



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

8974th meeting

Wednesday, 23 February 2022, 9.30 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
India	Mr. Tirumurti
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Mexico	Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu
Norway	Ms. Juul
United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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The meeting was called to order at 9.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

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

The Secretary-General: I want to reaffirm what I expressed this morning in the meeting of the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.58), but of course it would not make any sense to bother members reading again the same text that I am sure they are all aware of.

In between, during the day, a number of events took place, and with your permission, Mr. President, I would like to ask Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo to be able to brief the Council on those events.

But simultaneously, today was full of rumours and indications that an offensive against Ukraine was imminent. In the recent past, there were several situations with similar indications, similar rumours, and I never believed in them, convinced that nothing serious would happen. I was wrong, and I would like not to be wrong again today.

So, if indeed an operation is being prepared, I have only one thing to say from the bottom of my heart: President Putin, stop your troops from attacking Ukraine. Give peace a chance. Too many people have already died.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Secretary-General for his introductory remarks.

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: Earlier today, the so-called authorities of the Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples Republics requested military assistance from the Russian Federation.

Also today, the Ukrainian authorities declared a nationwide state of emergency and announced other related defence and security measures, including the mobilization of reservists.

Throughout the day, we have seen disturbing reports of continued heavy shelling across the contact line and civilian and military casualties. There are also reports of the repeated targeting of civilian infrastructure. This evening, different media are carrying reports of an ongoing large-scale military build-up and military columns moving towards Ukraine. The Russian Federation has also reportedly shut airspace to civilian aircraft near the border with Ukraine.

The United Nations cannot verify any of these reports. But if these developments were confirmed, they would greatly aggravate an already extremely dangerous situation.

The Ukrainian authorities are also reporting a new large-scale cyberattack targeting several State and financial institutions.

President Zelenskyy earlier this evening called for continued diplomacy. Separately, President Putin also spoke about his continued readiness to engage in dialogue.

We encourage such efforts even at this late hour. United Nations staff remain on the ground to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine. We are committed to staying and delivering. All parties must ensure their safety and security. Respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law is also paramount.

We cannot predict exactly what will happen in the coming hours and days in Ukraine. What is clear is the unacceptably high cost in human suffering and destruction of an escalation. The people of Ukraine want peace, and I am certain that the people of Russia want peace. We must do everything in our power to ensure that peace prevails.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

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

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): This is the fourth time that the Security Council is meeting on Ukraine in a matter of weeks. Every time we meet, the reality on the ground confirms bit by bit what some of us have been anticipating. Russia has been saying one thing and doing the opposite. We were told that troops were retreating when their number has only increased. We were told to stop the hysteria since troops were in Russian territory. That is no longer the case. They are invading a neighbour, unprovoked with false pretexts, false narratives and fabricated news.

Every development that has unfolded in the past 48 hours confirms to us and the world that Russia's concerns have nothing to do with its security, that its anxieties are not linked to NATO expansion and that this issue is not a confrontation between Russia and the West. This is a confrontation between Russia and international law and the Charter of the United Nations that it deliberately has chosen to ignore — a confrontation between a hegemonistic vision and a rules-based world order.

It is not about Russia's concerns; it is about Russia's appetite. The Ukrainians are facing another aggression just because they dare to exist, because they have chosen to be independent and because they have opted for democracy.

This is a dark hour not only for Ukraine, but for the entire international community, as we witness with trepidation the progression of a pure act of aggression, carefully planned and cold-bloodedly executed. We called and hoped for a backdown of the Russian Federation from this senseless destructive and self-destructive action. We repeat the same call on Russia to stop, to reflect, to reverse its illegal decisions, to withdraw from this senseless madness, to de-escalate and not to push on towards the precipice. Several mechanisms are in place and various proposals have been made, including by President Zelensky, whose calls remain unanswered. Diplomacy is like hope. It dies last, but, if it is to work, it must be seized, not ignored, as the Secretary-General said earlier.

We call on our fellow members of the Security Council to rally in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia has been warned repeatedly that it will be alone in this foolishness and that it will be responsible for the innocent lives lost, including possibly Russian lives, and for the destruction caused in the heart of Europe in the twenty-first century.

If they choose to continue to execute their plans, as every indication points to, they will bear not only the

consequences of the war, but also the historical blame and shame of invading a neighbouring country, when its responsibility as a big country and a permanent member of the Security Council calls for it to work and help preserve peace and security, not torpedo it.

We reiterate our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

In conclusion, I welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine at this meeting. I would like to convey to him and the Ukrainian Government and people that, at this most critical moment of their history, they are not alone, and we stand firm and in full solidarity with them for their right to be free and chose who they want to be.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank the Secretary-General for his strong stance and powerful remarks today before the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.58) and for his remarks tonight.

A few moments ago, I spoke to President Biden, who asked me to convey in the strongest possible terms his and our steadfast support for Ukraine and for the urgent meeting the Security Council has convened tonight. Furthermore, he asked me to share that the United States and its allies and partners will continue to respond to Russia's actions with unity, clarity and conviction.

We are here tonight because we believe, along with Ukraine, that a full-scale, further invasion into Ukraine by Russia is imminent. Tonight, we are seeing the Russians close airspace, move troops into Donbas and move forces into combat-ready positions. This is a perilous moment. And we are here for one reason and one reason only — to ask Russia to stop, return to its borders, send its troops, tanks and planes back to their barracks and hangars, and send its diplomats to the negotiating table. It should back away from the brink before it is too late.

Last week, the United States informed the Security Council and the world (see S/PV.8968) about what we expected to see unfold. We said that Russia would manufacture a pretext for an attack. We have since seen numerous false-flag events staged along the lines of contact in Donbas. We said Russia would theatrically convene emergency meetings at the highest levels of the Russian Government. We all saw that on Monday, with the State-televised Russian Security Council meeting held by President Putin — an orchestrated

moment in which the Russian Government decided to recognize as “independent States” sovereign territory of Ukraine controlled by Russia’s proxies since 2014. Russia literally violated Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity on live television before the world.

We said that false proclamations would come declaring that Russia would need to defend Russian-speakers in Ukraine. We got that and much more from President Putin’s speech on Monday and during the speech of the Russian Ambassador before the General Assembly today. No one could have predicted just how dangerous, inciting and far-reaching President Putin’s speech would be, with Putin arguing for taking the world back in time to an era of empires and colonies.

Finally, we said the attack would come next and that we could expect communications to be jammed and cyberattacks to shut down key Ukrainian institutions. Last week, we attributed to Russia denial-of-service attacks against Ukrainian banks, and we saw similar activity this morning, targeting Government sites as well. And, in the last few hours, we have received very concerning reports of destructive malware placed on hundreds of computers and executed on at least some. After that, we said, would come the bombs, the missiles, the soldiers and the tanks. Already, soldiers have been deployed to the occupied region of Ukraine.

We are here tonight because we believe the rest is imminent. Now, over the past few weeks, Russia has called our predictions hysterical. Russia has said that we were lying. Russia has said that we were supplying the world with misinformation. Russia’s diplomats have even laughed in the face of the human suffering that we were sounding the alarm about, but what we said would happen has come to pass for all the world to see.

Let us therefore be clear. Not all parties are culpable here. Calling for both sides to de-escalate only gives Russia a pass. Russia is the aggressor here. Russia’s attack on Ukraine is tantamount to an attack on the United Nations and every Member State in the Chamber tonight.

The Security Council is charged with adjudicating threats to peace and security. Russia is bypassing it entirely and taking matters into its own hands. That undermines the institution and everyone who participates in it. The United States, Ukraine, its allies and partners across Europe, United Nations officials and every other member of the Security Council have all repeatedly implored Russia to engage at the diplomatic table. Instead, tonight Russia has brought

its people, the Ukrainian people and the world to the brink of a conflict that will produce an untold amount of human suffering.

I said it in the General Assembly this morning (see A/76/PV.58), and I will say it again tonight — every day, Russians should be asking themselves right now how many Russian lives Putin will sacrifice for his cynical ambitions. Responsible members of the Security Council will stand together, and we will stand with Ukraine. We will do so despite a reckless, irresponsible permanent member of the Security Council abusing its powers to attack its neighbour and subvert the United Nations and our international system.

This morning, in the General Assembly, we saw dozens of leaders from across the globe stand up to defend the Charter of the United Nations and Ukraine against Russia’s brazen attacks. We were proud to stand with them. Today I had the opportunity to meet with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Kuleba. Many of those gathered here now were in the General Assembly Hall this morning when Foreign Minister Kuleba received enthusiastic and overwhelming applause after his remarks. Since he could not be here this evening, I would like to conclude by echoing his words. This morning he warned us all that:

“no one will be able to sit out this crisis if Putin decides that he can move forward with his aggression against Ukraine. Your Governments and your people will face painful consequences together with our Government and our people.”
(A/76/PV.58)

He is right. History tells us that, and we must confront this threat head on — in the Council, in the United Nations and in our capitals. The people of Ukraine are counting on us. Let us not let them down.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their remarks.

We are here tonight to call on Russia to avert war. For months, Russia has been holding a gun to Ukraine’s head. Now, President Putin’s finger is on the trigger. A full-scale conflict in a country of 44 million people will bring immense suffering, casualties on both sides and devastating humanitarian consequences. The members of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have all called this week for respect for the principles of the Charter of the United

Nations. The world is calling for peace, but Russia is not listening.

Make no mistake, the United Kingdom will not compromise. We will not compromise our commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity or our support for peace, prosperity, and the democratic freedom of the people of Ukraine. We will not compromise our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter — above all the founding principle of the United Nations, that we “live together in peace with one another as good neighbours”. Russia's actions are an assault on the Charter. And we will not compromise our commitment to a search for peace.

We are here for the second time this week in the Council. My Prime Minister and Foreign and Defence Secretaries have been unsparing in their diplomatic efforts. But we have also announced a significant further sanction step against Russia, with our allies — a package targeted against some of the Russian oligarchs, banks, and politicians supporting President Putin. And we will ratchet up economic consequences should Russia continue its aggression.

There is still time for restraint, reason and de-escalation. But that time is now.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary General for his engagement and for his appeal, which France fully supports.

As we speak, Russia is on the verge of causing chaos in Ukraine and dealing an unjustifiable blow to peace and security in the heart of Europe. For several months, the President of the Russian Federation has been patiently preparing the ground for a major offensive against Ukraine. He has amassed soldiers and weapons on a scale not seen since the end of the Second World War. He has incited violence through lies and disinformation. He has even denied the very legitimacy of the Ukrainian State. He has undermined the sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine by recognizing the independence of parts of Ukrainian territory.

In the face of that strategy of threats and destabilization, Ukraine has shown admirable restraint. It did not give in to violence despite Russian incitement. I want to reiterate our solidarity with the Ukrainian people, which President Macron confirmed to his Ukrainian counterpart a few hours ago.

In the face of that strategy of disorder and confrontation, the leaders of Europe and the United

States have demonstrated their unity and redoubled their efforts to propose a diplomatic solution. President Macron, together with Chancellor Scholz and many partners, have done their utmost. They have expressed their willingness to build a renewed security architecture for Europe with Russia.

France strongly condemns the Russian President's strategy of provocation to war. We hear the appeal of the Ukrainian people, made by President Zelenskyy in his address to the Russian nation a few hours ago: the Ukrainians want peace. They want a good neighbourly relationship with Russia, like the familial and personal relationships that unite so many Russians and Ukrainians.

The international community came together to make its voice heard today in the General Assembly. It is the voice of respect for the Charter of the United Nations, the voice of peaceful conflict resolution and the voice of diplomacy. It echoes the clear statements of the Secretary-General.

We call once again on the Russian Federation to follow that path, to reverse its decision to recognize the separatist entities in eastern Ukraine and to recall its troops.

We call on each member of the Council to act responsibly and to demonstrate resolute support for all initiatives aimed at preventing and putting an end to violations of the Charter of the United Nations.

If Russia confirms its choice of war, it will have to take full responsibility and pay the price for that choice.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their very sobering remarks at the beginning of the meeting.

Tonight, as we gather at this table, we are staring into the abyss of a major conflict in Europe — a conflict that would have major global implications. Tonight, the core principles of the United Nations in which we believe are under attack.

In Ireland, we know the importance of the rules-based international order. We know the importance of respecting the voice and integrity of all countries, big or small. Most fundamentally, we know the value of peace. We believe that one State threatening and using lethal force against another to get its way or to expand its territory is no solution.

Ireland has a deep understanding, informed by our history, that dialogue and respect resolve disputes. Tonight, that drives our solidarity with Ukraine. It is our collective responsibility — indeed, our obligation — here at this table to maintain international peace and security, nothing less. That means we stand up for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every State Member of the United Nations.

Let us be clear — the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine have not changed. The decision of Russia to recognize as independent entities the non-Government-controlled areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine does not change those borders one iota. They did not change in 2014 and they have not changed this week. We urge the Russian Federation to reverse that decision immediately.

We urge the Russian Federation to refrain from further escalatory, unilateral actions that can serve only to further deepen the crisis. Tonight, the path of diplomacy and dialogue that we have called for for so long is perilously narrow. The principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which we hold dear, have already been breached. Those principles now risk being further violated.

Now is the time to show courage, to pull back from the precipice and to return to dialogue and diplomacy. The use of military aggression has no place in our modern world. Have we learned nothing from our history? The United Nations rose from the ashes of two World Wars. The senseless destruction of that era was born of the belief that military might makes right. That philosophy, applied with modern weaponry, would unleash devastation and human suffering, affecting millions of innocent people.

Tonight, we stand with the people of Ukraine. Tonight, we stand with the Charter of the United Nations. We stand with those who, even in this dark hour, still have the courage and hope to bring us back from the precipice. A resort to military conquest — for one State to impose its will unilaterally against another and to annex parts of its territory — has absolutely no place in the twenty-first century.

There is still a choice — a choice to turn from the path of war to the path of diplomacy and dialogue. It is never too late to make the right choice.

Mr. Tirumurti (India): Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing on the evolving situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine.

The Security Council met two days ago and discussed the situation (see S/PV.8970). We called for the urgent de-escalation of tensions and emphasized the need for sustained and focused diplomacy to address all issues concerning the situation.

However, we note with regret that the calls of the international community to give time to the recent initiatives undertaken by the parties to diffuse tensions were not heeded. The situation is in danger of spiralling into a major crisis. We express our deep concern over the developments, which, if not handled carefully, may well undermine the peace and security of the region.

We call for immediate de-escalation and for refraining from any further action that could contribute to the worsening of the situation. We call on all parties to exert greater efforts to bridge divergent interests. I would like to underline that the legitimate security interests of all parties should be fully taken into account.

India has consistently advocated at the United Nations the need for the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law and with agreements entered into by the parties concerned.

I underline once again that more than 20,000 Indian nationals, including students, are located in different parts of Ukraine, including in its border areas. We are facilitating the return of all Indian nationals, including students, as may be required.

We believe that the solution lies in sustained diplomatic dialogue between the concerned parties. In the meantime, we strongly emphasize the vital need for all sides to maintain international peace and security by exercising the utmost restraint.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Under Secretary-General for their briefings.

This is the fourth Security Council meeting to be held on the situation in Ukraine in less than a month. In light of the recent worrying tensions, my country has taken a position calling for de-escalation and for efforts to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

In that context, we would like to highlight the following points.

First, we reaffirm the need to engage in dialogue in good faith, while intensifying diplomatic efforts at all levels to support opportunities for peace on the basis of international law. We reiterate that the Minsk

agreements still constitute a good basis for reaching a peaceful solution to the crisis and maintaining regional and international security and stability.

Secondly, we stress the importance of adhering to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, particularly in settling international disputes through peaceful means and respecting the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of States. Adherence to those principles and compliance with the Charter of the United Nations constitute a central pillar in finding a sustainable and peaceful solution to the current crisis

Thirdly, we reiterate that the tense situation in eastern Ukraine could exacerbate the critical conditions for civilians. Furthermore, there are still obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to some of those in need, which existed even before the recent tensions arose, particularly in the areas near the contact line in eastern Ukraine.

Any further escalation could worsen the humanitarian situation for a larger number of civilians. We therefore emphasize the importance of de-escalation and a ceasefire. In that regard, we urge all parties not to obstruct access to humanitarian aid or the movement of civilians in conflict areas, in accordance with their obligations under international law.

In conclusion, my country reiterates the importance of de-escalation, constructive dialogue and continued efforts to reach peaceful solutions that are consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for their important statements.

We are facing the dire prospect of a major war in Europe. Norway strongly condemns the decision by President Putin to send Russian troops into the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the latest announcement of a special military operation. Those decisions are unjustified, unprovoked and irresponsible. We call on Russia to reverse those decisions and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine and the vicinity of its internationally recognized borders.

Our thoughts are with those who have already suffered too much owing to this conflict and with all those who are afraid that tomorrow will be a lot worse.

We call upon all parties to strictly respect the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law, which call for the protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel, and civilian infrastructure, and for the facilitation of safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need in Ukraine.

As the Secretary-General clearly stated, the decision of the Russian Federation to recognize the so-called independence of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions are violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Let me recall the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, which are now under threat. The Charter applies to all nations, including Russia.

Today in the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.58), Member States from all over the world strongly urged the parties to pursue negotiations towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict, with respect for international law and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Norway urges Russia, as a party to the Minsk agreements and to the conflict, to fulfil its commitments, to abide by international law and to return to the path of diplomacy. Russia has taken on a clear commitment to seek a peaceful settlement to this conflict and must honour it.

We commend Ukraine's posture of restraint in the face of continued provocations and destabilization efforts.

Let me conclude by once again reiterating Norway's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The situation in Ukraine is at a critical juncture. China has been paying close attention to the situation. In the current context, all parties concerned should exercise restraint and refrain from any further escalation of tensions. We believe that the door to a peaceful solution to the Ukraine issue is not fully shut, and neither should it be.

China has repeatedly pointed out that the Ukraine issue is set against a complex historical backdrop and that the current situation is the result of the interplay of many factors. China's position on safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States has been consistent. The purposes and principles of the

Charter of the United Nations should be jointly upheld. We hope that all parties concerned will remain cool-headed and rational and commit themselves to enhancing dialogue and consultation to resolve the relevant issues properly through negotiations and address each other's legitimate security concerns, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

It is especially important at the moment to refrain from fuelling tensions. China will continue to promote peace talks in its own way and welcomes and encourages all efforts aimed at a diplomatic solution.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I would like to thank the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General, Rosemary DiCarlo, for the information they have provided to the Security Council and the remarks they have made tonight.

The reports received about the movement of troops into certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine are cause for extreme concern. The threat or use of force against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of a State Member of the United Nations is unacceptable.

In the present circumstances, the Security Council must act according to its main purpose as holder of the primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security. In the exercise of that responsibility, its actions must be geared towards a reduction in tensions and towards assisting parties in their negotiations. That is our primary role.

The recourse to arms and confrontation cannot lead to lasting peace. In that regard, we call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and to refrain from any action that may further increase tensions on the ground. The time is not for belligerent rhetoric or military threats but to engage truly in a diplomatic process. The means of negotiation have not been exhausted.

Immediate de-escalation is of a high order. It means, among other things, the complete and unconditional withdrawal of all military forces as an effective measure for the prevention and removal of threats to peace. The parties must abide by the terms of the Minsk agreements, above all by their call for a comprehensive ceasefire. The Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe can assist if granted unrestrained access in order to verify, identify and report accordingly any violation of the ceasefire.

Furthermore, the parties must allow the rapid, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in need. The protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel and persons in vulnerable situations, must be respected unconditionally.

We redouble our calls for the parties to work constructively in all relevant instances, such as the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. Negotiations must be mindful of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of its Member States.

Negotiations must also, on the one hand, take into account the security concerns of all parties to the conflict and, on the other, aim to create adequate conditions for an inclusive political dialogue that must reflect the diversity of and include representation from all the peoples of the region.

Brazil does not underestimate the complexity of the current situation, but we insist on dialogue as key to achieving a lasting settlement to this conflict. Too much is at stake here, above all the lives of many civilians. We owe them all our efforts to bring this crisis to a peaceful solution.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by first of all thanking the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their significant briefings.

Ghana is grateful to the Secretary-General for his clear statements on the situation in Ukraine in defence of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules-based international order and our collective security mechanism. The developments that are taking place in Ukraine are indeed troubling. The situation has implications not only for Ukraine and its immediate neighbours but also for all our countries. Security is indivisible and the insecurity of one is the insecurity of all.

As we indicated in our statement to the Security Council on Monday night (see S/PV.8970), Ghana deeply regrets the decision of the Russian Federation to naturally recognize the non-Government-controlled regions of Ukraine and to send troops into those regions. We are also deeply concerned by the implications of those decisions. We suggest that the Russian Federation has turned its back on the Minsk agreements and the path of dialogue required to address any concerns that we have over the implementation of the agreements and related security concerns.

However, we read a report this morning — the statement attributed to the President of the Russian Federation — that his country was always open to diplomacy. We urge that that avowed commitment to diplomacy to which the Russian Federation alluded be backed by present actions that de-escalate the situation on the ground and permit an atmosphere for dialogue. We note with concern the risk that an escalation of the situation in Ukraine holds for global peace, and we stress that those that choose the path of conflict rather than peace bear the consequences of their actions.

We are concerned by reports of the commencement of hybrid warfare against Ukraine, especially attempts of cyberattacks against some of its critical infrastructure. To de-escalate the situation, we urge the Russian Federation to reconsider any intentions to move troops into the eastern regions of Ukraine in response to the purported request by the leaders of the separatist regions for an intervention.

By its nature, peacekeeping requires the consent of the parties and the impartiality of the peacekeeping force. The presence of the Russian troops in eastern Ukraine at this time would not fulfil those requirements. If there is a real need, the Security Council should be seized of the matter.

We urge calm and call upon all parties to maintain the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine. We are particularly concerned by the high intensity of violations of the ceasefire in recent days and their consequences for the civilian populations in the Donbas region. We remind all parties of the need to respect international law and international humanitarian law and urge the parties to guarantee unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance in both Government- and non-Government-controlled areas. We condemn any military activity that would deliberately target civilians and civilian infrastructure and remind all parties of their personal responsibility that exists in international law.

It may be begging the question but, nonetheless, worth repeating: Ghana unreservedly stands by the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, a bona fide Member of the United Nations, whose membership of the Organization provides for its guarantees over its internationally recognized borders — the same borders with which it joined the Organization. We are aware that the current developments in the eastern regions of Ukraine would not lead to a strategic gain for any party, and we encourage efforts to address both immediate and long-term interests through diplomacy and

dialogue. As called for by the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations, we remind all parties to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours,

Finally, we take this opportunity to urge all Member States to exercise restraint with regard to the respective unsettled but accepted situations across the globe and to uphold the collective security mechanism established through the Charter of the United Nations. Any differences that exist in international relations must be adjusted by peaceful and legal means.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank the Secretary-General for his urgent plea for peace and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

In this grave moment, Kenya continues to call for respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine, in line with the core tenets of the Charter of the United Nations. Kenya is deeply concerned by the rapid escalation of the conflict risks following the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk as independent States by the Russian Federation and the continued military escalation. We are concerned that there is a serious risk that a conflict enveloping the whole of the Donbas region will occur, present trends holding. Such a development would instantly lead to significant loss of life, a humanitarian crisis and a large-scale population movement of refugees and internally displaced people.

Kenya urgently calls for calm by all parties and for their commitment to protecting civilians and civilian objects from any actions contrary to international law and international humanitarian law. We continue to believe that there is still an opportunity for diplomacy to produce a solution to this dangerous crisis. The required diplomatic steps should seek, in the short term, for a de-escalation of the situation and the limiting of all military manoeuvres to prevent sparking a wider conflict. For that to happen, there must also be a stated commitment to negotiations between NATO and the Russian Federation in the middle and long terms. Such a commitment will need the vision to design a viable security architecture for Europe that protects the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine and other States, while being sensitive to the concerns of all the relevant parties.

We want to believe that this Chamber, in the light of its storied past, retains the wisdom and wherewithal to prevent a catastrophic war. We have confidence that the United Nations Charter, embraced as a whole, protects

Ukraine and all countries, not only those with modest military means, but also the world's nuclear Powers. When we consider the recent past of wars undertaken by choice and when the Charter and international law were breached, eventually the safety and security of all parties were tragically undermined.

The membership of this Chamber was fundamentally shaped by the States that emerged victorious from the Second World War. In doing so, the Charter bestowed on them a special responsibility that reflected the sacrifices that they had made to defeat a unique evil to humankind. We believe that the leaders who designed today's multilateral system were profoundly humbled by the catastrophic war that they had survived, so much so that they were inspired to erect the sovereign equality of States as a central pillar of our United Nations. As such, we urge all Members to recall the ruin from war that has been experienced by most States sitting around this table. It is in this moment of peril that we can powerfully pivot to recommit to the Charter that our predecessors bequeathed us. A large part of that recommitment would be aided by our listening to the Secretary-General and utilizing his good offices to deliver according to their intended design.

In the coming days, we hope that we will observe a de-escalation in Donbas and that every effort will be made to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. We further hope that we will benefit from the visionary leadership that the world needs today in committing to negotiating a lasting European security architecture that lowers perceptions of threat and promotes cooperation.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement, as well as Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

This is the fourth time in three weeks that the Council is meeting to discuss the situation in Ukraine. We meet tonight, 48 hours after our last meeting (see S/PV.8970) on the subject, because the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of Ukraine have been violated. We meet tonight because the lives of countless men, women and children are at the mercy of the murderous violence and clashes in eastern Ukraine. That has resulted in a mass exodus that imperils their dignity and safety. We meet tonight because, once again, the spectre of a war with dire consequences hangs over an entire region and we fear an imminent invasion of Ukraine.

As we reject this attack on the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, we must be compelled to go further and ensure respect for all provisions of the Charter and that the international community focuses its attention, with the same commitment and fervour, on all situations in all regions of the world where the security and dignity of peoples are under threat.

Russia's decision to recognize the sovereignty of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics is heavy with consequence for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It jeopardizes the relevance and implementation of the Minsk agreements and heightens the recurring fears of imminent military action in Ukraine.

My country remains firmly attached to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State. Strict respect for those cardinal principles, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union, is the glue of our social contract, as members of the international community. We remain convinced that the intense diplomatic activity and the various political measures adopted in recent weeks will allow for dialogue to be prioritized over confrontation and help prevent irreparable damage.

Eight years ago, in a construct similar to that which brings us together today, 52 States Members of the United Nations abstained in the voting on General Assembly resolution 68/262, while the same fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter that bring us together today and on which we rely were violated. Their refusal to join the consensus, above and beyond the pressure to which their delegations were subjected in New York, as well as in capitals at the time, not too long ago, translates to a lack of understanding and, perhaps, apathy on the part of several members of the international community concerning the persistence of zones of influence we thought had ended in the post-colonization era and following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Regrettably, that harsh reality stubbornly persists in several regions of the world, in particular in Africa, Asia, America and, today, in Europe.

The Council must ensure respect for the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for the territorial integrity of States and national sovereignty. My country calls for an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation, as well as a sense of responsibility, by prioritizing the peaceful settlement

of conflicts, in line with the United Nations Charter. We urge the parties to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and refrain from all actions that could hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

In conclusion, I reaffirm my country's attachment to an international order based on rules and not on the law of survival of the fittest. We call on all parties not to break the dialogue and to take every opportunity available to restore peace in Ukraine.

Mrs. Buenrostro Massieu (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country thanks the Secretary-General for attending tonight's meeting and for his appeal in the Chamber. We support that appeal.

We also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

Mexico deplores the fact that, despite the widespread call from the international community, tensions around Ukraine, instead of having diminished, have increased. That is why we are forced to meet here again tonight.

Having ratified the Charter of the United Nations, all States have committed to respecting the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of States. As members of the Security Council, we have the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. That creates the obligation to ensure that the Security Council can discharge its mandate and ensure respect for the Charter of the United Nations.

Mexico supports all statements of the Secretary-General and urges the parties to make use of the good offices that the Secretary-General has offered.

The President of Mexico declared this morning that we cannot accept the invasion of one country by another, as it is contrary to international law. We recall once again that, some days ago, Russia made a forceful statement right here, before the international community, stressing that it would not invade Ukraine (see S/PV.8970). The recent announcement of a special military operation is at variance with that statement.

An invasion would constitute an act of aggression, in line with General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX). We will not waver in our call for détente, diplomacy and dialogue. A diplomatic solution is the only way to avoid falling off the precipice, which would lead to a war in Europe.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

We have had a very intense day as we discuss the crisis in Ukraine. I will not repeat what I said earlier today in the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.58). I can state with regret only that, ultimately, Ukraine did not heed our message to Kyiv concerning the need to stop provocations against the Luhansk People's Republic and the Donetsk People's Republic.

It appears that our Ukrainian colleagues, whom certain States have supported and egged on recently, remain under the illusion that, with the blessing of Western sponsors, they can secure a military solution to the problem of Donbas. It is otherwise difficult to explain the increase in shelling and acts of sabotage on the territory of the Republics.

Over the past 24 hours, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine has recorded nearly 2,000 ceasefire violations, including almost 1,500 explosions. The residents of Donetsk and Luhansk continue to shelter in basements. Refugees continue to flow into Russia. In a word, the nature of provocations by Ukraine's armed forces has not changed. Members would prefer to ignore that fact and repeat Ukraine's fairy tales that those living in Donetsk are bombing themselves.

It is no surprise that the ever-increasing suffering of those living in Donbas does not appear to affect our Western colleagues. At today's General Assembly debate, they were unable to find one word of compassion or sympathy for the residents of Donbas. It is as if, for them, those 4 million people do not exist.

I would like to recall that the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, of which we are accused of violating in Ukraine, as stipulated in the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, must be strictly observed with regard to

“States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples ... and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.”

That does not describe the current Government in Ukraine.

The tragedy in Ukraine began just after the illegal Maidan coup in 2014, when instead of engaging in dialogue with the Russian-speaking people of Ukraine, the new Government unleashed guns and aviation on them. There is an abundance of information and evidence to that effect, but our Western colleagues choose to ignore it.

We tried yesterday, today and the day before yesterday to explain to members the logic behind the decisions taken by the Russian leadership on the recognition of the Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic, and emphasized the need to ensure peace and security in those territories. However, they did not want to listen then or today. For our Western colleagues, the people living in the Donbas are nothing but a bargaining chip in a geopolitical game aimed at weakening Russia and moving the NATO bloc closer to its borders. For us, they are women, children and elderly people who have had to hide from Ukrainian bombardments and provocations for eight years now. For us, they are Ukrainians who suffer under the oppression of the Maidan Government.

That is the difference in our approaches. Without seeing our geopolitical perspective, one will never understand us. But those for whom the decisions that I mentioned earlier were made have been forgotten and disregarded during the past eight years and labelled as mere pro-Russian separatists and terrorists, and they are eternally grateful to us. And this is what really matters to us.

I would like to reiterate that the cause of today's crisis surrounding Ukraine is rooted in the actions of Ukraine itself, which has been sabotaging its commitments under the Minsk package of measures for years. As recently as last week, there was hope that Kyiv would come to its senses and actually implement what it promised to do in 2015. To that end, first and foremost, direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk was needed. However, yet another confirmation of Ukraine's unwillingness to engage in such dialogue and take steps to grant Donbas the special status stipulated in the Minsk agreements, and the support of Western sponsors for that position, ultimately convinced us that we simply did not have the right to allow the continued suffering of the residents of Donbas.

As I said, Ukrainian provocations against the people of Donbas have not only continued, but have intensified. The leadership of the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics have asked us to provide military

support in accordance with the bilateral cooperation agreements concluded at the time as their recognition. That is a logical step and a consequence of the actions of the Ukrainian regime.

During the course of this meeting, Russian President Vladimir Putin made an address in which he said that he had decided to launch a special military operation in Donbas. We do not know all the details today, but I want to briefly inform the Council of his rationale — what clearly follows from his message is that the occupation of Ukraine is not part of our plans. The purpose of the special operation is to protect people who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years. To that end, we will work towards the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine and bring to justice the perpetrators of numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation.

That decision was made in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the approval of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation and pursuant to the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance signed with the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. We are receiving a great deal of information on the matter, which has yet to be analysed. We will keep the Council updated.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Before I try to deliver parts of the statement that I brought here tonight — most of which has already become useless since 10 p.m. New York time — I would like to cite Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, which states:

“Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.”

Russia is not able to carry out any of those obligations. Three minutes ago, the Ambassador of the Russian Federation confirmed that his President has declared war on my country.

Therefore, before I read out parts of my statement, I would like to avail myself of the presence of the Secretary-General and request that he distribute among the members of the Security Council and the General

Assembly the legal memos by the United Nations Legal Counsel, dated December 1991, and in particular the legal memo dated 19 December 1991, which we had been trying to get from the Secretariat for a very long time and were denied.

Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Charter states,

“The admission of any such state to membership in the United Nations will be effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.”

I ask the Secretary-General to kindly instruct the Secretariat to distribute among the members of the Security Council and the General Assembly the decision of the Security Council, dated December 1991, recommending membership of the Russian Federation to the Organization, as well as the decision of the General Assembly, dated December 1991, in which the General Assembly welcomes the Russian Federation to the United Nations.

It would be a miracle if the Secretariat were able to produce such decisions. There is nothing in the Charter of the United Nations about continuity as a sneaky way to get into the Organization.

As I was on my way here about an hour ago, my intention was to ask the Russian Ambassador to confirm, on the record, that the Russian troops would not start firing on Ukrainians today or go ahead with the offensive. That became useless 48 minutes ago because, about 48 minutes ago, his President declared war on Ukraine. I would therefore like to ask the Ambassador of the Russian Federation to say on the record that, at this very moment, his troops are not shelling and bombing Ukrainian cities and are not moving into the territory of Ukraine. He has a smartphone; he can call Mr. Lavrov right now. We can pause to let him go out and call him.

If he is not in a position to give an affirmative answer, the Russian Federation should relinquish its responsibilities as President of the Security Council and pass those responsibilities to a legitimate member of Security Council that respects the Charter. I ask the members of the Security Council to convene an emergency meeting immediately to consider all necessary draft decisions to stop the war. It is too late to speak about the escalation — too late. The Russian President has officially declared war. Should I play the video of President Putin?

Shall I do that right now so that you can confirm it, Mr. President?

Do not interrupt me, please.

The President: Then do not ask me questions when speaking. Please proceed.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Russia declared war. It is the responsibility of this organ to stop the war. I therefore call on everyone here to do everything possible to stop the war. Or should I play the video with the President of Russia declaring war?

The President (spoke in Russian): Speaking in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation, I was not planning to answer the questions posed because I have already said all I know at this point. Waking Minister Lavrov at this time is not something I intend to do.

The representative of Ukraine referenced the information that we have, which we will provide. In addition, this is not called a war; it is called a special military operation in Donbas.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany): We meet at the very moment of a military escalation the likes of which we have not experienced in Europe for over a generation. The President of the Russian Federation announced a military operation on Ukrainian territory. We condemn it in the strongest terms, and we call upon all members of the Security Council and the United Nations to now stand up for Ukraine and against a shameless breach of international law.

Two days ago, Russia’s decision to recognize the self-proclaimed People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk was harshly rejected in the Council (see S/PV.8970). It had already dealt a devastating blow to the principles of international order that the United Nations stands for.

Russia has not listened and, it turns out, was not prepared to listen. It has continued its massive military build-up, and we have been observing cyberattacks against Ukraine. Now the Russian military is moving into Ukrainian territory. Through those actions and this unprovoked military operation, Russia is violating the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

We condemn the use of force against innocent people and the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. We urge Russia to terminate its military action against Ukraine immediately and withdraw its troops.

Our thoughts are with the Ukrainian people. We will be steadfast in our support for Ukraine and our support for the United Nations Charter. This Russian aggression will have an unprecedented cost — politically, economically and morally.

France, Ukraine and my country stood ready for diplomacy via another meeting in the Normandy format or a summit proposed by Ukraine. With our allies and partners, we called on Russia — in vain — to seek a diplomatic way forward. Now is the moment to jointly and decisively speak up and defend the international order of the United Nations Charter against unilateral aggression. Tonight we stand with Ukraine, unwavering and determined.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): In my remarks tonight, I said that we predicted Russia's false flag attacks — the misinformation, the theatrical emergency meetings and the cyberattacks. But one piece had not come to pass. Unfortunately, while we have been meeting in the Security Council tonight, it appears that President Putin has ordered that last step.

At the exact time that we are gathered in the Council seeking peace, Putin delivered a message of war, in total disdain for the responsibility of the Council. This is a grave emergency. The Council will need to act, and we will put a draft resolution on the table tomorrow. As President Biden said tonight,

“Russia alone is responsible for the death and destruction this attack will bring, and the United States and its allies and partners will respond in a united and decisive way. The world will hold Russia accountable.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of the United Kingdom has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): As we sat in the Security Council Chamber urging Russia to step back, President Putin announced special military

operations on Ukrainian territory. This is unprovoked and unjustified.

This is a grave day for Ukraine and for the principles of the United Nations. We and our partners have been clear that there will be consequences for Russia's actions. We fully support the call of the United States for a Security Council resolution. The Council must do all it can to stop the war and uphold the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Albania has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): We could not end this meeting without noting that we had feared and anticipated for days is happening. Explosions are reported in Kyiv and several other cities in Ukraine. The masks have finally been taken off and tanks are in. As we speak, Russia is implementing its plan and attacking a neighbour, to whom it has decided to deny existence, freedom, land, dignity and life.

We call on all the Members of the United Nations to rally in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, to stand with Ukraine and its people, to condemn firmly and unequivocally this aggression, to stand for peace, rules and international law and to take whatever measures they deem necessary to show the aggressor that its actions will bear consequences.

Let me reiterate — Russia will be held responsible for the consequences of an unprovoked war entailing the loss of human rights, for causing unbearable human pain and for opting for destruction when we need development, for bringing death where we are in desperate need for hope, for choosing to become an outlaw when we need cooperation. Russia will bear historical shame and blame and the consequences of invading a neighbouring country and attempting to destroy European security.

Let us unite and make sure that it will not succeed.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of France has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): As we convene in an emergency meeting in order to try to avert the worst and to prevent the start of a war, we have learned, alongside all gathered here, that the President of the Russian Federation has ordered a

special military operation in Donbas and that Russia will try to demilitarize Ukraine.

Russia has opted for war. France condemns in the strongest terms the start of those operations. Those decisions, announced precisely during this Security Council meeting, show the contempt Russia has for international law and the United Nations. Russia must be held accountable before the Security Council. That is why, over the next few hours, France will join its partners on the Council in the preparation of a draft resolution to condemn the war waged by Russia.

We call on all members of the Council to support us in these tragic circumstances. We call on the Russian Federation to fully respect international humanitarian law. We call for the protection of, and respect for, all civilians, especially the vulnerable — women, children and humanitarian personnel.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Ireland has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): When I spoke earlier, I said that the path towards diplomacy and dialogue was perilously narrow. I did not realize, in fact, how narrow and how close to the precipice we really were just over an hour ago. We now see that that path has been closed by the announcement of a military aggression on the part of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. That is something we roundly condemn.

We stand with the people of Ukraine tonight; with every man, woman and child seeing this news — as we did, sat here in the Chamber — whose lives are at risk.

We believe that it is now time indeed for the Council to stand up, to assume its responsibility and to speak out in the strongest possible terms about that act of aggression.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Ukraine has asked for the floor to make a further statement; I give him the floor.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): As I said, Sir, relinquish your duties as President of the Council; call President Putin and call Foreign Minister Lavrov to stop the aggression.

I welcome the decision of some members of the Council to meet as soon as possible to consider the necessary decision that would condemn the aggression that the Russian Federation has launched against my people.

There is no purgatory for war criminals; they go straight to hell.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a further statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

I wanted to say, by way of conclusion, that we did not launch an aggression against the Ukrainian people, but against the junta that is in power in Kyiv.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 11 p.m.