack. Russia often tells us — as we have heard again here today — that those attacks have been on military targets or on infrastructure supporting the Ukrainian military, but the images of people living in the dark, queuing for life-sustaining food and huddling together to stay warm tell a very different story.

Ireland regrets that the insecurity and obstacles imposed by Russia continue to restrict humanitarian access along the front lines and in areas not under Ukraine’s control. Those actions are simply inhumane and unacceptable. The level of damage or destruction to other civilian infrastructure, including homes, hospitals and schools, creates further challenges this winter and may well provoke a new wave of displacement. Ireland is deeply concerned by the reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees that this unjustified war has led to 6.9 million internally displaced people in Ukraine and more than 7.8 million refugees. Those are not merely statistics — each person has had their life

upended. We are talking about children, the elderly, the infirm and those with disabilities — vulnerable people in a situation beyond their control who seek shelter and safety.

As we know from our work in the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, children in war suffer most, often with life-altering consequences. Millions of children across Ukraine are being robbed by the war of their childhoods and futures, forced to leave their homes and communities, their educational facilities destroyed by Russian missiles and their right to education denied. That will have profound impacts, not only on their development but also on society as a whole. The reverberations of the war reach far beyond Ukraine’s borders and will also reach beyond this generation of children in Ukraine.

A new wave of displacement would exacerbate concerns for the protection of women and children, who as we know are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse, as highlighted earlier by Under-Secretary-General Griffiths. As the Council has heard before from Special Representative Patten, conflict-related sexual violence, including mass rape and the rape of children, has been a consistent feature of the war. But rape is not an inevitable by-product of war; it is an act that may constitute a war crime, leaving victims and their communities with life-long effects and trauma.

Ireland strongly supports Special Representative Patten’s calls for swift and rigorous investigations to ensure accountability as a central pillar of deterrence, prevention and non-repetition. As she previously informed the Council, the failure to acknowledge and investigate such crimes is the surest sign that violations will continue unabated.

I conclude, as I always do in our discussions on Ukraine, with the unfailing demand that Russia cease its senseless war. Russia is the sole party that has brought war, terror, conflict and hunger to the people of Ukraine since its illegal invasion in February. I speak to Russia directly, therefore, when I say that it is never too late for dialogue and diplomacy. Ireland renews its call on Russia to immediately cease hostilities, withdraw its forces and commit to resolving all outstanding issues peacefully and in line with the Charter of the United Nations.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his sobering briefing on the situation in Ukraine.

Over the course of the past few weeks, the humanitarian community has focused its attention on addressing the impact of winter in Ukraine. As the cold weather sets in, we have seen humanitarian actors rise to the occasion in support of those most in need. As we heard again today, the situation remains critical — especially in areas that have experienced or continue to experience heavy fighting and shelling. In places like Mykolayiv and Kherson, the lack of electricity, running water and heating, in addition to the scarcity of food and medicine, has put considerable pressure on humanitarian response efforts. We commend the work not only of the United Nations and other major aid organizations but also of local first responders and community organizations, who have deployed innovative measures to address ever-growing needs, whether by allocating generators, setting up mobile heating and charging stations or urgently repairing electricity grids and damaged water systems.

Winter also brings new and unforeseen dangers. Landmines and unexploded munitions are now concealed by snow and ice. We are deeply concerned by reports that the lack of heating has driven people, including children, to gather firewood in forests littered with hidden explosives. The previous time the Council met to discuss the situation of children in Ukraine was at the start of the school year in September (see S/PV.9126). Beyond the importance of education itself and avoiding a lost generation of students who are denied opportunity, schooling provides an important source of stability and peer-bonding that children desperately need as they cope with the intense trauma of war. Since September, it is estimated that approximately 2.6 million children in Ukraine are learning online due to the impacts of war on education, yet even that remote access to education has been disrupted by blackouts and emergency power cuts resulting from the conflict's impact on energy infrastructure. We reiterate our call for taking all the necessary measures to prevent the targeting of civilian infrastructure and ensure that all children can safely access education.

Children must be protected from the worst impacts of armed conflict. But the war's impact on the children of Ukraine goes beyond the immediate threat to their physical safety. The psychosocial impacts of the conflict could engender long-term challenges that affect an entire

generation of children. When families are separated and forced to move or take shelter underground, their daily activities are severely disrupted and the mental health of children suffers. We applaud those working on the ground, particularly community organizations that have mobilized to provide psychosocial support to children impacted by the war.

We can and must do more to protect the children of Ukraine. At the same time, it is critical to ensure that children elsewhere in the world do not suffer from the impact of the global food crisis exacerbated by this war. We were heartened to see the latest Global Food Price Index of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, which showed a modest decrease in global food prices, due in part to the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Yet we are still seeing record-high levels of food prices, which impact the poorest countries first. Areas where fertilizer is not available face low harvests that could undermine even the limited progress made in lowering food prices.

In that regard, we welcome the donation of 260,000 metric tons of Russian fertilizer and the news of the first shipment that is destined for Malawi. We look forward to further shipments in the coming months, as well as other efforts to enhance fertilizer supply. At the same time, we continue to underline the need to ensure that the delivery of grain facilitated by the July Istanbul agreements reaches those most in need. In that respect, we further welcome the recent arrival of Ukrainian wheat bound for Ethiopia. We must all engage in collective efforts to ensure that children do not go hungry, whether in Ukraine or in other parts of the world.

Once again, we reiterate the need for de-escalation and a diplomatic solution to this crisis. For its part, the Council needs to encourage dialogue and foster an environment that is conducive to a cessation of hostilities in order to ultimately bring an end to the fighting. The United Arab Emirates continues to stand ready to deploy its good offices and contribute to efforts aimed at achieving those goals.

**Ms. Opong-Ntiri** (Ghana): I thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his briefing.

The Security Council is once again convening, in close succession, on account of the humanitarian crisis resulting from the unrelenting military bombardments on civilian populated areas in Ukraine. Despite several calls by the Council for the protection of civilians, the

war in Ukraine continues to unfold, with devastating impacts on civilians and civilian infrastructure critical to the survival and livelihoods of the people. The ordinary people of Ukraine continue to suffer attacks, in blatant violation of the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

We continue to be deeply concerned about military hostilities across several front lines, especially the new wave of missile attacks that began yesterday and have reportedly claimed some civilian lives. We are concerned that those attacks are happening at a critical time when temperatures are dropping and many homes are already without access to heating or water, thereby further worsening the humanitarian conditions of the people.

We are particularly disheartened by the plight of Ukrainian children, whose childhoods have been upended by the war. It is not only unfortunate, but also unacceptable that children — anywhere — should suffer from the scourge of armed conflict. Thousands of Ukrainian children have been either killed, maimed or displaced to unfamiliar environments as a result of the war. The physical and psychological well-being of those children is under constant threat from the persisting violence, disruptions to their education and, in some cases, sexual abuse and violations. We register our strong condemnation of all forms of violations against the rights of children and strongly support investigations into such cases so as to avoid impunity against children in Ukraine. We welcome the differentiated humanitarian assistance that would ensure that we can meet the specific needs of the children, especially their psychosocial, health and nutritional needs.

We urge international support for the restoration of Ukraine's energy and water supply infrastructure that have been damaged or destroyed and hope that the international conference announced by the French Government to be held in Paris on 13 December will help to mobilize resources in order to complement the efforts of United Nations humanitarian agencies and further enhance resilience in Ukraine.

The scaling-up of humanitarian assistance, especially the provision of winterization support, is important. However, as we have indicated in previous statements to the Council, such measures are insufficient to mitigate the full impact of the war. The

war must end, and it must end now to prevent further debilitating humanitarian conditions.

At the founding of the United Nations, world leaders, having witnessed the ugliness of the two previous World Wars on our common humanity, pledged to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. While a third world war has been kept at bay, the war in Ukraine has had far-reaching global consequences. We, who now bear the responsibility of promoting international peace and security, must therefore intensify our efforts to bring an end to the war on Ukraine and, indeed, all conflict situations the world over.

The war in Ukraine, in our view, has come at a cost to the world and is an expense that we cannot continue to afford. We must therefore continue in our efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table in order to chart a political process and a peaceful settlement of the conflict through the channels of dialogue and diplomacy.

We welcome reports on the progress being made to resume ammonia exports through the Black Sea ports. The unimpeded export of Ukrainian grain and Russian fertilizers is critical, respectively, to avoid a rebound in global food price increases and avert a food shortage in the coming months.

We reiterate our call for an end to the hostilities and call on the Russian Federation to end its aggression against Ukraine. The immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from the internationally recognized territories of Ukraine would provide a much-needed window for diplomatic consultations towards a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the conflict that lies between the two countries.

We reiterate further our call on the warring sides to take the necessary measures to protect civilians from harm and avoid the targeted attacks on Ukraine's energy and other critical infrastructure. There is also a continuing need to address nuclear safety concerns.

In conclusion, I reiterate Ghana's unwavering commitment to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We once again express our solidarity with the people of Ukraine in these perilous times and reaffirm our support for all international efforts to restore peace in Ukraine.

**Mr. Hoxha** (Albania): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his update. We commend the

monumental work and commitment of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to Ukraine and its people, and we understand the uneasiness of having to bring the never-ending misery of the war to the Security Council.

Yesterday was the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, a landmark agreement according to which Ukraine delivered its nuclear arsenal and, in exchange, the Russian Federation committed to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. There were no festivities, no parades in Kyiv or in Moscow. The only "celebration" was the latest barrage of deadly missiles, the fifth of its kind against Ukraine, coming from the east, its neighbour and aggressor, Russia, in a continued effort to cripple Ukraine's energy infrastructure.

It was yet another attempt to plunge Ukraine into darkness and cold, to punish innocent civilians, to disrupt power and water supplies amid freezing temperatures by weaponizing winter. We hear that Russia does not target civilians. The truth is that the only civilians not under attack are those 17,000 already killed.

Since February, we have heard many times the Kremlin claim that in its special operation, which has now entered its tenth month, everything is going to plan. But we never got a real chance to know what the plan was exactly, as it kept changing. Was it a three-day walk into Ukraine in order to take Kyiv and overthrow the Government? It failed. Was it to wipe Ukraine from the world map? It nosedived before it even started. Was it to break the morale of an entire nation and force it into submission? The contrary has happened.

The reality is that, despite despicable crimes and widespread human rights abuses, despite continued vicious attacks on civilian infrastructure and continued efforts to bring the war into every Ukrainian household, the aggression has spectacularly failed to break Ukraine. It has only boosted Ukraine's resistance and its national identity. Moreover, the false narrative about Ukraine has not been able to poison the desire internationally for truth and peace. Only a few weeks ago, in General Assembly resolution ES-11/4, 143 Member States said a resounding no to the annexation of territory by force and an unquestionable no to a world according to the Kremlin (see A/ES-11/PV.14).

As we have heard, the situation of children is particularly worrying. Nearly 6 million of them have been affected since the start of the war. Many cannot

attend their schools because the buildings have been damaged or demolished, and power cuts are disrupting online classes. Some 3.4 million Ukrainians need child-protection care and, as Under-Secretary-General Griffiths mentioned, 700,000 are enduring injuries and psychological trauma. For them the scars are deep and lasting. For them the war has meant the loss of their education, their health care and a place where they can grow up healthy. It is needless to remind the Council that this war continues to take a heavy toll on civilians. I once again recall the words of Mr. Griffiths, who said it all in one sentence — this senseless war is causing death, destruction and displacement. That is what civilians are enduring there. We commend the efforts of the United Nations system and humanitarian partners to deliver critical assistance and ensure protection across the country.

The deliberate destruction or damage of civilian objects, such as schools, hospitals and energy and water infrastructure, is a violation of international humanitarian law. Resolution 2573 (2021), adopted by the Council only last year, strongly condemns attacks in situations of armed conflict directed at civilians and other protected persons that deprive them of objects indispensable to their survival. Energy, water and heat are indeed indispensable for survival, and even more so in wintertime. Those who authorize such flagrant violations in Ukraine are not merely acting in contravention of their commitments and obligations, they are committing crimes. There is also mounting evidence that Russian forces are committing war crimes, indiscriminate attacks, torture and sexual and gender-based violence against the civilian population, including prisoners. Those crimes are documented, and they must be investigated and their perpetrators held accountable. We could not prevent the war, but we must therefore make sure there is accountability.

It is clear that the cause of this enduring suffering, including its humanitarian and food-insecurity aspects and its worldwide impact, lies in the war of choice on Ukraine. We know how the war started. We do not know how or when it will end. But we know that the only way to stop this madness is by immediately and unconditionally withdrawing all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine, respecting its internationally recognized borders and embracing diplomacy. Yes, we need dialogue, but in freedom, not under coercion. Until then, Ukraine needs and will have our support, because supporting Ukraine is supporting everything we stand for.



**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his briefing. As he said, this war is about death, destruction and displacement.

This is the third time in as many weeks that we have discussed Russia's brutal attacks on civilians across Ukraine. On all three occasions, the United Nations has underlined the devastating humanitarian impact of the systematic strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure and civilian centres. That presents a potentially catastrophic situation for Ukraine's brave and courageous people and for the 690 organizations that are supporting the humanitarian needs as winter begins and people are left without water, power or shelter.

We know what Russia is trying to do. It is trying to bring terror and suffering to the civilian population in a war of subjugation. It is barbaric, illegal and horribly cruel. The statistics we have heard from the United Nations today are shocking. More than 17,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine by Russia's senseless war. That is a devastating number of innocent lives lost, and we have heard today in particular about the impact that Russia's war is having on children in Ukraine. We heard about the millions forced to flee their homes and in need of humanitarian assistance and the hundreds killed, injured or missing; the damage or destruction of more than 500 schools and the classes that remain being interrupted by air-raid sirens and power cuts; the reports that thousands of children have been forcibly taken to Russia; and the credible allegations of sexual violence against children by Russian forces. The trauma inflicted by Russia will last for generations.

The response from the Security Council and the wider membership of the United Nations has been consistent. It is a call for an end to conflict and for peace. Two weeks ago (see S/PV.9202), President Zelenskyy asked us once again to help end the suffering of the Ukrainian people and expressed his willingness to negotiate a peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. But Russia is not listening. Its response has been wave after wave of long-range strikes and continued, albeit frustrated, efforts to take Ukrainian territory. It is time for Russia to end this war, withdraw from Ukrainian territory and commit to dialogue and negotiations based on international law and the Charter.

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

Let me begin by thanking Mr. Martin Griffiths for his briefing on the situation in Ukraine with regard to the protection of civilians and the situation of children.

India continues to remain concerned about the situation in Ukraine. The conflict has resulted in the loss of lives, as well as countless miseries for its people, particularly women, children and the elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries. The reports of attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in the recent weeks are indeed deeply worrying, and we reiterate our grave concerns in that regard.

Children constitute a third of humankind, and the most important third, because they are our future. They are also the most vulnerable to suffering, particularly in situations of armed conflict, and therefore need additional protection and care. The conflict in Ukraine is unquestionably severely impacting the 7.5 million children across the country. While the protection of the rights of the child, including their access to education, is the primary responsibility of national Governments, the international community has the obligation to do its utmost to provide succour to children affected by conflict. India is a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and appreciates the ongoing efforts, including by UNICEF, to alleviate children's suffering. We also support UNICEF's efforts to scale up its operations.

As the Council is aware, since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, India has consistently called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to the violence. We have urged both sides to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue and have also expressed our support for all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. We believe that no solution is worth the cost of innocent lives. Our Prime Minister has spoken to the Presidents of Ukraine and Russia on multiple occasions and has reiterated India's position. India stands ready to support all such efforts aimed at de-escalation.

I would also like to point out that the impact of the Ukraine conflict is not just limited to Europe. The conflict is exacerbating concerns about food, fertilizer and fuel security, particularly in developing countries. It is necessary for all of us to appreciate the importance of equity, affordability and accessibility with respect to those critical issues for the global South. Open markets must not become an argument for perpetuating inequity and promoting discrimination. India's approach to the Ukraine conflict will continue to be people-centred. For our part, we provide humanitarian assistance to Ukraine

and economic support to some of our neighbours in the global South that are under economic distress. In order to help low-income countries fight against price rises and foodstuff shortages, India has exported more than 1.8 million tons of wheat to countries in need, including to Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Sudan and Yemen. We hope that the international community will continue to respond positively to the call for humanitarian assistance. India has to date dispatched 12 consignments of humanitarian aid to Ukraine; at the request of the Ukrainian Government, India has also provided financial aid for the reconstruction of an educational institution. We stand ready to do more.

Let us not forget that the situation has also affected foreign students, including students from India. India facilitated the safe return of 22,500 Indian nationals, most of them students studying in various universities in Ukraine. Even as we explore options for minimizing the impacts on our students' education, we appreciate the accommodations made by the Ukrainian Government for medical students in the current academic year.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate that the global order is anchored in the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** I acknowledge what is left of the delegation of the terrorist Moscow regime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

Today, on Ukrainian Armed Forces Day, I salute Ukraine's heroic and invincible soldiers, who are fighting for their country, their families, every one of us and our free future. The aggressor will be defeated, the dictatorship will fail and the war criminals will be held to account. This is yet another meeting at which the representatives of the Russian Federation try to convince the Security Council of their country's readiness for peace. And the hypocrisy of their words has once again been revealed by the deeds of their country on the ground.

Yesterday Ukraine sustained another wave of Russian missile terror. More than 70 missiles were launched from aircraft and ships to hit critical infrastructure throughout Ukraine. Ukrainian armed forces were able to intercept almost 60 of those missiles.

We are grateful to the responsible nations throughout the world that contribute to enhancing Ukraine's air defences, and thereby to saving the lives of innocent civilians. Given the reports on missile fragments being found in the Republic of Moldova following yesterday's strike by Russia, we reiterate that Russian missile terror poses a dangerous threat, not only to Ukraine but also to its neighbouring countries. The only way to prevent a spillover effect is to continue supporting Ukraine by further strengthening its air-defence and missile-defence capacities.

In that regard, we also welcome the readiness of our friends to ensure the provision of immediate assistance to Ukrainians in meeting their urgent needs and strengthening the civilian resilience of the Ukrainian people following the Russian terrorist attacks on their infrastructure. The international conference on standing with the Ukrainian people organized by France and Ukraine, to be held in Paris on 13 December, serves as a good example of such efforts. We encourage United Nations Member States and the leadership of the Secretariat to participate in that event.

It speaks volumes that Moscow decided to attack Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and its people on the anniversary of the Budapest Memorandum. On 5 December 1994 in Budapest, the Kremlin granted security assurances to Ukraine, committing in particular to respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and existing borders and reaffirming that none of its weapons "will ever be used against Ukraine".

Almost every single day Russia demonstrates that its assurances are of no worth — whether those that Moscow gave in the past, those of which they speak today or those that they may offer in the future. Indeed, sometimes the Kremlin might seem to take an adequate position, as former President Yeltsin once did. In his letter to former President Clinton dated 2 November 1994, Yeltsin conveyed his readiness "to make a decision now with regard to signing a document on guarantees". He also expressed his confidence that "the leaders' signatures should seal a really milestone document which would cover all the concerns of Ukraine, which is fraternal to us".

The problem is that the post-Soviet transformation in Russia was not underpinned by de-communization or the dismantling of its authoritarian style of leadership and therefore led to Putinism instead of democracy. The lessons of history must be learned this time so that past tragedies are not repeated. After the military defeat

of Russia, which is imminent, the de-Putinization and denuclearization of that country must follow. By marking the anniversary of the Budapest Memorandum with a missile strike on Ukraine, the Kremlin finally showed that it has no moral or legal grounds for possessing nuclear weapons. Therefore, while the armed forces of Ukraine continue to do their job to defeat Russia militarily, the international community must start considering the modalities of post-Putin arrangements with Moscow, which should include a new Budapest Memorandum to be signed by Moscow in the context of its denuclearization. It remains to be seen how soon after its military defeat and by whom such a document could be signed on behalf of the territory with an administrative centre in Moscow. Such an arrangement would require credible counterparts, and neither Putin nor any of his cronies can be considered trustworthy.

Ukraine needs peace, and Ukraine wants peace more than any other country. It is our territory that has been invaded. It is our people who are being killed. It is our homes that are being destroyed and robbed by the Russian army. Please keep that in mind every time Moscow attempts to wear sheep's clothing and persuade us that it is not the aggressor but the victim that resists peace efforts. Ukraine indeed resists, but not peace of course — we resist Moscow's attempts to erase us from the map. We also resist the Russian strategy to buy time under the guise of peace efforts in order to replenish its military arsenal, build strongholds in the occupied territories and prepare for a new attack, whether in two, or five or seven years.

Putin's representative at this meeting talks about peace, but at the same time his masters in Moscow claim that Russia will not leave the territory of Ukraine. In a nutshell, the so-called peace à la Kremlin would be built on violations of the Charter of the United Nations.

Moscow's vision of peace also means that all Ukrainians in the occupied territories would be left in danger, unprotected from abduction, detention, torture, looting or execution-style killing. In all the Ukrainian territories still under Russian control the occupation authorities regard any local resident as a potential enemy. That is why, while retreating, Russian troops are leaving behind mass graves and torture chambers. That was the case in Kyiv and the northern regions in April, in the Kharkiv region in September and in Kherson last month. At the end of November, Ukrainian law enforcement exhumed a mass grave in the liberated village of Pravdyne, in the Kherson region. According

to eyewitness accounts in April, occupiers killed seven people, including a teenage girl, in a private house, which they then blew up. The local residents were forbidden to bury their remains for a long time. That is another episode in the Russian war of aggression. Seven more human lives taken for nothing.

Several days ago, a DNA examination confirmed that one of the bodies found in the mass grave in Izyum in the Kharkiv region belonged to a well-known Ukrainian children's writer, Volodymyr Vakulenko. His village near Izyum was occupied at the very beginning of the invasion and he stayed there because of his son, who has been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. As a peaceful civilian, his only guilt in the eyes of Russians was his affiliation with Ukrainian literature. And that was enough for them to detain Mr. Vakulenko at the end of March and to kill him. The teenage son of the Ukrainian writer will live with memories of his father as one of the heroes. He will read his father's books, and they will warm his heart. Let me ask the Russian diplomats in this Chamber, or what is left of them: what legacy will they leave their children — volumes of lies and shameful attempts to whitewash war crimes and genocide? That is a torturous and painful life to leave one's children.

We remain concerned about the vile practices of family separations and mass deportations of children from the occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia. To date, the Ukrainian authorities have identified 12,340 children deported to Russia or to the territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by Russia. Until now, only 119 deported children have been returned to their relatives in Ukraine. We urge Moscow to cease that illegal practice and to immediately provide the relevant United Nations bodies and international organizations with complete information on the Ukrainian children abducted or deported to its territory, including those who have subsequently been adopted or transferred to foster families. We call on the United Nations authorities, as well as the international community, not to be silent about those crimes and to demand that Russia provide access to those children and facilitate their safe return and family reunification in line with the best interests of the children and in accordance with international law.

In November we informed the Security Council of the peace formula plan proposed by President Zelenskyy (see S/PV.9202). It includes 10 steps that would lead us all to sustainable and lasting peace. Let me remind

Council members that the list includes radiation and nuclear safety, food security, energy security, the release of all prisoners and deportees, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the withdrawal of Russian troops, justice, the prevention of ecocide and of escalation and legal confirmation of the end of the war. I am grateful to the members of Security Council that have emphasized the plan's viability. We invite Member States to take the lead and to participate in any of the 10 points of the plan. It is time to start its implementation.

I listened carefully to the statement by the representative of Kenya, especially on the issue of food security. Let me say it loud and clear — the only root cause of that problem is the Russian war on Ukraine, and as soon as the war is stopped, 99 per cent of the issues the representative raised will be resolved. Another important development I would therefore like to touch on is the fact that the past week was the start of the practical implementation of the Grain from Ukraine initiative. As of now, more than 30 countries and the European Union have declared their financial participation in the humanitarian Grain from Ukraine programme initiated by President Zelenskyy. Pledges have already amounted to almost \$190 million.

In the framework of the programme, on 4 December the first ship delivered 25,000 tons of Ukrainian wheat for Ethiopia through the port of Doraleh in Djibouti. Yesterday another ship set off for Ethiopia loaded with 30,000 tons of wheat. Two more ships are now being loaded at the seaport of Chernomorsk, and they are due to deliver 60,000 tons of wheat for Somalia and the Sudan. Overall, within the framework of that important humanitarian initiative, our State is going to send more than 60 ships to Ethiopia, the Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Yemen and other countries. As I have said, more than 30 countries and international organizations have already offered their support to the Grain from Ukraine programme. There are two reasons why the programme is important. First, it undermines the Russian propaganda in the countries of the global South because they see that Russia is a problem while Ukraine is a rescuer. Secondly, it supports Ukrainian agriculture and farmers amid the hardship of war. We continue to work on enlarging the group of countries that support this humanitarian programme and increasing the scope of financial contributions to it.

We harbour no illusions about Russia's readiness for peace. For the time being, it is a militarized and brainwashed society ruled by war criminals and educated with hatred. As long as they have resources, they will continue to attack Ukraine, the global security architecture and the international order based on the Charter of the United Nations. Moscow must be deprived of its ability to produce missiles, finance military activities in Ukraine and threaten the world with sabre-rattling. We encourage responsible and peace-loving nations to continue seeking relevant opportunities to deprive Moscow of the fossil-fuel revenues it uses to finance the war. In that regard, the decision to cap the price of Russian oil is a first step in the right direction, although the upper limit requires further adjustments. It is completely useless to beg Moscow for peace or to appeal to its common sense. Moscow can only be forced into peace. That is the only language that it understands and to which it responds. As soon as the strategy is applied by everyone, a sustainable peace, as well as renewed respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, will be within reach.

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

**Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia):** I speak on behalf of the Baltic States — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Griffiths for his sobering briefing, and I also thank the presidency for the opportunity to address the Security Council.

Destroying the energy, heat and water supply in order to inflict pain on people who are already suffering food and medicine shortages seems to be key to Russia's war of terror against civilians in Ukraine. Just days after Ukraine saw the season's first snow, Russia's strikes caused widespread blackouts and disruptions of vital services, thereby affecting millions of people, including children.

With the onset of winter conditions, we face a completely new dimension of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine — a crisis that was deliberately created by Russia. It has also affected neighbouring countries, such as the Republic of Moldova, which has also experienced blackouts. Over the past few weeks, Russia has only stepped up its indiscriminate attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure. Russia's war on Ukraine has caused immense suffering and psychological trauma, which particularly affects children. Energy cuts



have negatively impacted child-protection activities. Russia's aggression has left 3.4 million children in need of child-protection interventions. Thousands of Ukrainian children have been forcefully deported to Russia, which constitutes a war crime. Children belong with their families, and they must be safely and immediately returned to their homes.

There must be no impunity for Russia's crimes in Ukraine. The international community will hold Russia's perpetrators accountable for the crime of aggression and all other atrocity crimes committed in and against Ukraine. Therefore, it is imperative to continue documenting and properly storing evidence, as well as to continue reporting regularly on all the war crimes committed throughout Ukraine. In order to further strengthen international criminal justice mechanisms, we strongly support the idea of establishing a special international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine. Currently, there is no international court or tribunal that could hold Russia's top political and military leadership to account for committing crimes of aggression against Ukraine. A special international tribunal for the punishment of the crime of aggression against Ukraine must be established to fill that jurisdictional vacuum.

Russia could — but chooses not to — stop its war of aggression and the suffering and crisis it causes to Ukraine and its people, including its children. Together with actions aimed at stopping Russia, one of the international community's priorities for this winter should be to ensure protection for the most vulnerable. Shortages of electricity and fuel add to the challenges involved in ensuring that children in Ukraine can continue their education and receive crucial services. States, civil society organizations, private donors and United Nations agencies, including UNICEF and other humanitarian partners, have worked to meet the needs of millions of people in dire need of assistance. In addition, in providing aid to Ukraine the Baltic States are taking the lead in terms of the share of their gross domestic product. We commend the humanitarians who continue working through the challenges posed by energy shortages to support people in Ukraine. We call upon all relevant United Nations institutions, as well as the international community, to continue their life-saving efforts.

Helping Ukraine to restore its energy infrastructure is especially critical for avoiding the direst humanitarian consequences. However, insecurity and the obstacles

imposed by Russia continue to hinder humanitarian workers' capacity to support those in need. The ongoing war in Ukraine severely disrupts access to livelihood opportunities and basic services for women and girls, including life-saving sexual and reproductive health-care services. There are mounting allegations of conflict-related sexual violence, including against children, and other forms of gender-based violence. Survivors' access to comprehensive services, including medical and psychological support, must be ensured.

According to NASA Harvest, Ukraine has lost at least 6 million tons of wheat — worth \$1 billion — harvested in areas controlled by Russia. We would like to reiterate that the Russian aggression is the direct cause of the current global food insecurity, not the sanctions aimed at ending the aggression. We call on Russia to stop prolonging the inspection of vessels heading to and from the Black Sea ports, thereby preventing Ukrainian grain and foodstuffs from reaching millions of people. We fully support the Secretary-General's Black Sea Grain Initiative and the work of the Joint Coordination Centre and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in facilitating trade in food and fertilizer in order to alleviate global food insecurity. We call for transparency in that important work. The unhindered freedom of navigation in the Black Sea is the only practical way to ensure a reliable flow of Ukraine's grain and other food staples. To achieve that, Russia must immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will continue to firmly stand up for the Charter of the United Nations, international law, human rights, peace and security. Wherever Russia goes, it leaves horror in its wake, and with every passing day those crimes go unpunished. However, we believe in the power of the international community. We are confident that Ukraine will prevail. We are determined that war criminals will be brought to justice.

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

**Mr. Szczerski (Poland):** Let me start by thanking India for convening today's important briefing. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths for his insightful yet grim briefing.

Since 24 February, one of the biggest humanitarian crises since the Second World War has been unfolding

in Poland's immediate neighbourhood — in Ukraine. It has to be stressed that the crisis is purely human-made and was caused solely by Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Today's Security Council briefing on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is timely, as it takes place in an increasingly challenging context for the humanitarian system. It should be stressed that, unlike in most conflicts in which a humanitarian crisis accompanies the military aggression, in the case of the Russian war against Ukraine the humanitarian crisis is the weapon of war used on purpose by the aggressor. The sole aim of the aggressor at this stage is to create and further deepen the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Such actions by the Russian Federation constitute war crimes and clearly demonstrate a blatant disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law. That is why today's briefing is indeed timely and pertains to the very essence of the current phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Poland has supported Ukraine since the very beginning of the war in a multidimensional way. Poland's actions are threefold in nature. First, we host and provide support to the biggest community of Ukrainian refugees; secondly, we operate as a hub for transferring international humanitarian aid through our border with Ukraine; and thirdly, like other donors, we deliver humanitarian aid directly to Ukraine. With regard to the assistance provided by my country, I should like to point out that the Polish Government at all levels, as well as Polish society, stood up and showed solidarity in times of need: 77 per cent of Poles have been involved in providing various kinds of assistance to Ukraine and to Ukrainians who have taken refuge in our country.

We make every effort to meet the needs of our guests. It should be underlined that we have chosen to provide Ukrainian refugees in Poland with the same public services and social benefits to which Polish citizens are entitled, including family benefits for children, free public health care and education. Ensuring that children continue their education is one of our top priorities. We are determined to ensure that all children affected by the war can continue their education. Depending on preferences, we offer enrolment in Polish schools or provide the equipment necessary for distance-learning within the Ukrainian educational system. For those who wish to continue their education in Polish schools, preparatory classes are organized to help refugee children to find their

way in the Polish educational system and overcome the language barrier. There are currently approximately 200,000 refugee children from Ukraine in Polish schools, including 35,000 in preschool. The Polish Ministry of Education has also created an online platform with various educational tools available for free. The Ministry is organizing special language courses for teachers from Ukraine, as well as for Polish teachers, in order to facilitate their communication with children coming from Ukraine and enable them to better respond to their educational needs. More than 2,500 Polish and Ukrainian teachers have made use of that training opportunity so far. Poland pays particular attention to the needs of children with disabilities. Children with special educational needs, as well as their parents, can benefit from psychological and pedagogical assistance in Polish kindergartens and schools.

Poland is also delivering humanitarian aid directly to Ukraine. We are providing assistance to the health sector and to internally displaced Ukrainians by constructing temporary-housing towns for 20,000 internally displaced persons at an estimated cost of more than €75 million, coming out of the Polish national budget. Additionally, in mid-November we opened two mobile medical units, the first of a planned total of 12 such units. In 2022 Poland has also financed humanitarian projects delivered by non-governmental organizations to the tune of €2.5 million in the areas of food, health, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, education and logistics. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's preliminary estimates for 2022, Poland will spend approximately 1.5 per cent of its gross domestic product on humanitarian assistance.

Those are considerable costs, and the needs are growing as we speak. Unfortunately, as long as Russia's deliberate attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure continue, disrupting electricity and heating services and forcing more people to leave their homes in freezing temperatures, the number of people in urgent need of humanitarian help will also grow. Poland strongly condemns the use of harsh winter conditions as a weapon of war against civilians in Ukraine. We have been steadfast in our efforts to provide Ukraine with as much support as possible in securing energy supplies for people who are suffering due to Russia's actions. Polish institutions are in constant contact with Ukrenergo to coordinate the supply of power generators to Ukraine within the framework of the

European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity.

Poland once again strongly urges the Russian Federation to end its war of choice and respect international humanitarian law. International law, respect for humanitarian principles and accountability are core rules for making the humanitarian system reliable for civilians. That is of particular importance for the most defenceless victims of this or any war — children.

Let me end by saying a few words about an exhibition recently opened by Poland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, entitled "Mom, I don't want war!", organized thanks to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' archives and Ukrainian partners. The project consists of two incredibly moving testimonies of war, with historical drawings by Polish children from 1946 depicting their experiences during the Second World War under German occupation, and contemporary drawings by Ukrainian children related to the current war waged on them by Russia. It shows that war always looks the same through the eyes of a child. The similarity between the historical and present-day drawings is striking. There can unfortunately be no doubt that children in Syria, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or any other conflict zone would draw the same images of tanks, bombs, fires, ruined homes and separated families fleeing their homes.

Children see war and understand the nature of it. We cannot hide it from children. It traumatizes them just as much as — and sometimes even more than — adults. But what is also striking is that the children also draw their hopes and dreams for the future. Let us therefore hear a message of hope from 7-year-old Illariia from Zaporizhzhya in Ukraine, who wrote under her drawing:

"I want peace! I want my family to smile like before. I want to feel the safe sky and bright warm sun over my head! I want to go to school! I want to freely give joy and happiness with my violin playing!"

It is high time to deliver on her very simple hopes and dreams. There is one State in this Chamber that can make it happen, if it so chooses. As we heard, the peace plan is on the table.

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

**Ms. Leendertse (Germany):** I would like to thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity to speak in the Council today.

It has been more than nine months now since Russia started its full-scale aggression against Ukraine. In recent weeks Russia has waged its war with ever-more systematic attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, far from the front lines, with a special focus on disrupting basic services, such as electricity, water and heat, during winter. To quote my Foreign Minister, Ms. Annalena Baerbock, the Russian President is using the cold as a weapon of war — attacking the most vulnerable people in Ukraine.

Let me be clear. Those attacks are deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure. They are a blatant breach of international humanitarian law. Article 54, paragraph 2 of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions stipulates that "It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population". The humanitarian impact of these attacks is shocking. Hospitals, schools, water supply stations, residential buildings and so forth are clearly not military targets and serve civilian needs only. Deliberately and systematically destroying the power supply and heating systems of an entire country in the midst of winter is simply barbaric and inhumane. I urge Russia to stop that cruelty immediately. It will be important to coordinate all the support for Ukraine's energy infrastructure among its international partners and allies. After the successful Group of Seven Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bucharest, the summit in Paris on 13 December will be the next important step.

Germany will continue to stand by Ukraine in order to end the war. Last Friday Chancellor Scholz spoke with President Putin. He urged the swift withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine as a precondition for any diplomatic solution. Germany welcomes the fact that President Zelenskyy has articulated his vision for peace in his 10-point peace formula. We will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes. We will help Ukraine uphold its resilience. We stand committed to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. It is Russia that needs to reverse its course and immediately and unconditionally stop its aggression and withdraw its troops.

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

**Mr. Skoog:** First, I want to congratulate you personally, Madam President, and India for acceding to the presidency of the Council. I thank you for the invitation to speak at today's debate.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as on behalf of Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Andorra and San Marino.

I want to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for his briefing this morning. What he described is a situation that is not just of concern, it is horrifying. It is the result of a relentless and deliberate aggression. As lights go up and families gather in many parts of the world, Kyiv's Christmas tree is without light. Russia's onslaught of rockets is bringing nothing but darkness. What can parents tell their children to reassure them that they are safe as the ground shakes and glass splinters, forcing them to constantly run to seek refuge in bomb shelters? How can teachers tell their students that they are safe, when they are not? How does a doctor reassure her patient when operating on her in darkness?

At today's debate, I would like to highlight the following three points: first, the need to protect civilians and preserve humanitarian space; secondly, the deep scars that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is leaving on its people; and lastly, the global consequences of Russia's war.

First, on the need to respect humanitarian law, the ongoing deliberate and systematic missile attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure add to the growing evidence that Russia is committing war crimes, as has already been reported by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine. Civilian casualties are being reported from across the country. Attacks around nuclear power plants are bringing us to the brink of a nuclear disaster. As temperatures drop below zero, those unlawful attacks are causing a humanitarian catastrophe. There are also serious challenges to delivering life-saving humanitarian assistance because Russia is obstructing access.

The situation is most severe and acute close to the front lines and in newly liberated areas. It is a fact that when the contact line moves, as Ukraine liberates its territories in the south and east and areas become accessible for humanitarian partners to

operate, the needs of the affected people are immense. The liberation of Kherson oblast, west of the Dnipro River, demonstrates how Russia destroys critical infrastructure as it retreats. The indiscriminate shelling of Kherson and other areas close to the front line further hampers the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid to civilians.

Secondly, the scars left by Russia's brutal war on the people in Ukraine are immense. We are very concerned about the increasing mental health and psychosocial well-being and needs of the war-affected population, and in particular children's vulnerability to conflict-related traumas. The sad reality is that Russia's war of aggression severely impacts a generation of Ukrainian children. They suffer the horrors of war every day and are in dire need of safety, stability and protection. We therefore need to maintain well-targeted humanitarian support for the most vulnerable children in Ukraine in order to ensure access to education, shelter and health-care services, including psychosocial support, especially for those who are displaced or have been separated from their parents and are therefore particularly at risk.

We commend the bravery and resilience of the Ukrainian people, especially humanitarian workers and social workers, including educational and medical personnel, and call for further support from the international community for Ukrainian institutions so as to ensure that these essential staff can stay and deliver. We also need to sustain support to relevant international actors engaged in delivering help to Ukraine and Ukrainians, such as UNICEF, the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the Office of the Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Thirdly, I note the global consequences of Russia's aggression. In the middle of a global food crisis, Russia's systematic and deliberate targeting and destruction of Ukraine's agricultural production infrastructure, grain looting and the obstruction of exports are unacceptable and inexcusable. Those actions exacerbate hunger and severe food insecurity in the world. We are doing everything possible to alleviate hunger by getting agricultural products and fertilizers to world markets. Together with the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the EU's solidarity lanes are making a significant difference and have enabled Ukraine to export 29 million tons of grains and other foodstuffs to date. As we heard today, last week's launch of the Grain from Ukraine initiative,



which has the EU's full support, also demonstrates Ukraine's commitment to helping the most vulnerable. Two ships filled with grain are already on their way towards Ethiopia and Somalia — from a country that is suffering an onslaught of missiles from Russia on a daily basis.

The EU will continue to stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes and to the extent necessary. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has brought death and unspeakable suffering. Russia must be held to account for its horrific crimes, including for its crime of aggression against a sovereign State. It must also pay financially for the devastation it has caused.

Let me reiterate one more time our call on Russia to unconditionally and immediately withdraw all its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

The real healing, which will take generations, can begin only once the war is over. Ukraine has indicated that it is ready for a just peace, and the EU certainly supports all genuine and meaningful efforts in that respect. In the meanwhile, Russia is actively bombing civilians and critical infrastructure, deliberately blocking humanitarian access and using cold and hunger as weapons.

We are the first to acknowledge what you said, Madam President, about the global consequences of this war against Ukraine and that the humanitarian situation globally is extremely challenging and requires our full engagement and solidarity. We are proud to be at the forefront of all global humanitarian efforts, and we do so hand in hand with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

*The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.*