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Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Narváez Ojeda (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 59 (continued)

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Mr. Lagatie (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully supports the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/77/PV.88) and would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the following aspects.

Given the scale of the destructive action that we have witnessed since 2014, and which the Assembly has denounced since March of that year, it seems essential to remind ourselves that this unprovoked and unjustified aggression has one cause and one cause only — the attempt by the Russian Federation to illegally annex part of Ukraine's territory by force. The consequences of Russia's aggression are unfortunately being felt by all States Members of this Organization, as they are further exacerbating the delay in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which we will be discussing here in a few weeks' time at the SDG Summit. In particular, the implementation of SDG 2, achieving zero hunger, will be further hampered by Russia's deplorable and unilateral decision to pull out of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The achievement of SDG 7, on clean and affordable energy, SDG 13, on combating climate change, and SDG 16, on peace, justice and effective institutions, will also be affected.

Through its actions, the Russian Federation has been persistently violating the principles laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. I believe it is essential to remind ourselves of that in order to fully appreciate the threat that the Russian Federation's actions pose to the Charter. The Assembly has repeatedly noted and condemned those violations. In an overwhelming majority, we demanded in February that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from Ukrainian territory (resolution ES-11/6). We called for a cessation of hostilities while enumerating the principles of the Charter underpinning a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Nothing has been done. The Russian Federation continues to ignore the Assembly's demands on a daily basis.

Belgium calls on the Assembly not to allow any violation of the Charter of the United Nations to go unchallenged. This aggression constitutes a crime against peace — a crime under international law, whose perpetrators must not go unpunished. It is a crime committed by individuals, those who have planned, prepared, launched or executed the act of aggression while in a position to control or direct the political or military action of a State. Given the impossibility of the International Criminal Court being seized of the issue thanks to the paralysis in the Security Council, Belgium fully supports the efforts being made to establish a special international tribunal to prosecute the crime of aggression against Ukraine and invites the members of the Assembly to do likewise.

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Reducing the number of child victims of Russia's aggression should be our absolute priority. Belgium therefore welcomes the inclusion of the Russian armed forces and affiliated groups in Ukraine on the list of shame in the Secretary-General's report on children in armed conflict (see A/77/895, annex) and hopes that it will lead to an improvement in the situation. We share the Secretary-General's concerns about the abduction and transfer of children to the Russian Federation.

In conclusion, allow me to reaffirm Belgium's unwavering commitment to the principles of our Charter and therefore to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters. Crimea, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk are all integral parts of Ukraine.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We last held a debate on this agenda item on 23 February 2022, on the eve of Russia's military aggression against Ukraine (see A/76/PV.58 and A/76/PV.59). Our debate began with the annexation of Crimea, in breach of international law, more than nine years ago. Over the years, various initiatives have been taken to offer solutions, notably by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We deeply regret that despite those efforts, we are now faced with a situation that has dramatically worsened. Today we want to assure the Assembly, just as we did nine years ago, that one thing will not change — Switzerland's firm support for Ukraine.

Through its violation in particular of the prohibition of the use of force enshrined in international law, as well as of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, Russia has directly attacked the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Assembly has repeatedly met to denounce those acts. Switzerland has condemned the annexation of Ukrainian territories — from Crimea in 2014 to the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya in September — which constitutes a serious violation of international law. Each time, the General Assembly has demanded that Russia immediately and unconditionally reverse all the decisions it has taken in that regard.

Switzerland deeply deplores the fact that Russia has so far ignored those appeals. My country continues to condemn Russia's serious violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and insists that

the annexed regions are and always will be part of Ukrainian territory. We call on Russia to de-escalate the situation immediately, cease all combat operations and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay. Any further steps towards annexation or other violations of international law should be avoided. We urge Russia to abandon the elections announced for September 2023 in the regions of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya. Switzerland will not recognize their results.

It is the civilian population that is paying the highest price for Russia's actions. The images and accounts that have reached us from the liberated territories bear witness to the atrocities committed in the occupied areas. These are serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Reports from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine and the OSCE have highlighted these violations. Switzerland is very concerned by the cases of summary executions, arbitrary detentions and enforced disappearances, acts of torture and ill-treatment, frequent deportations of children and sexual violence linked to the conflict. These crimes must be investigated, and the perpetrators, whoever they may be, must be brought to justice.

We reiterate our support for the various independent national and international investigations and commend the work of the International Criminal Court in this respect. At the same time, we reiterate that it is essential to place the needs of victims at the centre of all justice efforts. Switzerland welcomes and supports the establishment of instruments complementary to criminal justice, such as a victims' register, reparations or mental health and psychosocial services, to strengthen the rehabilitation of victims.

Since 2014, Switzerland has continued to call on Russia, the occupying Power, to respect its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. In addition, we call for rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to be guaranteed throughout Ukraine, including in areas occupied by Russia. The consequences of the floods following the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam demonstrate once again the importance of this obligation. We are deeply concerned by the humanitarian, ecological and economic consequences of this destruction, particularly on water supplies in southern Ukraine. In Crimea, these

consequences are compounded by the deteriorating human rights situation. In addition, we recall that the General Assembly has for several years expressed its concern at the lack of safe and unhindered access to human rights monitoring mechanisms in Crimea.

On more than one occasion, the General Assembly has defended the principles of a peace built on the fundamental tenets of the United Nations Charter and international law. It is our collective duty to do everything we can to make them a reality. Peace efforts must return to the centre of our discussions. Switzerland is ready to offer its support to ensure that the suffering of the Ukrainian people, and of those affected by this war throughout the world, finally comes to an end. In this respect, we deplore Russia's decision to put an end to the implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and hope that it will be renewed in the near future. We welcome the continued efforts of the Secretary-General and his representatives to advance global food security.

We will continue to make our voice heard for the people of Crimea and the regions of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya. Let us act to make comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine a reality.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): When we gathered for this debate on 23 February 2022 (see A/76/PV.58 and A/76/PV.59), we stood on the edge of war, urging Russia to choose the path of peace as thousands of Russian troops amassed at Ukraine's border. Within 24 hours, Russian tanks were rolling into Ukraine, marking the start of Russia's full-scale invasion — an egregious violation of the United Nations Charter by a permanent member of the Security Council. In September, Russia again blatantly violated international law, conducting sham elections in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson. The General Assembly categorically rejected Russia's attempts to illegally annex yet more Ukrainian territory (resolution ES-11/4). Russia did not change course.

Russia is not seeking to liberate Ukrainian civilians. Russia, named by the Secretary-General as a State committing grave violations against children (A/77/895), is seeking to seize and consolidate control through violence and repression. According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Russia is torturing civilian detainees and committing summary executions. Russia is trying to erase Ukrainian culture and identity.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine began, not on 24 February 2022, but eight years earlier when the country illegally annexed Crimea. Civilians in Crimea, particularly Crimean Tatars, have faced oppression since 2014. Their situation has only deteriorated since Russia's full-scale invasion, with an increase in violence, house searches, arbitrary arrests and conscription into the Russian armed forces.

The downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH-17 with a Russian anti-aircraft weapon nine years ago was a shocking violation of the international norms that keep our societies safe. It serves as another stark reminder of the human cost of Russia's actions in Ukraine over many years. We remember the 298 victims.

As the Secretary-General said last year, we must not accept Russia's illegal control of this territory. The United Kingdom will continue to support Ukraine to defend itself until it wins a just and sustainable peace, in line with the United Nations Charter, that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Seah (Singapore): Russia has waged war on Ukraine for over 500 days. This war has had a widespread and profound impact beyond the warring parties, with the large-scale displacement of Ukrainians, worsening global food and energy insecurity, and the undermining and challenging of the international order predicated on international law and the United Nations Charter. The annual debate on the agenda item entitled "The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine" has always been important, but it has taken on a new significance for obvious reasons.

While the Security Council has debated the issue countless times, it remains paralysed and ineffectual in the face of this crisis. This is because Russia has used its privileged position as a permanent member to shield itself with the veto. There have been countless meetings, accusations and claims — but no solution. In this context, the General Assembly must speak up and make clear that violations of the United Nations Charter and international law are not acceptable.

I would like to reiterate Singapore's clear and consistent position that Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the annexation of its territories and their continued occupation are blatant violations of the United Nations Charter and international law. Singapore did not hesitate to condemn Russia's actions, as this was a matter of principle, not of alliances or ideology. The United Nations Charter is very clear that all States

Members of the United Nations shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We do not accept the arguments of historical errors and omissions that have been used to justify the invasion and annexation of Ukraine, and we emphasize that the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected. Russia's actions were made even more egregious by the fact that Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council, whose mandate it is to maintain and uphold international peace and security.

Please allow me to make two additional points.

First, we are gravely concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that there have been more than 25,000 civilian casualties, including more than 9,000 killed, and the actual number is likely to be higher. We are also distressed by reports of war crimes, denial of humanitarian assistance and the shelling of civilians, as well as those delivering emergency assistance. We call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, as well as with the second resolution adopted during the eleventh emergency special session, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine" (resolution ES-11/2).

We also regret the suspension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which has been a lifeline for global food security and has helped to stabilize food prices. We thank the Secretary-General for his efforts to facilitate the Initiative and encourage the parties concerned to resume the Initiative.

Secondly, the situation of nuclear safety and security in Ukraine remains deeply worrisome. Ukraine's nuclear power plants and, in particular, the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, are part of active conflict zones and have been placed under considerable stress. The recent damage to the Nova Kakhovka dam and the resulting loss of water supply to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, led to what Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo described as an "extremely fragile" safety and security situation. We note with deep concern that all seven pillars of nuclear safety and security proposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) continue to be compromised at all times. We have to take steps to address this situation and prevent a nuclear tragedy.

The IAEA has been working around the clock to ensure nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and to deliver regular and factual updates. We commend the inspectors for their steadfast dedication. We also appreciate Director General Rafael Grossi's personal attention to this issue. We support the seven pillars for nuclear safety and security and the five concrete rules for the safety of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant that he recently set out in his statement to the Security Council on 30 May (see S/PV.9334). We urge all States, especially the parties to the conflict, to support those principles and provide the IAEA with the support needed to carry out its work.

In conclusion, the General Assembly has spoken powerfully on this issue. We hope that the war will come to an end, that Russia will withdraw its forces and that Ukraine will be able to restore its sovereignty over all its temporarily occupied territories.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/77/PV.88). I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

It has been 17 months since the Russian Federation unleashed its unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. And it has been 17 months too long. The Russian Federation must end this war now; it must abide by its international commitments and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

We firmly reject Russia's attempt to forcefully change the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine by annexing the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions. We do not recognize the so called "referenda", just as we never recognized the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014. The latest decision of the Central Election Commission of Russia to hold elections in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine is yet another blatant attempt by the Russian Federation to redraw the post-Cold War boundaries of Ukraine.

During the past 17 months, the General Assembly has unequivocally, resolutely and consistently defended the United Nations Charter, rejecting Russia's act of aggression and promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Bulgaria is proud to be among

the co-sponsors of all six General Assembly resolutions supported by the vast majority of the States Members of the United Nations. We are committed to bringing this war to an end in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular those on sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. However, a just and lasting peace cannot be achieved without Russia's immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal from Ukraine's territory.

We are gravely concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in the temporary occupied territories of Ukraine and by the brutal violations of international humanitarian law by Russia. The Secretary-General's most recent report on the situation of children and armed conflict (A/77/895), which lists the Russian Federation among the perpetrators of grave violations against children is yet another element of proof of the moral bankruptcy of the Kremlin. The unlawful deportation to Russia of Ukrainian children must stop immediately. We call on Russia to fully respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all persons in need in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

As a Black Sea littoral country, Bulgaria is deeply concerned by the Russian Federation's decision yesterday to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative. By this irresponsible act Russia not only blocks Ukraine's sea ports and threatens the freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, but also creates conditions for new waves of global food insecurity and economic instability, especially in the Global South, where the price of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is particularly high.

The Russian Federation bears full responsibility for its aggression in Ukraine and the Russian leadership should and will be held accountable for its war crimes and crimes against humanity in accordance with international law. Justice must be ensured for all victims of executions, torture and maltreatment, gender-based violence, forced deportation and disappearance and other forms of human rights law violations conducted by the Russian Armed Forces or affiliated armed groups. That is the only guarantee that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be achieved.

We cannot allow the use of force in resolving disputes and the illegal annexation of a sovereign country's lands to become the new normal. We must

show a firm and united stance against any violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law and defend Ukraine's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, because this is not about Ukraine — it is about each and every one of us.

Mr. Vučinić (Montenegro): At the outset, I wish to stress that Montenegro fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (see A/77/PV.88) and wishes to make additional remarks in our national capacity.

More than a year of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression in Ukraine has caused unimaginable suffering to Ukraine and its people and has had multifaceted effects on the entire world.

We once again reiterate our strong condemnation of the brutal aggression and devastation Russia's aggression has caused to Ukraine, including the killings of civilians, as well as unlawful attacks on civilian infrastructure, sexual and gender-based violence and appalling reports of abductions of children. We stress once again that there can be no impunity for war crimes and the other most serious crimes and that we need to ensure accountability for the crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine, as that is of the utmost importance for ensuring sustainable peace. In that regard, we fully support all the accountability initiatives to combat impunity and ensure justice.

Since the aggression was particularly devastating for children, as reported by the Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict (A/77/895), we call upon the Russian Federation to fully respect international humanitarian law and to immediately implement measures to protect children. In addition, we call on the Russian Federation to cease attacks on civilian infrastructure and allow help to the affected civilian population, including in areas under temporary Russian military control.

A permanent member of the Security Council and a nuclear State exercised brutal force, breaching the territorial integrity and serenity of its neighbouring country. A permanent member that bears the most significant responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security violated international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. No one can remain silent about that. Moreover, the consequences of the Russian aggression are being felt not only in Ukraine. They have provoked

global energy, food and financial crises that are having a particular impact on least developed countries. In that regard, we regret that the Russian Federation did not agree to extend the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which will further jeopardize the fragile situation and will have a direct effect on vulnerable populations all over the world.

Montenegro strongly condemns Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a violation of the Charter, and expresses its support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, as well as its inherent right to self-defence against the Russian aggression. Montenegro also recognizes Ukraine's right to request international support for such efforts. Montenegro will continue to support Ukraine and its people for as long as it takes and to provide financial, humanitarian, military and diplomatic support. Like the rest of the international community, we want to see a comprehensive, just and long-lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly. That is what the people of Ukraine deserve, and it is high time that we delivered.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): It has been well over a year since Russia's illegal armed invasion of Ukraine began, and we are all haunted by the spectre of a war of attrition. The casualties keep mounting, while the war's impact ripples through the rest of the world. Just last week, President Yoon Suk Yeol visited Ukraine and met with President Zelenskyy. The two leaders agreed to work together for the Ukraine Peace and Solidarity Initiative, affirming Korea's support in the areas of security, humanitarian affairs and reconstruction. As President Yoon stressed during his visit, Korea sympathizes deeply with the people of Ukraine and is committed to working with the international community for a peaceful, free and prosperous Ukraine. We are deeply concerned about the continuing loss of civilian lives and the intensified destruction of critical civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. We are particularly appalled by the Secretary-General's recent report revealing details of atrocities committed against children in Ukraine (A/77/895).

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to once again urge all the parties to the conflict to comply with humanitarian and human rights laws. War crimes must be investigated and their perpetrators ultimately held accountable. Meanwhile, international

cooperation is more crucial than ever to addressing the war's far-reaching repercussions. In that regard, the Black Sea Grain Initiative should continue unimpeded in order to ensure the safe passage of food commodities from Ukrainian ports. The Republic of Korea reiterates that Russia's armed invasion of Ukraine and its annexation of Ukrainian territories through the use of force are serious violations of the Charter of the United Nations, international laws and the core values that have underpinned the international system for more than 70 years.

My delegation is also deeply concerned about the agreement between Russia and Belarus to deploy Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory. Such actions and escalatory nuclear rhetoric are in complete contradiction to the joint statement issued in January 2022 by the five permanent members of the Security Council in which Russia reaffirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We call on Russia to recommit to that statement in words and deeds as a responsible nuclear-weapon State. We are deeply concerned about the nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine, particularly at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Recent developments there, such as the repeated loss of off-site power, are especially worrisome. We fully support the five principles of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency aimed at ensuring nuclear safety and security and call on Russia to return control of the plant to the competent Ukraine authorities and withdraw its personnel from the facility.

Next week marks the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement. As a nation that defended itself in 1950 with the assistance of the United Nations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's armed invasion, and that is still witnessing the lasting consequences of a war fought seven decades ago, the Republic of Korea attaches the utmost importance to the Charter and its core values. When the Security Council fails to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as enshrined in the Charter, the General Assembly must speak in a firm and united voice, just as it did during the Korean War in accordance with the Uniting for Peace resolution (resolution 377 A (V)). As the last 70 years of history on the Korean peninsula show, I strongly believe that time is on the side of freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and the Charter. The Republic of Korea will promote

international solidarity to restore peace in Ukraine and protect universal values. I expect all Member States to join forces in that regard.

Mr. Amorín (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): On 24 June we marked one year and four months since the start of the unjustified invasion of Ukrainian territory by military forces of the Russian Federation. It has provoked a conflict whose persistence has had highly negative consequences not just for the warring countries but for the region and the entire international community. Uruguay has voted in favour of all the resolutions that the Assembly has adopted since March 2022 in its current eleventh emergency session and has clearly expressed in its statements its firm condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, denouncing it as a clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which all of the Organization's members should not only respect but comply with and enforce. We once again call on the Russian Federation to cease its military operations, end its aggression against Ukraine and withdraw its forces from Ukrainian territory as soon as possible.

I would like to remind the Assembly that the rejection of the use of force and the peaceful settlement of disputes are fundamental principles of Uruguay's foreign policy. We have discussed both in this forum and on other occasions the need for full respect for international law and the fact that the acquisition of territories through the use of force or other mechanisms that contravene the Charter is illegal. The rule of international law, expressly provided for in the Charter and endorsed by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice, means that territorial annexation in a context of aggression against another State is a violation of the Charter and of international law in general. As such, Russia's acts and declarations of annexation of territories in a context of aggression are in violation of the Charter and of international law. The Government of Uruguay therefore reiterates its firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Finally, we reiterate our call on the parties to the conflict, through the negotiation mechanisms provided for in the Charter of the United Nations, and with the participation of the Security Council and the Secretary-General, to find paths to dialogue that can make it possible to agree on steps to de-escalate the current conflict and for both parties, through diplomatic negotiation, to resolve their differences and put an end to this illegal war.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union (see A/77/PV.88) and would like to make some additional remarks in its national capacity.

Today's debate in the Assembly is taking place at a critical time for Ukraine, Europe and our international community. On 26 February we marked the ninth anniversary of the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. That unlawful annexation is a direct and substantive threat to international peace and security with serious implications for the international rules-based order. Malta has continued to maintain its non-recognition stance in accordance with resolution 68/262 of 2014, and condemns the illegal annexation, which represents a clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity and has been further aggravated by the ongoing illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which is another direct violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

As we have stated before, in the Assembly and within the Security Council, we condemn all attempts by the Russian Federation to forcibly integrate the illegally annexed peninsula into its territory, including through the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, illegal election campaigns and voting, population censuses, forcible changes to the demographic structure of the population of Crimea and the suppression of national identity. Since the Russian Federation's illegal annexation in 2014 there has been a significant decline in the human rights situation in Crimea and the other occupied territories. Malta emphasizes the imperative of adhering to international human rights standards. The inhabitants of these regions, especially the Crimean Tatars, have been subjected to systematic restrictions on their human rights and basic freedoms, including the right to freedom of expression, religion or belief, association and peaceful assembly. That is unacceptable, and it is our duty to hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

As an entity that seriously promotes the values of peace, security and dialogue, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) remains a vital partner in the resolution of this conflict. To that end, we commend the work being done through the OSCE Support Programme for Ukraine, launched in November of last year, which has worked to successfully address the immediate challenges posed by the war and support long-term reforms towards rebuilding the

democratic and social resilience of its institutions. We will continue to support the OSCE's work on that front. We also underline the need to further strengthen international cooperation through the international Crimea Platform. Malta emphasizes the importance of continuing to refuse to recognize the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We stand firmly by Ukraine and its people in the face of unprecedented military aggression. We call on the Russian Federation and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international law, including international humanitarian law.

We would like to point to the latest report of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights in the temporarily occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (A/HRC/53/64). Malta calls on Russia to uphold its obligations under the Charter, international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Crimea. In that regard, we urge Russia to abide by the complete prohibition of torture and to enable the independent, impartial and effective investigation of such allegations on the peninsula. It will also be essential to ensure that the fundamental right to freedom of expression and religion can be exercised by all individuals and groups in Crimea, without unjustified interference or discrimination on any grounds.

In conclusion, we reiterate the demand that the Russian Federation immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw all its troops and proxies from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the illegally occupied Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. We also reiterate the demand that Russia return to discussions to restore and facilitate unimpeded access to Crimea for international and regional human rights monitoring mechanisms.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): I want to thank and join all the previous speakers who have condemned Russia's illegal occupation of Ukraine's territories and outlined the immense human suffering it has caused. Since the start of its unjustifiable and unprovoked war of aggression, Russia has tried to take Ukraine's capital city of Kyiv by brute force, as well as several regions in the north, south and east of the country. The Ukrainian people have resisted bravely and driven the occupiers from Ukraine's north, from Kharkiv oblast and the city of Kherson. Step by step, they are now trying to expel Russia from the east and south as well. Germany

is humbled by the courage and determination of the people of Ukraine. We will stand with them until they have re-established full control over all of Ukraine's territory within its internationally recognized borders. Only after the complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops will there be a chance for peace — a just and lasting peace that is based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations, which we have all vowed to uphold.

Germany welcomes all initiatives by the General Assembly and international actors that bring us closer to that goal. To achieve it, we must be vigilant and avoid steps that perpetuate the aggression and illegal occupation. It is important that a group of countries has started to work on Ukraine's peace formula, establishing principles for a just peace. Germany welcomes the fact that the work initiated in Copenhagen is now continuing in Kyiv. A ceasefire without a withdrawal by Russia would condemn millions of Ukrainians to indefinite occupation by an aggressor that wants to erase their Ukrainian identity, an aggressor that murders, tortures, rapes, deports children to Russia and puts civilians in filtration camps. Moreover, any territorial concession by Ukraine would embolden the aggressor and other potential invaders of other countries around the world. We will never recognize Russia's illegal annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya and Crimea. Those territories are part of Ukraine. A complete and unconditional withdrawal from all of Ukraine is not just a legal and moral obligation but crucial to the protection of the principles enshrined in the Charter.

A comprehensive peace that re-establishes a basis for future ties between Russia and Ukraine will also encompass compensation and accountability issues. Last year Russia started a relentless bombing campaign to systematically destroy Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and leave its citizens without heat, electricity or water. Through its actions Russia has repeatedly violated international humanitarian law. Now the Kakhovka dam lies in ruins, creating a catastrophe for tens of thousands of Ukrainians, an ecological disaster and a heavy burden for many years to come. And the danger has not yet passed for the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which is still illegally occupied by Russian forces. Ukraine has repeatedly warned the rest of the world of the possibility of a Russian provocation at the plant with far-reaching, transboundary consequences. According to the World Bank, as of right now, it will cost \$411 billion for Ukraine to recover from Russia's

aggression. The Russian Federation bears responsibility for the damage that has been caused and will have to compensate Ukraine accordingly. Furthermore, all Russian perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity must be held accountable for their actions. The crime of aggression, which is the ultimate cause of all the other crimes and atrocities committed in the wake of the invasion, is no exception to that. The people of Ukraine who have lost loved ones and whose lives have been shattered deserve justice.

Let me conclude by saying that Germany believes in peace and in Ukraine's freedom and independence. That is why we will continue to support Ukraine in its right to self-defence until Russia ends its imperialistic attempt to subjugate a neighbouring country.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): I would like to align myself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union (see A/77/PV.88) and to add some remarks in my national capacity.

Greece remains unwavering in its commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Greece has condemned and will never recognize the Russian Federation's illegal annexation of Ukraine's regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya. The same goes for the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. My country commends the determination and courage of the Ukrainian people and armed forces in their struggle to defend their country's independence and sovereignty against Russia's illegal and unprovoked aggression. We remain committed to our political, financial, humanitarian and military support to Ukraine for as long as it takes, along with our partners and allies.

Russia's war of aggression is an existential threat for Ukraine. It is also a stark violation of the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and a fundamental challenge to the multilateral system as a whole. Restoring a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace in Ukraine based on the Charter and international law, as well as protecting and promoting the rules-based international order, is at the core of our objectives. The Russian authorities have forcibly deported thousands of people from Ukraine to Russia. The abductions and deportations of children are abominable, and we denounce them firmly. Every day we see reports of civilians and civilian infrastructure being deliberately targeted by Russian indiscriminate

attacks. A significant and historic Greek community lived peacefully in Mariupol, which until last year was a vibrant city with a busy commercial port, and today is sadly a ghost town. Let me stress that in no circumstances can civilians and those not taking an active part in the conflict be legitimate targets. Russia's continuing deadly strikes are international crimes. This is why Greece, as a long-standing proponent of accountability for the most serious international crimes, fully supports the investigations of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) with regard to the situation and welcomes the upcoming establishment of an ICC country office in Ukraine.

Greece also welcomes the start of the operations of the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression within the framework of Eurojust in The Hague. In March my country also joined the core group on accountability for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. We are closely following the discussions within the core group on the possible legal avenues for bringing those responsible for these crimes to justice. Greece welcomes the recent establishment within the framework of the Council of Europe of a Register of Damage for Ukraine through an enlarged partial agreement, of which my country has become a full member.

In conclusion, Greece, as a pillar of stability in the broader region and beyond, reiterates its unwavering commitment to international law and the Charter. International law and the inviolability of borders are the cornerstones of our world order. Any violations of them, no matter who they target, are a threat to us all. There is no room for exceptions.

Mr. Simpson (New Zealand): It is with deep frustration and dismay that we once again find ourselves here today joining others in deploring Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its continued occupation of Ukrainian territory. More than 500 days after Russia's unprovoked and unjustified actions plunged the people of Ukraine into crisis, Aotearoa New Zealand continues to call for an immediate end to the senseless conflict and to the loss of life, wanton destruction and suffering that it has caused. Sadly, more than a year after we joined 140 Member States to call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory (resolution ES-11/1), that call has not been heeded.

Russia's aggression clearly represents a blatant violation of the most fundamental tenets of international law. In breaching the prohibition on the use of force in

Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, Russia has made a mockery of its special responsibilities as a member of the Security Council, dedicated to the maintenance of peace and security. I do not need to remind the members of the General Assembly that Russia's actions have also sparked a global food security crisis that has driven hundreds of millions around the world into hunger and malnutrition. Indeed, all of our citizens have felt its impacts, particularly the most vulnerable among us. In that regard, Russia's recent decision to terminate its implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative is not merely disappointing, it is unconscionable. Let us be clear. Food is not a weapon. Hunger is not a tool. And food security must not be used as a pawn in political games. We join others in calling on Russia to resume its implementation of that critical Initiative as soon as possible.

Above all, Russia's actions, including its willingness to target civilians and civilian infrastructure, have created a devastating humanitarian crisis and unleashed tremendous suffering on the people of Ukraine. Despite the claims of our Russian colleague here earlier today (see A/77/PV.88), that is well documented. The evidence is clear, compelling and indisputable, and indeed we have heard moving testimony about this throughout the course of today's debate. Among Russia's victims have been those it is supposedly acting to protect, the people living in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

Armed conflict inevitably brings its catalogue of horrors and suffering to the unfortunate communities on which it is inflicted. But Aotearoa New Zealand, like many others here today, has been gravely concerned about the reports of extrajudicial killings, gender-based violence, forced deportations and abductions, including of children, and the deprivation of property in the temporarily occupied territories. We have heard many examples of the mounting evidence for such actions today. These blatant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law must stop immediately. Aotearoa New Zealand will continue to speak out against such criminal acts and to support efforts to hold those responsible to account, including through action in the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

We once again call on Russia to abide by its international obligations, withdraw its troops immediately from within Ukraine's internationally

recognized borders and enter into diplomatic negotiations, as the only legitimate pathway to a lasting resolution of a senseless and appalling conflict.

Mr. DeLaurentis (United States of America): We would like to express our appreciation to Ukraine for organizing this important debate every year since 2014, when Russia brazenly seized and attempted to annex Ukraine's Crimean peninsula. It was a violation of international law then and remains so today. Nine years later, Russia has moved its armed forces deeper into Ukraine's territory, but its objectives remain the same — the brutal subjugation of its neighbour and the seizure by force of the territory of another Member State of the United Nations.

Today Russia is using the same playbook in Ukraine as it did in 2014. It is resorting to the same attempts to annex additional areas of Ukraine through sham referendums. It is attempting to further subjugate the people living in those regions through "passportization", the installation of Russian occupation authorities in regional Governments, the conscription of Ukrainians into Russia's armed forces and other illegitimate methods. Since February of last year, Russia has killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian men, women and children. It has caused the displacement of millions of people from their homes and destroyed more than half of the country's energy grid. Russia has bombed more than 700 hospitals and 2,600 schools and forcibly relocated as many as 20,000 Ukrainian children, some of them as young as four months old. In areas under Russian occupation, Russia's forces have arrested and detained tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians, many of whom have been subjected to sexual violence and torture and held incommunicado.

We can all tell stories of the human faces behind those horrifying statistics. Last week in Geneva, the High Commissioner for Human Rights presented the latest findings of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). He called them shocking. Among the many gruesome findings, OHCHR has documented several cases suggesting that Russia's armed forces have used detained civilians as human shields. Russia's occupation of parts of Ukraine has also resulted in danger to surrounding nuclear plants and other critical infrastructure. Let us be clear. Russia's militarization of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, including its military presence on the tops of reactor buildings, jeopardizes global nuclear safety and security.

Last October the General Assembly came together to affirm the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations Charter in the face of Russia's attempted annexation of Ukrainian territory (resolution ES-11/4), with 143 countries condemning Russia's attempted annexations via sham referendums. And as we did last year, the international community must continue to make it clear that it will not tolerate attempts by any Member State to seize land by force, and that it will not tolerate crimes against humanity and war crimes.

The effects of this war have been devastating, not only for the people of Ukraine but for people across the world, as energy and food prices have increased. Russia's suspension of its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative was yet another selfish blow to the world's most vulnerable. The arrangement helped bring stability to global food markets and lowered prices, especially in regions suffering from food insecurity. We call on all Member States to urge Russia to reverse its decision, resume negotiations and extend, expand and fully implement the Initiative.

This war must end. But as the General Assembly made clear in February, a just and lasting peace must be based on the principles of the Charter (resolution ES-11/6). Any so-called peace that legitimizes Russia's seizure of land by force or gives the aggressor time to rest, rearm and relaunch its aggression would send a dangerous message that aggressors everywhere can invade countries and get away with it. Russia's war against Ukraine is a clear violation of the Charter. We once again call on it to withdraw its troops from Ukraine's sovereign territory and end this war.

Mr. Khaddour (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I want to once again underscore the Syrian Arab Republic's firm position on the importance of resolving regional and international conflicts through peaceful means, while ensuring that the concerns of all parties are taken into consideration, respected and given proper attention and understanding. We also think it is important to support sincere and good-faith efforts to maintain international security and stability, given our belief in respecting the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations while prioritizing dialogue, diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

Regrettably, what we are seeing in today's debate under this agenda item is exactly what we have seen since the item was first introduced into the General

Assembly's agenda, and it reflects the negative tendency among certain States to use the rostrum of the Assembly to engage in hostile rhetoric against the Russian Federation and encourage political polarization, division and conflict. It should rather be a platform for constructive dialogue and meaningful diplomacy aimed at establishing security and stability and guaranteeing rights. The positions of the Security Council must be respected, along with its view regarding the settlement of this issue enshrined in Council resolution 2202 (2015).

We cannot view the situation in Ukraine today apart from the political and security contexts that followed the coup d'état in 2014. Nor can we view it apart from the unprecedented subsequent change in Ukraine's approach to its relations with Russia, in contrast to the principle of good-neighbourliness and the shared history, geography and fraternal relations between the two countries' peoples. We should not ignore in that regard the role that a number of Western Governments and NATO countries have played with a view to escalating tensions between the two countries, inflaming hate speech and hostility towards Russia and seeking to destabilize its regional security and stability. A rational interpretation of events should compel us to look carefully at the legal aspects of international commitments and parameters that have been violated, particularly the 2015 Minsk agreements and resolution 2202 (2015).

The policies of the West and NATO continue to aggravate the conflict and exacerbate the humanitarian situation. The Governments of those countries turned a blind eye to the inhumane practices inflicted on the residents of the Donbas region for more than eight years, and they have supported and escalated hostility to Russia. They have sent all sorts of heavy weaponry and missile systems to Ukraine, including weapons that are banned all over the world. Despite the Russian Federation's many initiatives and proposals aimed at settling the dispute, none of them have shown any interest in responding to or even discussing those initiatives, reflecting the absence of any real desire on the part of those Governments to achieve a peaceful settlement of the situation or even to engage in a constructive dialogue and address Russia's security, economic and humanitarian concerns in good faith.

As for the situation in Crimea, the Syrian Arab Republic's position on it is based on the 2014 referendum, which clearly demonstrated that a majority

of its residents wished to remain part of the Russian Federation, a fact that should be respected and taken into account.

In conclusion, the essential and only key to addressing the current conflict is to launch a serious, constructive dialogue in the context of effective multilateralism and the United Nations system. The principle of good-neighbourly relations must be respected where international relations are at issue, and the relevant commitments and obligations implemented without hidden agendas or intentions. All of the security, economic and humanitarian concerns that the Russian Federation has raised in the past few years must be taken into account, and policies that incite or fuel conflict or that are based on economic embargoes and illegal unilateral coercive measures must come to an end. Any attempts to undermine the prospects for restoring security and stability must cease.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the subsequent invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Mexico has discussed in all multilateral forums the need to restore Ukraine's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, in full adherence to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the constitutional principles of Mexico's foreign policy.

From the perspective of the civilian population and the consequences they have endured, the numbers are compelling and unacceptable. More than 6 million Ukrainians have had to leave their country and another 5 million have been internally displaced. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has recorded the deaths of at least 9,000 civilians, although it is very likely that the number is higher. To all of that must be added the insane loss of human lives in combat, amounting to tens of thousands among all the parties to the conflict.

The war has also had an impact on the price of food worldwide and has mainly affected the countries with the greatest food insecurity, the poorest and the most vulnerable. The Black Sea Grain Initiative represented temporary relief for the food supply and for the world economy, which is becoming more fragile and asymmetrical every day. Its interruption will once again have serious humanitarian repercussions. For that

reason, we support the Secretary-General in his efforts to restart the Initiative with a view to restoring global food security and its social and economic ramifications.

Mexico also reiterates its concern about the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant. The most recent report from the International Atomic Energy Agency gives an account of the explosions that allegedly took place in the vicinity of the plant. The fact that a nuclear catastrophe has not happened so far does not mean that there is no risk that one might occur at any time. We call for an urgent halt to all military action around the plant in full compliance with international humanitarian law. We also reiterate that it is the responsibility of the International Criminal Court to conduct judicial processes that may arise as a consequence of alleged violations of international law.

My country supports all international efforts to reach a peaceful solution. We must create the conditions necessary for the serious consideration of the various proposals that exist in that regard. That is why we strongly support the Secretary-General in using his good offices. It is time to make way for proposals that bring us closer to rescuing what had already been agreed to and to seek other possible spaces for peaceful encounters.

Ms. Squeff (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina reiterates its concern about the situation in Ukraine and calls once again for a cessation of hostilities and for all the parties involved to return to the negotiating table, which is the only way to achieve a lasting peace.

This war is a catastrophe for Ukraine and for its people, and its ramifications will have serious consequences for the whole world. Argentina will continue to promote dialogue and a peaceful solution to ending the conflict. As such, we reiterate our firm commitment to the principle of the peaceful settlement of international disputes and maintain that that is the only way we can ensure just and lasting solutions. In that regard, my country supports the efforts of the Secretary-General and other actors who have continued to work to reach a solution to the conflict as soon as possible and thereby facilitate a constructive compromise between the parties.

We are concerned about the fact that far from arriving at a peaceful and coordinated resolution, the situation has featured an intensification of the armed confrontation, a lack of progress in various mediation

attempts and the escalating deployment of increasingly destructive weapons. It has been more than a year since the war began, and despite the continued calls for respect for international humanitarian law, we continue to witness attacks on the population and civilian infrastructure. In that context, humanitarian aid becomes essential to survival, especially for the most vulnerable. We reiterate the call to allow unrestricted access to all areas where there is a civilian population, including those under occupation. We also call for a resumption of political dialogue as a means of détente and for ensuring the full observance of human rights, in accordance with the principles to which we all subscribe as members of the United Nations. The world wants peace in Ukraine, a peace that is sustainable and in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Mr. França Danese (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will speak in English.
(*spoke in English*)

At a briefing to Security Council members yesterday (see S/PV.9380), Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, noted once again that the prospects for peace in the near future remain dim. At the same time, the intensified fighting is increasing the human suffering on both sides of the front line. The situation on the ground represents a scenario of grave risks to human rights, with the civilian population under severe threat. The continued attacks on civilian infrastructure, which are unacceptable under international humanitarian law, have deprived significant portions of the population of their health, education and energy sources and will have severe and lasting economic and environmental effects. The situation may assume catastrophic proportions with the approach of winter in a few months.

Brazil calls on all the parties to strictly respect international law. It is imperative to fully observe the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations in a non-selective manner. The prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention and the protection of human rights are pillars of our collective security system. We encourage the parties to de-escalate their hostilities and reopen channels of dialogue. There are urgent issues that must be resolved through negotiations, such as exchanges of prisoners of war, guarantees for the integrity of the

Zaporizhzhya power plant and other nuclear facilities and the continuity of the transport of grains and fertilizers from the Black Sea ports. Those are matters of interest to all Member States, which are all suffering from the severe side effects of the conflict to a greater or lesser extent.

We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, a right guaranteed to all States under international law. Brazil renews its call for a just and lasting peace in line with the principles of the Charter and taking into account the legitimate security concerns of all the parties in conflict. We encourage political and diplomatic efforts by members of the international community in support of a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict. Brazil supports all initiatives in favour of peace and encourages all stakeholders to renew their trust in the potential of diplomacy.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The crisis in Ukraine continues to drag on, with no signs of easing on the ground. Military logic still prevails and progress in peace talks has been slow, which is a worrying prospect. The international community should make concerted efforts to step up peace talks and negotiations so as to promote an early ceasefire and political solution.

First, we must exercise reason and restraint and make every effort to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. Since the outbreak of the crisis, black swan and grey rhino events have occurred one after another and uncertainties continue to grow. If the fighting is allowed to drag on, it will only create more risks. Many horrific scenarios are possible. We hope that both parties to the conflict will practice calm and restraint, abide strictly by international humanitarian law and the principles of necessity, distinction and proportionality, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, provide rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and do their utmost to alleviate civilian suffering. The safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant will always touch a sensitive nerve of the international community. We support the continued engagement of the International Atomic Energy Agency with all parties and its constructive role in ensuring the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities. China has always maintained that nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought. Moreover, China has always called for the prevention of escalation into nuclear crisis. The parties concerned should strictly

observe the bottom line of nuclear security and stay far away from the red line of nuclear war, making every effort to avoid the situation deteriorating to the point of no return and the consequences that would follow from that.

Secondly, we must engage in dialogue and promote a political solution to the crisis. There are no winners in a war or conflict. Dialogue and negotiation are the only proper way out of the crisis in Ukraine. No matter how complex the situation is, the door to political settlement must not be closed. Efforts for peace must not desist. The international community must continue to promote the resumption of contacts between the parties and build a consensus so as to create conditions for the final political settlement of the crisis in Ukraine. The crisis in Ukraine is essentially the culmination of the security tensions in Europe, a tragedy brought about by the cold war mentality and bloc politics. There are no simple solutions to complex problems. All parties should uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security philosophy on the basis of accommodating each other's legitimate concerns, and all parties should explore the construction of a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture so as to fundamentally address the security deficit that underpins the crisis and achieve peace and stability on the European continent.

Thirdly, we must strengthen solidarity and cooperation and reduce the spillover effects of the crisis, which has wiped out decades of development gains and wealth in the conflict zones. The parties concerned have suffered incalculable losses. At a time of deepening globalization, conflicts and other factors interact with each other, compounding each other and slowing down the pace of global recovery and sustainable development. The sooner a ceasefire is put in place, unilateral sanctions are halted and the more investments are made in maintaining food, energy and financial security and helping developing countries to cope with risks, the sooner the resilience of the global industrial and supply chain will be restored and the world economy regain its vitality. We call on the international community, in particular the United Nations, to continue to place development issues high on the international agenda and to make efforts to resolve the spillover effects of the Ukraine crisis and help developing countries to resolve their difficulties and prevent their hard-won development gains from being reversed. China appreciates the important role of

the Black Sea Grain Initiative in stabilizing the global food market and hopes that the parties concerned, through dialogue and consultation, will address the issue appropriately and make joint efforts to safeguard international food security.

On the question of Ukraine, China has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be safeguarded and that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be adhered to. The legitimate security concerns of all parties should be taken seriously, and all efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully should be supported. China will continue to stand on the side of peace and dialogue and of strengthened communication and coordination with all parties concerned and will work to promote an early political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): India continues to remain concerned over the situation in Ukraine. The conflict has resulted in the loss of many lives and misery for its people, particularly women, children and the elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries. Reports of attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are deeply worrisome. We are concerned about recent developments in the region, which have not helped to secure the larger cause of peace and stability. I will add here that India has supported the efforts of the Secretary-General in continuing the Black Sea Grain Initiative and hopes for an early resolution to the current impasse. We have consistently advocated that no solution can ever be found at the cost of human lives. The escalation of hostilities and violence is in no one's interest. We have urged that all efforts be made for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an urgent return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy.

The global order to which we all subscribe is based on international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. Those principles must be upheld without exception. Dialogue is therefore the only answer to settling differences and disputes, however daunting that may appear at the moment. The path to peace requires us to keep all channels of diplomacy open. It is also unfortunate that as the trajectory of the Ukrainian conflict unfolds, the entire global South has suffered substantial collateral damage. It is therefore critical that the voice of the global South be heard and their legitimate concerns be duly addressed. India's

approach to the Ukrainian conflict will continue to be people-centric. We are providing both humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and economic support to some of our neighbours in the global South under economic distress, even as they stare at the escalating cost of food, fuel and fertilizers — which has been a consequential fallout of the ongoing conflict. In the light of my Prime Minister's repeated engagements with both sides, it is essential to emphasize that we firmly believe that this is not an era of war. It is with that understanding and spirit that India actively participates in this debate.

Ms. Dhanutirto (Indonesia): More than 500 days have passed since the war began in Ukraine, leaving only human suffering and destruction, with impacts reaching far beyond the borders of the warring countries. Indonesia stands by our position that putting an end to the war must happen at a negotiating table and not on the battlefield. We continue to call for an urgent cessation of hostilities and for all parties to provide an enabling environment to kickstart the peace process.

Indonesia, for its part, has provided support for recovery in Ukraine, delivered through the Ukraine Red Cross Society, and further commitment will also be provided to support hospital reconstruction in Kyiv.

Indonesia supports global efforts to end the war in Ukraine. However, any initiative to create peace must be aimed at truly solving the issues among the parties. If the approach is a zero-sum game, durable peace will not be achieved.

Indonesia appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General and Türkiye, as it is important for global commodities trade stability and for ensuring that the global supply chain for much-needed grain and fertilizer continues. However, Indonesia would like to underline that those initiatives should be implemented in their entirety, with the goal of reaching those who need them the most, namely developing countries and the poor. Indonesia stands ready to support all efforts to achieve peace and stability, and we call on the international community to do so as well.

Mr. Vichankaiyakij (Thailand): Thailand reaffirms its unwavering commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and those of international law, in particular respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the non-use of force against States.

Thailand continues to follow the prolonged situation in Ukraine with grave concern. We are deeply worried about the continuing humanitarian consequences of the protracted conflict, particularly for the civilian population. The conflict has also exacerbated the food and energy crises, generated economic hardship and adversely affected our efforts to recover from the pandemic, while also hindering sustainable development. The world will be more polarized, with increasing political tensions, growing distrust and an arms race if the conflict continues. Thailand therefore joins other Member States in calling on the parties directly concerned to do their utmost to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, facilitate access to humanitarian assistance for those in need and alleviate the food and energy crises. It is also equally important for all sides to intensify diplomatic efforts for an immediate cessation of hostilities and to seriously engage in genuine dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. And that is indeed what the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations also underscored in their meeting last week, as reflected in their joint communiqué.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): The Holy See continues to be gravely concerned about the war and resulting bloodshed in Ukraine and reiterates its plea that weapons be silenced. The Holy See urges all the protagonists of international life and the political leaders of nations to do everything possible to bring an end to the war. A few days ago, Pope Francis observed how the current war in Ukraine, like all wars, is an utter disaster for peoples and families, for children and the elderly, for people forced to leave their country, for cities and villages, and for creation, as we have seen following the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam.

The Holy See, while thanking those States that have hosted and supported refugees, implores that displaced persons continue to receive humanitarian support until they can make a safe, voluntary and dignified return to their homes. On the other hand, the Holy See urges that no effort be spared in providing for the swift reunification of all families separated by the current violence in Ukraine, ensuring that the best interests of affected children are respected. In the face of such suffering, the international community must not grow resigned to war but work together for peace.

In that regard, Pope Francis has entrusted Cardinal Matteo Zuppi with the responsibility of leading missions aimed at listening and identifying humanitarian gestures that could guide towards the path of peace. The Holy See calls upon all parties to support such humanitarian efforts in order to alleviate some of the immense suffering caused by the abhorrent war. Moreover, there is an urgent need, as Pope Francis says, to use all diplomatic means, even those that may not have been used to date, to bring an end to this terrible tragedy. War in itself is an error and a horror. The Holy See once again calls for a ceasefire and the commencement of negotiations towards a just and lasting peace.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

The exercise of the right of reply has been requested. May I remind members that statements made in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kim Nam Hyok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation takes the floor to exercise the right of reply in response to the provocative statement made by the representative of South Korea.

We categorically reject and strongly condemn South Korea's groundless allegations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Korea's groundless remarks are intolerable, as they are totally aimed at trying to tarnish the image of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Their remarks are also a grave provocation and a reckless hostile act that triggers counteraction.

In reality, the last Korean war was a war of aggression that was deliberately prepared and provoked by the United States of America and South Korea in order to undermine the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which was founded in less than two years. Nevertheless, South Korea continues to deceive the international community to cover up the criminal truth of the war of aggression against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it provoked. Even today, the military provocations and war drills of the United States and South Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to the critical point of outbreak of nuclear war. The exercise of the right to self-defence is a legitimate right of a sovereign State that nobody can deny, as it is recognized under the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The self-defensive measures taken to date by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea constitute the just exercise of its sovereignty in order to deter threats from the security environment caused by the reckless and provocative manoeuvres of South Korea and the United States, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country and bring the situation on the Korean peninsula under control.

We urge Member States to remain vigilant and have a clear understanding of South Korea's impure plot to deceive the international community. On this occasion, we clearly warn South Korea once again to be mindful that if it persists in provoking us groundlessly, it will face an extreme security crisis.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the General Assembly now wishes to conclude its consideration of agenda item 59?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.