



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9115th meeting

Wednesday, 24 August 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Zhang Jun/Mr. Geng Shuang (China)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
India	Mrs. Kamboj
Ireland	Ms. Moran
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
Norway	Ms. Heimerback
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations requesting that His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, be invited to participate in today's meeting via video-teleconference, in accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Does any member wish to take the floor on this matter?

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our delegation objects to the virtual participation of the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in today's meeting. We would like to explain our objection in detail.

We are not opposing the participation of the President of Ukraine or his representative in the meeting. I repeat again for the record — and for those who will try to distort our position — that we do not object to the participation of the President of Ukraine in this meeting. However, that participation must be in person; in other words, he must be physically present in the Security Council Chamber. This is not a whim on our part; these are the rules that govern the work of the Council. There is no politics involved here; it is purely a procedural matter. It is also a matter of respect for the members of the Council and for the Council as a body.

Indeed, when the world was facing the coronavirus disease pandemic, we collectively decided that we would continue working virtually. But, according to our collective decision, all of our meetings via video-teleconference (VTC) were informal meetings. Then, after returning to the Council Chamber after the peak of the pandemic, we decided that the Council would resume its normal working methods, which meant a return to the provisional rules of procedure as well. In other words, if we the members of the Security Council are sitting here in the Chamber, other Member States participating under rule 37 must be present too.

Mr. Zelenskyy has already spoken to the Council twice via VTC. Each time, we expressed our negative

view of that in writing. Each time we expressed our negative view of that in writing, but at that time the Western Council members, including the Council Presidents who invited the President of Ukraine to address the Council, assured us in writing that this was an exception that would not set a precedent. A precedent is not set after one or two times, but a third time is no longer an exception.

We would like to remind those members of the Council who presided or will preside in the Council that we have already encountered such cases. We can understand making a few exceptions when we had just returned to the Chamber after the pandemic when the Heads of certain States were still prevented from travelling. However, this year, during our presidency in February, as well as other Presidents, did not allow high-ranking representatives of Member States to speak under rule 37 via video-teleconference, so why should there be double standards in the Council on this matter? Why are other Heads of State or ministers of other countries that are on the Council's agenda subjected to discrimination?

This harkens back to the situation with international humanitarian assistance, which rushed into Ukraine when people forgot to help others in other parts of the world, or the double standards on refugees and migrants in Europe when refugees from Ukraine are green-lighted in every European country while refugees from Africa and the Middle East and other regions find themselves facing barriers. We cannot agree to make an exception for one country and one person for the third time.

This meeting was announced a week in advance, and the President had the opportunity to travel to New York. We constantly see Mr. Zelenskyy meeting foreign delegations, travelling around the country and even posing for photo shoots for glossy magazines. He is also appointed as the Head of the Ukrainian delegation to the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, something that is possible only through personal participation. Based on all this, we can draw the conclusion that there are no restrictions to the President's movements. We also know that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, has been actively travelling abroad. Moreover, today in this Chamber we see Secretary-General António Guterres, who just recently travelled to Ukraine and visited various cities there.

I repeat once again that what we are objecting to in this regard is not the participation of the Head of Ukraine, but rather his participation via video-teleconference specifically. We ask the President to put this matter to a procedural vote.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): We listened carefully to the arguments put forward by the delegation of Russia. We disagree with them. Let me explain why.

We have discussed this issue in the past. And here we are again, unfortunately, since the situation on the ground in Ukraine has not changed and has not improved. We agree that, in the post-pandemic situation, virtual participation under rule 37 should be an exception. We are faced with such a situation since a democratically elected leader of a sovereign country, a Member of the United Nations, cannot leave his country for reasons beyond his control. We all know what the reasons are. The letters from the United Kingdom, Albania and the United States of 11 April, 18 July and 19 July, respectively, explained in detail the reasons for granting the Ukrainian President the possibility of addressing the Security Council virtually.

Allow me to reiterate that the justification for this exception remains unchanged from the previous times when the Council agreed that the President could address the Council via video-teleconference. It was so in April, it was so in June and it is so, sadly, now. Ukraine is at war and under foreign invasion.

When a full military attack on a country — Ukraine — remains ongoing, and with today being its Independence Day, with curfews imposed in various cities because of that threat, the Security Council cannot reasonably demand that the President travel to New York if he wants to participate in a meeting. It is therefore legitimate. And we fully understand that in such circumstances, the situation in Ukraine requires President Zelenskyy to be there. This is a unique and exceptional situation at this moment in the world, and therefore for the Security Council as well. We therefore strongly support the participation of President Zelenskyy via video-teleconference and invite other members to vote in favour.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In view of the comments made by Council members and the request by the representative of the Russian Federation, I shall put to the vote the proposal to invite Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, to participate via video-teleconference in today's meeting in accordance

with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

Russian Federation

Abstaining:

China

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The proposal received 13 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention. The proposal to invite His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine, to participate in today's meeting via video-teleconference has been adopted.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We regret that members of the Security Council have spoken out against complying with the rules of the Council. We can understand the logic of Kyiv's Western backers, who are prepared to sacrifice the entire Ukrainian people to cover up Kyiv's crimes and the Council's work, but we are disappointed by the fact that other members, who when they come to the Council commit to upholding the rules of the Council, have today contributed to the erosion of its very foundations and practices. We call on all States Members of the United Nations to take note of today's situation.

Despite our position, we will hear out Mr. Zelenskyy because we also have something to say to him. We hope that he will remain at today's meeting until its conclusion. We shall see whether or not Mr. Zelenskyy will be able to come to the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly as the Head of the Ukrainian delegation or not, as the representative of Albania has claimed.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now invite President Zelenskyy to participate in today's meeting via video-teleconference.

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, and His Excellency Mr. Silvio Gonzato, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

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

The Secretary-General: Today marks a sad and tragic milestone. It has been six months since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February. During this devastating period, thousands of civilians have been killed and injured, including hundreds of children. Countless others have lost family members, friends and loved ones. The world has seen grave violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed with little or no accountability. Millions of Ukrainians have lost their homes and their worldly possessions, becoming internally displaced or refugees. As we approach the onset of winter, the humanitarian needs in Ukraine continue to rise rapidly, with millions of people in need of assistance and protection. As those needs skyrocket, it is imperative to ensure that humanitarian actors in Ukraine have safe and unhindered access to all who require assistance, no matter where they live.

The consequences of this senseless war are being felt far beyond Ukraine. We are seeing new vulnerabilities emerge in a global environment already worn out by conflicts, inequality, pandemic-induced economic and health crises and climate change, with a disproportionate impact on developing countries. The accelerated increase in food, fertilizer and fuel prices that were already high has triggered a global crisis that could drive millions more into extreme poverty, magnifying hunger and malnutrition, while threatening to raise the global humanitarian caseload to new highs and erase hard-won development gains. Vulnerable communities are grappling with the largest cost-of-living crisis in a generation, and high commodity and transportation costs are having major repercussions for existing humanitarian operations.

Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo will brief the Security Council on the impact of the armed conflict in Ukraine, both inside and outside the country, over the past six months. As I mentioned

here on Monday (see S/PV.9112), I want to take this opportunity to provide a brief update on my recent trip to Ukraine. I would have liked to have been able to do so at yesterday's meeting (see S/PV.9114), based on my experience in discussions about the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, but unfortunately I was out of New York for an engagement that was impossible to change on such short notice.

My visit was an important opportunity to follow up on a landmark deal that has brought a measure of hope, especially to developing countries and the millions of vulnerable people bearing the brunt of the global food crisis, some of them on the edge of famine. I can report to the Council that the Black Sea Grain Initiative, signed in Istanbul in July, is progressing well, with dozens of ships sailing in and out of Ukrainian ports, loaded so far with more than 720,000 metric tons of grains and other food products. That deal would not have been possible without the constructive approach of both Ukraine and Russia and the efforts of the Government of Türkiye.

On my visit to Lviv, I met with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine and President Erdoğan of Türkiye. I thanked them for their continued commitment to supporting the implementation of the Initiative to ensure the safe passage of Ukrainian food products and fertilizers to those in need and the world at large. Visiting the port of Odesa and the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, I was filled with emotion. In Odesa, I went aboard a bulk carrier, the *MV Kubrosli Y*, as it was being loaded with about 10,000 metric tons of wheat. It was deeply moving to peer into the hold of that cargo ship and see wheat pouring in. Even if it is in a limited way, the storied port of Odesa, which had been paralysed for months, is slowly coming back to life thanks to the Initiative. In Istanbul, I saw the *MV Brave Commander*, a World Food Programme-chartered ship. It was proudly flying the United Nations flag with its cargo destined for the Horn of Africa, where millions are at risk of famine. I then had the opportunity to walk up the long, narrow gangway of the *SSI Invincible II*, heading to the port of Chernomorsk to pick up Ukrainian grain. That vessel will carry one of the largest hauls of grain leaving Ukraine to date, more than 50,000 metric tons.

Just a few weeks ago, much of that would have been hard to imagine. We are seeing a powerful demonstration of what can be achieved, in even the most devastating context, when we put people first. As I stressed in Odesa and Istanbul, what I saw was the more visible part of the solution. The other part of

this package deal is ensuring that Russian food and fertilizers have unimpeded access to global markets and are not subject to sanctions. It is critical that all Governments and the private sector cooperate to effectively bring them to market. Together with the task team led by Rebeca Grynspan, I will continue my intense contacts for that purpose.

In 2022, there is enough food in the world — the problem is its uneven distribution. But if we do not stabilize the fertilizer market in 2022, there simply will not be enough food in 2023. Many farmers around the world are already planning to reduce areas intended for cultivation for next season. Getting a great deal more food and fertilizers out of Ukraine and Russia at reasonable cost will be vital to further calming commodity markets and lowering prices for consumers. I once again commend the parties for their engagement in the process and urge them to continue to build on the progress. I also renew the call I made in Odesa for a massive scaling-up of support to the developing countries that are getting hammered by the global food crisis. The shipments of grain and other foodstuffs are crucial, but they will not mean much if countries cannot afford them. Developed countries and international financial institutions must do more to ensure that developing countries can fully capitalize on the opportunities of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Despite progress on the humanitarian front, the fighting in Ukraine shows no signs of ending, with new potential areas of dangerous escalation appearing. Two places have been ever-present in my mind and in my discussions in Ukraine — Zaporizhzhya and Olenivka. I remain gravely concerned about the situation in and around Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhya. The warning lights are flashing. Any action that might endanger the physical integrity, safety or security of the nuclear plant is simply unacceptable. Any further escalation of the situation could lead to self-destruction. The security of the plant must be ensured, and the plant must be re-established as purely civilian infrastructure. In close contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Secretariat has assessed that we have the logistics and security capacity in Ukraine to support any IAEA mission from Kyiv to the Zaporizhzhya plant, provided that both Russia and Ukraine agree. I welcome the expressions of support for such a mission and urge that it happen as soon as possible.

I am deeply disturbed by the allegations we are hearing of violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights related to the armed conflict. International humanitarian law protects prisoners of war, and the International Committee of the Red Cross must have access to them wherever they are held. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine continue to monitor, document and report with a view to supporting the investigation of alleged violations. Work is also ongoing to deploy the recently established Fact-Finding Mission to Olenivka to look into the incident there on 29 July. The Fact-Finding Mission must be able to freely conduct its work, gather and analyse necessary information and find the facts. It is imperative that it have safe, secure and unfettered access to all relevant places, people and evidence without any limitation, impediment or interference.

On this thirty-first anniversary of Ukraine's independence, I want to congratulate the Ukrainian people. The people of Ukraine and beyond need peace and they need peace now. It is in line with the Charter of the United Nations. It is in line with international law.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: On 23 February (see S/PV.8974), the Security Council heard impassioned pleas to avert a war in Ukraine, to no avail. Today, exactly six months later, there is no end in sight to the conflict triggered by the Russian Federation's invasion. As we meet, the heaviest fighting is concentrated in the eastern Donbas region; the south near Kherson and Zaporizhzhya; and the north-east near Kharkiv. But virtually all corners of Ukraine are affected, and no one is out of reach of missile strikes. At the same time, several attacks, conducted mainly with drones, have also been reported in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, occupied by the Russian Federation since 2014.

Civilians are paying a heavy price in this war. During the past 181 days the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has recorded 13,560 civilian casualties, that is, 5,614 killed and 7,946 injured. These statistics are based on verified incidents. The actual numbers are considerably higher. The majority of civilian casualties were caused

by explosive weapons with wide-area effects. The use of such weapons in and around populated areas has predictable and devastating consequences. To date, OHCHR has documented damage, destruction or use for military purposes of 249 medical facilities and 350 educational facilities. The actual numbers may be higher. The indiscriminate shelling and bombing of populated areas, killing civilians and wrecking hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure are actions that may amount to war crimes.

We continue to receive reports of human rights violations. The arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of civilians, including local authorities, journalists, civil society activists and other civilians, continues. OHCHR has documented 327 cases of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of civilians by the Russian Federation and affiliated armed groups in non-Government-controlled territory. OHCHR has also recorded 39 arbitrary arrests in Ukrainian Government-controlled territory and 28 other cases that may amount to enforced disappearance.

Fourteen victims of enforced disappearance perpetrated by the Russian Federation and affiliated armed groups were found dead or died while in detention — 13 men and one woman. OHCHR has also corroborated allegations of hundreds of wilful killings of civilians while parts of the Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions were under Russian control in February and March. It has also verified 43 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, the majority attributable to Russian armed forces.

We are also concerned about the situation of prisoners of war on both sides. All prisoners of war are protected under international humanitarian law. There is a need for unimpeded and confidential access by the International Committee of the Red Cross to all places of detention, including to places of internment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees in the Russian Federation.

We are concerned about reports that the Russian Federation and affiliated armed groups in Donetsk are planning to try Ukrainian prisoners of war in a so-called international tribunal in Mariupol. Any tribunal must respect the protections afforded to all prisoners of war by international law, including fair-trial guarantees. The failure to uphold those standards could amount to a war crime.

Humanitarian needs continue to rise rapidly. At least 17.7 million people, or 40 per cent of the Ukrainian population, are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, including 3.3 million children. Humanitarian access is of great concern. Roads are heavily contaminated with explosive ordnance, putting civilians at risk and stopping humanitarian convoys from reaching them. More than 6.6 million internally displaced persons have been recorded. Another 6.7 million people have left Ukraine to other countries in Europe, most of them women and children.

As winter approaches, the destruction caused by war, combined with the lack of access to fuel or electricity, owing to damaged infrastructure, could become a matter of life or death if people are unable to heat their homes. An estimated 1.7 million people are already in need of urgent assistance with heating, shelter repair and other winterization preparation, as temperatures in parts of the country are expected to drop to -20°C .

The United Nations ongoing winterization efforts aim to complement and support the work led by the Government of Ukraine. Our revised flash appeal requires \$4.3 billion to support 17.7 million people in need of assistance through December. As of 19 August, donors have generously provided \$2.4 billion. The humanitarian response has scaled up to 500 humanitarian organization partners reaching more than 11.8 million people with at least one form of assistance. The war has severely impacted agriculture in Ukraine, leaving thousands of farmers without income, destroying grain-storage facilities, and exacerbating food insecurity among vulnerable groups. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), 20 per cent of the people of Ukraine have insufficient food.

As the Secretary-General emphasized, the repercussions of the war in Ukraine are being felt worldwide. According to World Food Programme estimates, 345 million people will be acutely food insecure or at a high risk of food insecurity in 82 countries with a WFP operational presence. That represents an increase of 47 million acutely hungry people caused by the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine.

Last month, the United Nations Development Programme estimated that up to 71 million people may have already been pushed into poverty in the three months after the start of the war. Key affected areas include the Balkans, the Caspian Sea region and

sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the Sahel. The global financial situation remains volatile, with concerns about potential stagflation scenarios in the latter part of 2022 and 2023. Energy markets remain under stress — a serious concern as the winter season in the northern hemisphere approaches.

While food prices have stabilized in recent weeks, this has not yet necessarily translated into lower inflation rates. Inflation continued to accelerate in July. It is breaking multi-decade records in developed countries, and yet it is developing and least developed countries that have been more drastically affected. The fiscal situation in many developing economies is a particular concern, especially as their borrowing ability has been fragile following the need to respond to the coronavirus disease pandemic with significant expenditures.

Today developing country debts and import bills are coming under further pressure. We remain concerned that the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in developing countries, particularly those in already-fragile situations, could lead to social unrest. While it is difficult to establish a direct link to the war, we have already seen an increase in the number of riots between the first and second quarter of 2022.

Today's grim six-month anniversary coincides with Ukraine's National Day. This is an occasion to celebrate the country's sovereignty and independence and proud heritage, and we congratulate the people of Ukraine on this day. But let us recall that the human and material toll of the war is tragic, colossal and evident — first and foremost for Ukraine and its people. The economic consequences for the rest of the world are ominous and growing.

The conflict is having another impact that, although less tangible, is just as perilous. In deepening global divisions and exacerbating mistrust in our institutions, the war is weakening the foundations of our international system. The consequences of a breakdown in how the world manages questions of peace and security are frightening to contemplate. This war is not only senseless, but it is exceedingly dangerous, and it touches all of us. It must end.

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

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Volodymyr Zelenskyy, President of Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy (*spoke in Ukrainian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): I thank everyone for their support and would like to convey our greetings from an independent and free Ukraine, as it continues its fight against Russian terror. Just recently, as I was preparing this statement, I was informed that Russia had launched missiles against railway cars in a train station in the Dnipro region. A number of people were killed and some 50 injured, and unfortunately the death toll could increase. That is our life every day now. That is how Russia prepared for today's meeting.

Today our country is celebrating its independence. We can all now see how much the world depends on our independence and on whether Ukraine is at peace, our people are safe, and the integrity of our territory and the viability of our borders are guaranteed. Any aspect of the terrible aggression against us will ultimately be related to one global crisis or another. What is happening right now? Russia has put the world on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. It is a fact that the Russian military has turned the territory of the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, the Zaporizhzhya power plant, into a war zone. That is a fact. Russia's armed provocation, shelling and deployment of terrorists on the territory of the station under the Russian flag have ensured that Europe and neighbouring regions now face the threat of radioactive pollution. That is a fact. The Zaporizhzhya power plant has six reactors. In the Chernobyl incident in 1986, only one reactor exploded. The International Atomic Energy Agency mission should take permanent control of the situation at the Zaporizhzhya plant as soon as possible and Russia should unconditionally stop its nuclear blackmail and completely withdraw from the plant.

Russia has also weaponized hunger. It is a fact that the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports has increased the deficits in an already destabilized global food market. That has led to a dangerous situation in various parts of the world that has compounded the effects of the drought in Europe, which is the worst in 500 years. Fortunately, we have managed to create a situation in which Russia was forced to accept the terms of the international community and allow grain exports from Ukrainian ports to be resumed. That has relieved some of the tension in the global food market but has not lifted the threat completely. Only a full, unobstructed resumption of Ukrainian agricultural exports can guarantee that tens of millions of people around the world will have something to eat.

Even now, in the twenty-first century, is it not strange that we must still fight to save tens of millions of people in a number of countries from artificial hunger caused by the insane aggression of a single country? That is also a fact. We in Ukraine do not believe that the United Nations was established to debate issues in the twenty-first century that should have long ago been relegated to the past. Nevertheless, I am grateful to the Secretary-General, the President of Türkiye and all the other responsible members of the international community who are striving to end the food crisis, for which Russia alone is responsible. In the coming weeks, we must do our utmost to expand the Black Sea Grain Initiative in Ukraine.

Turning now to another issue, energy, it is a fact that Russia is deliberately trying to impose energy poverty on tens of millions of people and to deprive them of regular access to basic goods by deliberately raising energy prices. That is all being done by a permanent member of the Security Council that continues to use the privilege of its veto right. The energy crisis in Europe, the threat of large-scale hunger, the political chaos created for African and Asian countries and the price hikes all over the world — surely those issues are all too much for a single country whose representative is sitting in the Security Council Chamber with the rest of the members?

I will mention one more issue, which is values. We should have a frank discussion about the fact that values are perceived differently in different parts of the world, with different approaches taken to them. But everywhere in the world, life has value. Peace has value. Economic prosperity has value. Every country that respects itself and its people punishes murder, and not just those who are its executioners. However, there is one country that behaves differently and is proud of doing so. It rewards murderers and encourages executioners. That is not just a threat to Ukraine, although thousands of Ukrainians have been killed by the Russian invaders and dozens of our cities have been destroyed by Russian artillery. Russia does not abide by the fundamental conventions on prisoners of war, something that has already been mentioned in today's meeting. The Russian occupiers' deliberate killing of Ukrainian prisoners of war in Olenivka has become one of the most terrible pages in the history of Europe. We need a United Nations fact-finding mission in Olenivka immediately, with a mandate that should cover all Ukrainian prisoners of war currently held by Russian forces.

There is no war crime that the Russian occupiers have not yet committed on the territory of Ukraine. If Russia is not stopped now, through a victory for Ukraine, all these Russian murderers will inevitably end up in other countries — in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Russian war criminals leave their tracks everywhere. We must all unite as soon as possible and act decisively to wipe out every trace of Russian missiles and ensure that no more cities are destroyed by Russian artillery and that there are no more threats of a nuclear disaster.

Russia must release the territory it is occupying in Ukraine in order to end the food crisis. Russia must withdraw from our lands and seas so that no country in the world can ever again disregard the United Nations Charter and the conventions that are binding on all humankind. Russia must be held accountable for the crime of aggression against Ukraine. A relevant draft resolution will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its seventy-seventh session. In order to restore a sense of justice to international relations, we must all join in compelling Russia to recognize that the inviolability of borders and peace are unconditional values for all nations. That is why the independence and integrity of our country are crucially important to international relations. Preserving our independence, guaranteeing our borders and restoring economic ties with Ukraine will bring back the true power of the Charter and save the world from the crises we are all being forced to face.

Secretary-General António Guterres has the ambitious intention to organize a Summit of the Future next year. We support that initiative and reaffirm that, in order to build a future, it is necessary to leave in the dustbin of history that which has always prevented humankind from living in peace, namely, aggression and colonial ambitions, which are what Russia brought to Ukraine. I believe that we can surely build a future, and it would be good and symbolic to hold that summit in Ukraine and that the world's future is decided on the territory of Ukraine is decided. Whether we will have a future at all is also being decided at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and in our seaports and in Donbas and in Crimea. Our independence is the world's security.

I thank the Council for this opportunity to brief it on the situation in our country. I also thank members for their kind attention and the Chinese presidency for arranging my virtual participation in this meeting.

Glory to Ukraine.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank His Excellency President Zelenskyy for his statement.

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

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Secretary-General Guterres and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their briefings.

I would also like to congratulate Ukrainians on their Independence Day and thank President Zelenskyy for participating in this meeting today. The United States stands with President Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine today and every day. Every Russian bomb that falls only strengthens our resolve to support their sovereignty and their independence.

Today marks six months of Russia's premeditated, unjustifiable and brutal full-scale war against Ukraine. It has been just six months since we sat here in the Council Chamber and watched as Russia, serving in the presidency, attempted to defend the indefensible. Six months of Russia's defiance of the international community. Six months of Russia's flagrant lies in disregard of international law, including violations of the Charter of the United Nations. Six months of attacks by Russia, killing Ukrainian civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure. Six months of devastation and missile strikes that have torn apart families and stolen the lives of too many, including the life of 4-year-old Lisa Dmitrieva, who was killed last month in a missile strike that left 24 people dead. Six months of horrific atrocities, including rape, murder and torture in towns like Bucha, Irpin and others. Six months of families being separated and millions displaced. Six months of killings, thousands dead.

Six months later, Russia's goal is as clear as ever: to dismantle Ukraine as a geopolitical entity and erase it from the world map. Russian disinformation campaigns are increasingly being weaponized to prepare for further attempts to annex Ukrainian territory. The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, publicly acknowledged that as one of the Kremlin's objectives. Specifically, Russia is laying the groundwork to attempt to annex the regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhya, as well as all of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Let us be clear: the international community will never recognize Russia's attempt to change Ukraine's

borders by force. When the world's leaders come to New York next month to reaffirm their commitments to the Charter of the United Nations, they are also reaffirming their support for that basic principle. No matter how many more sham referendums or illegitimate authorities Moscow tries to install, we will continue to defend the Charter of the United Nations and uphold Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.

As we discussed yesterday (see S/PV.9114), Russia is responsible for creating another grave risk to another core commitment by the international community, namely, that of nuclear safety. Ukraine had an impeccable record of nuclear energy safety and security at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, but Russia recklessly attacked and seized control of that plant by force, risking nuclear disaster.

In a similar vein, we are particularly concerned by Russia's so-called filtration operations, which involve the systematic forced deportation of Ukrainian civilians to remote areas of Russia. Those camps are abducting and separating children from their parents. Russian forces are forcibly confiscating and replacing passports, dictating curriculums in schools and replacing Ukrainian street names and other public signs with Russian language alternatives. The evidence of Russian forces interrogating, detaining and forcibly deporting hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including children, continue to mount.

The reasons are clear: they want to destroy Ukraine, its culture, its people and its very existence. Even where we have seen progress like the movement of grain and other foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports following the much-needed arrangement signed with Türkiye, Russia did not let us forget about its intentions. Mere hours after the deal was inked, Russia launched missiles at the port of Odesa. Those missiles were a potent reminder that millions of Ukrainians are still under siege and tens of millions around the world are being driven to hunger by Russia's actions.

For all the violence and carnage, the hunger and humanitarian crises, the human rights abuses and threats to vulnerable groups, Russia — and Russia alone — bears sole responsibility. Russia alone is the sole hindrance to a swift resolution to the crisis. We must continue to call for and ensure accountability for all of Russia's atrocities.

Today marks six months of the war, but it also marks Ukraine's Independence Day — a day normally celebrated by parades and festivals with joy. Many of us came together in a similar kind of celebration on 4 July on the lawn of the United Nations Headquarters as America celebrated its independence. We ate and we danced and we looked in awe at the fireworks in the sky.

In Ukraine today there are none of the typical festivals. There are no feasts or concerts. Citizens have been told to stay away from cities and to look for very different kinds of explosions from the sky. We heard President Zelenskyy describe just that to us today. One Ukrainian citizen told a National Public Radio reporter that she hopes that “we can celebrate independence without weapons in the future — maybe with flowers and dances instead.” Let us do everything we can to bring the flowers and the dances back to Kyiv and back to Ukrainians. Let us pray that, by this time next year, her dream will have come true.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me also thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their updated information.

Thirty-one years ago today, Ukraine declared its independence from the decaying Soviet Union. It is a day to celebrate, and I am sure that, despite the situation, Ukrainians in Ukraine and abroad will probably mark their day in one way or another. We join them in those celebrations and welcome President Zelenskyy's participation in this meeting under the exceptional circumstances that he and his country continue to endure. But celebrations are not easy and are hardly joyful when a country is under attack from a neighbour that from dawn to dusk pretends to be its brother — but the kind that assaults its own brother, killing its people, destroying its homes, bombarding its cities, abusing its women, deporting its people, breaking up its country and denying its existence — an abusive brother who wants to take everything.

Today also marks exactly six months from the start of the invasion, the day the Charter of the United Nations was thrown into the Kremlin's shredder, when the term “respect for international law” lost any meaning in Moscow. It marks 27 weeks from the adoption of General Assembly resolution ES-11/1, when every country in the world but four asked Russia to stop the war and respect the sovereignty of Ukraine. It marks 25 weeks from a legally binding order of the International Court of Justice, the highest international court, addressed to

Russia and requiring it to immediately halt its military activities. All those calls and documents continue to be ignored. Russia persists in its course, with the clear intention of dismantling Ukraine and subjugating its people, despite unquestionable evidence and hard proof that its actions have produced and continue to produce serious global destabilizing consequences for security, energy and food, including the risk of a nuclear catastrophe, and are increasingly decoupling Russia from the rest of the European continent. We commend Türkiye and the Secretary-General for their tireless and successful efforts to make sure that grain and other food products are being exported from Ukraine and can reach the tables of the needy throughout the world.

The war is having a terribly negative impact on everything in Ukraine and beyond, but the worst is its devastating impact on civilians in general and children in particular, the generation of the future. Some 1,000 children, maybe more, will not be there to see Ukraine liberated. They have been killed — five every day — and 5.2 million of them are in need of humanitarian assistance. At least 3.6 million children have been affected by the closure of schools or the impact of attacks on schools, which will continue to delay the children's return to in-person learning. Many more are left with invisible wounds that must be addressed without delay in order to prioritize children's mental health and psychological needs and help them build resilience. If there were one single reason to put an immediate end to this war, it is that — to save children, our future generations, from the scourge of war, as is written in the Charter of the United Nations.

A few weeks ago, a deadly explosion killed 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war held in Ukrainian territory under Russian control. That tragic event has still not been independently investigated, and as with everything of that nature, we are told that Ukraine did it. The prisoners of war should have been protected by law, as well as by the guarantees given by to the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross that the Azov detainees would be properly treated. Unfortunately, 53 of them were killed. We welcome the Secretary-General's appointment of an investigation team and urge the United Nations to do everything to make sure that the investigation is done impartially and on United Nations terms. Those responsible for such despicable crimes must be held accountable.

With a regular army stretched thin after six months of a disastrous and bloody invasion of Ukraine, there is

increasing evidence that the Kremlin is making dreadful choices and recruiting Russia's prisoners to fight. Credible reports and meticulous investigations point in that direction. That is very worrying for a situation that is already alarming, since after seeing what regular soldiers were capable of in Bucha, we shiver at the thought of what might happen when one gives weapons to murderers and criminals who should be behind bars in Russia, not in Ukraine wearing military uniforms. If that proves to be true, those new fighters will fill in for those who have come to their senses, discovered the truth, abandoned the war and decided to stop being a partner in crime. One such is Pavel Filatyev, who was sent to Kherson. He is free to speak his mind now and tell his story. What is he saying? Let me quote.

“We understood that we were dragged into a serious conflict where we were simply destroying towns and not actually liberating anyone. We do not see the reason that our Government is trying to explain to us. All of it is a lie. We are just destroying peaceful lives.”

His account is much longer — 141 pages — and is out in the open for anyone to read the immense despair of someone sent to commit crimes next door.

We have warned before, and we want to reiterate, particularly on this day, that any annexation of territory, any development incompatible with Ukraine's Constitution imposed by Russia, such as sham elections or referendums *à la russe*, will not be accepted or recognized. Pro-Russian officials in the territories under Russian control speak openly of joining Russia by implementing the Crimea template. That will be null and void, a dead end. As key European leaders stated as recently as yesterday, Ukraine's friends are ready to support Ukraine's fight to defend itself, not because anyone is against Russia and the Russians, but simply because all who are for peace see in Ukraine a litmus test of the European security architecture and a stress test of the resilience of world peace and security in the face of long-banished imperial behaviour.

On this day, we once again reaffirm our full and unwavering solidarity with the people of Ukraine. We pay tribute to all who are fighting to defend their land and their lives and to all who have been sacrificed for the independence and freedom of Ukraine. We reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, and we call on Russia to stop the war, withdraw its troops

and change course, so that next year at this time there is a truly happy parade in Kyiv, not one that features the burned-out and abandoned husks of Russian military equipment, the epitome of this senseless war.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General and Ms. DiCarlo for their briefings, and I would also like to welcome the address by President Zelenskyy this morning.

For exactly six months, Ukrainians have courageously resisted the war of aggression launched by Russia, with its horrific toll of mass suffering and abuse. In case anyone needs reminding, Ukrainians are fighting for their country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. What better time to pay tribute to them than today, the day of their national holiday, which marks the declaration of Ukraine's independence, in 1991? Through its struggle, Ukraine is also defending the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why France will continue to stand by its side. Together with our European partners, we will continue to support it as long as it takes in the face of Russian aggression.

On this day when Ukrainian independence is celebrated, I would like to make it clear that France will never recognize the annexation of the territory occupied by the Russian Federation. We will not recognize the legitimacy of independence referendums organized by Russia in those areas in an attempt to legitimize its aggression and camouflage its flagrant violations of international law, and neither will we ever recognize the annexation of Crimea.

With this war, Russia is contributing to the further destabilization of a world already dealing with serious threats. We welcome the fact that the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul is now operational and that 33 vessels have been able to leave Ukrainian ports since the signing of the Istanbul agreements. But let us make no mistake, the negative consequences of the Russian-led war continue and are multiplying. Supply chains are still disrupted, transportation costs remain very high and the energy market is in turmoil. As long as Russian aggression continues, those consequences will continue to proliferate. The presence of Russian troops at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant also raises the risk of a nuclear accident, with potentially devastating consequences. We reiterate our call for the withdrawal of Russian forces. Russia would be primarily responsible for any incident. It is crucial

that the International Atomic Energy Agency be able to conduct an expert mission on the ground as soon as possible.

The reports we are receiving about extrajudicial killings and acts of torture against Ukrainian prisoners, in particular in the village of Olenivka, but also elsewhere, are shocking. Russia must comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, which apply in all international armed conflicts — regardless of whether it acknowledges that it is at war.

Since the first days of Russia's invasion, France, together with its partners, has actively worked to ensure that the perpetrators of the crimes committed in Ukraine are identified and prosecuted and their crimes documented. We actively support the work of the International Criminal Court, which is investigating facts that may constitute war crimes, genocide or crimes against humanity. We also support the investigations that are being conducted by Ukrainian jurisdictions. We will also be paying close attention to the information soon to be released by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, established by the Human Rights Council, with the support of France.

Finally, we once again call on Russia to choose diplomacy in order to rebuild peace with Ukraine, while respecting its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and to do so at a time and under conditions decided by Ukraine, the party that is being attacked. France will continue working to ensure that happens.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his remarks and efforts with regard to resolving the war in Ukraine, as well as its wider consequences, including for global food security. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I want to welcome President Zelenskyy's address to the Security Council and reiterate Ireland's unwavering friendship and support to the people of Ukraine on the occasion of their Independence Day.

It has been eight and a half years since Russia first violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine; and today marks six months to the day since Russia launched its further illegal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, violating and attacking the core principles of the United Nations. Yet let us be clear. The internationally recognized borders of Ukraine have not changed in the past six months, or in the

past eight and half years. Russia's decision to invade Ukraine has not changed those borders; they did not change in 2014, and they have not changed in 2022. And Russia's unilateral steps to integrate parts of Ukraine will not be recognized as anything other than flagrant violations of the principles of sovereign independence and non-intervention and a bald attempt to entrench a supposed sphere of influence. We also condemn Russia's dangerous, escalatory and unacceptable nuclear rhetoric during this conflict.

For 183 days, Ireland has called for an end to the unjustified and unjustifiable war being waged against Ukraine. As each day passes, the reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by Russia grow. Civilians in Ukraine continue to pay the highest price. For six months, they have been living under terror, not knowing where and when the next bomb will strike. We therefore once again call on Russia to comply with its obligations under international law. Parties to the conflict must comply with international humanitarian law. They have an obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants and not to attack civilian objects; and there is a prohibition against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, as well as an obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack. Compliance is not optional.

As I said at our meeting yesterday (see S/PV.9114), Ireland remains extremely concerned about the situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the serious risk of a radiological accident or incident arising from military activity at the site, with devastating consequences. We call on Russia to end its illegal occupation of the site, withdraw its troops and munitions and ensure that the Ukrainian authorities can uphold their responsibilities for ensuring safety and security at the site. We welcome reports that a visit by the International Atomic Energy Agency could go ahead soon and support the Secretary-General's call for the plant to remain connected to Ukraine's power grid.

We once again call on Russia to end its brutal war and withdraw its troops from the entire internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours. Russia can end its aggression if it chooses. And even while it chooses to execute its illegal war, it still has obligations under international law, and it must comply with them.

We note the remarks made this morning by the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General with regard to humanitarian needs, particularly in the face of the onset of winter. Russia's aggression continues to cause mounting hardship and suffering for the people of Ukraine, who have shown remarkable resilience and resolve. Today Ireland stands in full solidarity with them.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): Russia's war in Ukraine is affecting us all. It is an attack on democratic values and freedom. It is causing a global food crisis. It is a blatant violation of international law and the very principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I would like to thank President Zelenskyy for his strong testimony this morning and for the heroic fight that he and the Ukrainian people are engaged in for their country, as well as for the peace and freedom of us all.

Today we mark Ukraine's declaration of independence in 1991. And here we are, 31 years later, because the Soviet successor State, Russia, has invaded Ukraine. That is truly tragic. We therefore reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

I want to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her thorough and thoughtful briefing. I also thank the Secretary-General for his briefing, including on his important recent visit to Ukraine. Norway applauds his crucial role in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, as well as his further tireless efforts to alleviate the consequences of this horrible war and to restore peace.

Norway condemns Russia's military aggression in the strongest terms possible. Russia's warfare in urban and populated areas and use of heavy explosive weapons is destroying homes, schools and hospitals. The ongoing attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including nuclear power plants, are also having a devastating and unacceptable impact. Thousands of civilians have already been killed. Millions have fled their homes and others are trapped in war zones. We stand with the people throughout Ukraine, who continue to live in daily fear of the next attack. We reiterate our demand that civilians must be protected and international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be fully respected and implemented. Humanitarian actors must be ensured access.

Russia must stop the war and fully, immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces and military equipment from Ukraine. Russia started the war in Ukraine, and it can choose to stop it. It seems clear that war crimes are being committed. They cannot be forgotten. Perpetrators on all levels must be held accountable.

The Secretary-General has talked about a beacon of hope with the resumption of Ukrainian grain exports. We are hopeful that one of the global bread basket's critical transportation lines might be restored. That is much-needed, both for Ukrainians and the world's most vulnerable people and countries. It is also critical that the World Food Programme and other humanitarian actors are once again able to purchase grain from Ukraine for humanitarian food assistance. It is now vital for the Black Sea Grain Initiative to be fully implemented.

Every day, more people are feeling the accumulated effects of the war. In May, the Council expressed its unified support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to search for a peaceful solution. We must continue to support his efforts for dialogue and mediation between the parties in the search for peace and freedom for the people of Ukraine. We stress the joint responsibility of the members of the Council to make every effort to ensure peace. We want to tell the Ukrainian people once again that our thoughts are with them on their national day — and every other day. We reiterate our solidarity with them.

Mr. Kariuki (United Kingdom): On behalf of the United Kingdom, I thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their briefings, and we warmly welcome President Zelenskyy's participation in today's meeting.

Six months ago, even as the Security Council met late into the night to try to avert catastrophe (see S/PV.8974), Russia launched an unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. In the months since then, Ukraine has been subjected to the full horrors of war. As we have heard today, thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded. More than 17 million are currently in need of humanitarian assistance. Schools, hospitals and other medical facilities have been attacked. We have seen a pattern of Russian violations of international humanitarian law and human rights abuses and violations, including reports of torture, inhumane

treatment and arbitrary detention. Ukrainian citizens, including children, have been forcibly deported to Russia. Six million people are displaced within Ukraine, and more than 6 million are refugees abroad. And the people of Ukraine are not the only victims of this war. Beyond Ukraine's borders, Vladimir Putin's decisions have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable, with many millions around the world affected by rising food and fuel prices. We once again pay tribute to the work of the Secretary-General, together with Türkiye, to negotiate the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Today, in what would be another violation of the Charter, there are reports that Russia is planning fake referendums to illegally annex more territory from Ukraine. Any such attempts will fool no one. After all, Russia has lied throughout its illegal invasion, using disinformation to create false pretexts, undermine Ukrainian sovereignty, obscure the truth and hide war crimes. Such efforts would also further demonstrate Russia's contempt for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which we have all committed to upholding as States Members of the Organization.

Thirty-one years ago today, Ukraine declared its independence, with more than 90 per cent of Ukrainians voting in favour of it. Today that pride in Ukrainian identity and sovereignty remains as strong as ever. We have all seen the courage and ingenuity of the Ukrainian people as they have fought to defend their nation against Russia's attack on their national sovereignty and right to self-determination. Ukraine's fight is a fight for the principles of the Charter, and all of us in this Chamber have a responsibility to recognize that. It is a fight that has inspired the world with its courage and defiance against brutality. So today, on Ukrainian Independence Day, we stand together with the nation of Ukraine and its heroic people, who continue to resist Russia's attempts to rewrite international borders by force. We once again call on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine, and we call for full accountability for Russia's crimes.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I acknowledge the participation in this meeting of President Zelenskyy, whom I congratulate on Ukraine's national day. I thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their remarks.

Six months after the start of hostilities, there seems to be no solution in sight for the conflict in Ukraine. The situation is now compounded by a risk of

nuclear disaster. It is essential that the parties refrain from attacks that could threaten the safety of nuclear facilities, as has been happening in the vicinity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Brazil calls once again for the two sides to facilitate access for an International Atomic Energy Agency mission so that the conditions at the plant can be properly evaluated.

It is deeply saddening to note how little progress has been made towards a political solution. The most notable result has been the initiative for grain exports from Ukrainian ports and for facilitating Russian grain and fertilizer exports, announced in July. We are grateful for the efforts of the Secretary-General and the support of the Government of Türkiye for it. When the parties engaged in negotiations, an important result was achieved that partially alleviates the effects of the conflict on food prices around the world, particularly in developing countries.

Reality and history show that closing the door to dialogue is not the right approach to resolving any conflict, and that applies to Ukraine. Actions that prolong the hostilities will only result in greater human suffering and will not resolve the underlying causes. Brazil welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to ensure the implementation of the Istanbul agreements and takes note of his visit to the region last week. It is essential that the international community seek to preserve that important achievement, which indicates a possible path towards broader negotiations. We urge the parties to keep open the channels of dialogue that made the Istanbul package possible, as they offer the best prospects for peace.

Lastly, we would like to remind both side of their obligation under international humanitarian law to protect civilians and prevent human rights abuses. Attacks on residential areas and facilities such as schools, churches and hospitals are unacceptable and fuel a logic of retaliation that must be avoided at all costs. It is in everyone's interest to ensure that the two countries can live peacefully side by side in the future and cooperate to achieve their development goals.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for their respective briefings and welcome the participation of the President of Ukraine in this meeting.

As the war in Ukraine enters its seventh month, we remember with great sorrow all who have fallen

victim to it since the beginning of the conflict. We would like to express our solidarity with the survivors, including the many women, children, elderly and displaced persons and refugees whose daily lives have been upended. We pay tribute to the humanitarian personnel on the ground who are working to alleviate the horrendous daily effects of the war on its survivors by providing vital and valuable assistance, often in extremely difficult conditions. In addition to the war's human toll, its material cost has also been very high. The images of the destruction of public buildings and roads, and of the infrastructure and means to provide public services, have become a daily occurrence.

The shelling of nuclear facilities, for which the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant has become a symbol, raises the risk of a nuclear catastrophe, which is increasing along with the heightened military activity around the site. It is urgent to ensure that military activity in the vicinity of nuclear sites stops and the warring parties refrain from any action that could put the world at risk of a nuclear disaster, with irreparable consequences. We once again call on the parties to comply with the current nuclear security rules and to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in securing potentially dangerous sites in order to prevent the risk of disaster. We welcome the recent announcements indicating the willingness of the parties to allow a mission of IAEA experts to visit the Zaporizhzhya power plant in order to avoid a conflagration.

We reiterate our opposition to the war and our outrage about attacks on civilians. We will not tire of repeating that the parties to the conflict must respect their international commitments under international humanitarian law.

The most recent update from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reports 13,477 civilian casualties, including 5,587 killed and 7,890 injured. Many civilians, including children, are maimed by explosive weapons with wide-area and indiscriminate effects. So long as the fighting continues, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and surrounding countries will continue to deteriorate. It is hard to predict the extent of the physical and psychological repercussions that will result, let alone the economic consequences, whose shockwaves continue to spread.

For seven months, the Council has been plagued by unprecedented fragmentation. It has moved to the

rhythm of the invectives of one camp against another, while towns and villages are ravaged and women, men and children are killed by a bloody war. Our mandate is to stop wars, if not to prevent them. We must take urgent action in line with our mandate and the purpose of the Council.

Faced with the hopeless logic of confrontation and antagonism, my country will continue to choose the side of peace, negotiation and dialogue. We must activate the channels of dialogue. That is the unwavering position of my country, which, since the beginning of the hostilities, has supported consultations as the preferred method of resolving conflict. The recent agreement reached to allow the export of grain from Ukrainian ports is a ray of hope that can lead to others. It is high time for peace to return to the top of our priorities.

In conclusion, my country once again calls on the parties to firmly commit to negotiations in good faith with the goal of silencing the guns and bringing peace to Ukraine.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres and Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for their updates on the situation in Ukraine.

Kenya takes this opportunity to convey its best wishes to President Zelenskyy and the people of Ukraine on their Independence Day. We regret that what should be a day of celebration is impaired by a war that has breached Ukraine's territorial integrity, contrary to the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The people of Ukraine have suffered greatly over the past six months. We offer them, and particularly the bereaved families, our deepest condolences.

Ukraine's Independence Day gives us an opportunity to appreciate our own independence, as I am sure is the case for every member of the Council. We will forever be thankful for the brave men and women who fought for our freedom. We joined the United Nations within days of becoming independent. We signed up to its principles because, as a young nation, we needed assurance that our sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence would be respected. We valued its mission to outlaw aggression and sought to use its instruments to help us turn swords into ploughshares so that we could enjoy the fruits of our freedom.

We remain thankful that the United Nations stood for decolonization and that it gave voice to the smallest

countries in the world, without regard to their military might or wealth. What a precious heritage we have, and how intolerable that it should be as endangered as it is today. We are forced by this moment to recall how its failed predecessor, the League of Nations, was unable to stop the conflicts that led to the great fire of the Second World War.

Multilateralism, as expressed in the United Nations, including in the Chamber, with all its flaws, is our last hope against a new world war. The wars we choose to fight, as Kenya and Africa, as I believe is the case for most of the world, are for independence from poverty, ignorance and disease. We have no desire to be drawn into a worldwide conflict, or for our grievances and disagreements to be the soil in which wars by proxy take root.

We see in Ukraine's war a grim warning that we too may be engulfed by the competitions and confrontations that contribute to its ferocity. That is why we believe that Ukraine's immediate fate is so important to all of us. Ukraine deserves the same freedom and independence that we enjoy. It is a Member of our United Nations in good standing. Its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence should be respected. Its people do not deserve to have their lives and livelihoods destroyed.

Unless the war in Ukraine is stopped through dialogue and negotiation, it could be the first of a series of conflicts that future historians will name the Third World War. Such a disaster would be different from the last world wars and all the wars before them. The dangers of direct conflict between nuclear-armed Powers mean that most of their confrontations would be undertaken by proxy. Africa and the rest of the world would be thrown into a mirror of the Cold War, which shattered our democracies, overthrew and killed our leaders and robbed us of decades of economic progress. Stopping this war, in a manner that adheres to the principles of the United Nations Charter, is what will keep other old grievances from boiling over.

Not all is lost. Even in such dark times, we must remember that in the past serious threats to international peace and security were successfully resolved. There is yet a chance to build on the slim, but important, success represented by the agreement between the parties for the secure export of Ukraine's food products through the Black Sea, as well as food and fertilizer exports from Russia. We commend the Secretary-General and

the Government of Türkiye for their crucial facilitation. The willingness of the parties to negotiate and the alertness, subtle skill and moral persuasion of the facilitators demonstrate that diplomacy is still able to deliver if given a chance.

We cannot leave our fate to the most powerful. Some of them may be bent on domination, but we cannot allow it to be at the expense of our common peace. They may project certainty and great power, but none can know or control the future. It is time for intuitive, bold leadership from any and every country that has influence or leverage to push them to dialogue, rather than confrontation.

The immediate aim should be the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine; the opening of safe humanitarian corridors and unhindered humanitarian access and the security of all nuclear installations, especially the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Those should be part of a road map to achieve a comprehensive agreement that secures the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Such an end, given the emerging escalation between the great Powers, would ideally be linked to a broader negotiation that produces a stable European security order. The principles underlying such an order should adhere to the United Nations Charter and be utilized to stabilize other parts of the world. In the meantime, Kenya, while in the Security Council and in all relevant forums, will offer every support to positive efforts seeking those aims.

We will continue to champion the cause of the Secretary-General and his team, who should be commended for their tireless efforts. In that regard, we applaud the Secretary-General's recent visit to Lviv. We also pay tribute to the determined efforts by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to provide humanitarian aid and comfort to Ukraine's most vulnerable. Their impact is evidence of a depth of competence that we hope can be resourced and deployed with equal ambition in other conflict areas.

We know that even with a multilateralism that is under grave threat, as this downcast Security Council reflects, a spirit of urgency and imagination can still enable us to forge a just peace for Ukraine. I wish for continued independence for all Ukrainians, as I reaffirm Kenya's respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General

for his opening remarks and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her valuable briefing. I also want to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General and his team for their effective use of his good offices. As he said in Odesa, the ships that have left Ukrainian ports over the past month carrying grain are indeed vessels of hope. I also thank President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine for his briefing, and I would like to join my colleagues in congratulating him and all Ukrainians on their country's Independence Day.

Today we are marking six months since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. It is difficult to overstate the toll it has taken on the dead, the injured, those remaining in the country and those forced to flee. A staggering third of Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes, and 6.6 million have sought refuge across Europe. Beyond Ukraine's borders, the conflict has exacerbated food insecurity and the rise in commodity prices, both of which add to the daily hardship suffered by hundreds of millions of people around the world.

The United Arab Emirates enthusiastically applauds the agreements brokered with the support of the Secretary-General and the Republic of Türkiye to facilitate the export of grain, food supplies and fertilizers to global markets. However, that rare example of tangible progress must not be the last. It must incentivize more concerted efforts to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the lives of those most in need and hopefully ensure that we are not here six months from now, marking a year of conflict and further global disruption.

The Charter of the United Nations provides a repertoire of tools to address the peaceful settlement of disputes, none of which are applicable in the absence of the political will to use them. That in turn requires all of us to recognize that the war will end only through a negotiated settlement and that all wars must eventually end, as they have done countless times in human history. There is value in the Council's meetings on Ukraine when they are complemented by action, laser-focused on alleviating the suffering of civilians and finding a political path to the war's end. We cannot change the past, but what happens next is a responsibility we all share. In the past few weeks, we have seen signs of progress, particularly with the agreements on agricultural exports. We have also taken positive note of the parties' expressed support for a mission from the International Atomic Energy Agency to the

Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, and we reiterate how urgent that is. As the Secretary-General said, warning lights are flashing and a failure to act could have grave consequences. Those initiatives all have potential as confidence-building measures that could unlock broader political discussions. We need to work hard to preserve and expand those windows towards viable diplomatic initiatives aimed at de-escalation and resolution.

Ultimately, a peaceful, sustainable resolution relies on the Charter of the United Nations and international law as our guiding principles. Six months in, our call for a cessation of hostilities throughout Ukraine is as relevant as it has ever been. We cannot become inured to this war. The stakes are too high, and every life is too precious. The conflict should end now, and we need to see leaders from both sides commit to charting that difficult path forward with all of our support.

Ms. Opong-Ntiri (Ghana): I welcome the participation in this meeting of President Zelenskyy and the other 39 participants. We wish Ukraine the very best on its Independence Day. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his pertinent briefing on the humanitarian and security situation in Ukraine, and I join others in commending his direct involvement in the multiple mediation efforts aimed at getting the Russian Federation and Ukraine to cease their military hostilities and engage in positive dialogue. In that regard, I want to affirm Ghana's full support for the continuing use of the Secretary-General's good offices in helping to bring lasting peace to the people of Ukraine.

The Black Sea Grain Initiative and the agreement on promoting the access of Russian food products and fertilizers to world markets — both secured under the auspices of the United Nations, with active facilitation by other key actors — have proved that with persistent diplomacy, an acceptable political solution can be found to the ongoing military hostilities in Ukraine. It is now more important than ever for us to seize the positive momentum generated by those outcomes and intensify the efforts to find other avenues to significantly defuse the dangerously escalating tensions.

Indeed, since the signing of the agreements on 27 July and their subsequent implementation, the maritime humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea created by that initiative has enabled more than 500,000 metric tons of grain and other foodstuffs to be evacuated from

Ukraine's southern ports to various parts of the world that had been reeling under the threat of hunger and food insecurity. We urge Council members to overcome their persistent divisions and work constructively to bring the weight of the Council's authority to bear in support of such peace initiatives.

Ghana continues to be deeply concerned about the mounting death toll and destruction of economic infrastructure in Ukraine. The deliberate targeting of nuclear facilities meant for peaceful purposes has further heightened our fears that we are seeing the start of a dangerous phase in this senseless war. We stress the need for the parties to heed our genuine calls and those of the international community generally for an end to the war. We also urge that all zones around Ukraine's nuclear facilities be demilitarized and affirm our support for allowing international inspectors access to the facilities, in line with established norms.

Beyond the fact that there can be no military solution to the parties' substantive security concerns, the war is unfortunately accentuating geopolitical tensions in many areas, putting further strain on the already fragile international order. We share the belief that any miscalculation could potentially result in a wider conflict in Europe, with long-term irreparable damage to the global peace and security architecture. We therefore continue to urge for maximum restraint on the part of all the key actors and for unconditional respect for the obligations imposed by the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, we encourage all the parties to the conflict to seek a peaceful settlement, as there should be no question about the need to respect international law, which underpins the current rules-based international order.

In conclusion, we want to underscore that it is crucial that the lives and safety of civilians caught up in the ongoing war, particularly women and children, be prioritized above every other consideration. We therefore renew our call to the Russian Federation to withdraw all its invading troops from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and pursue diplomacy and dialogue to resolve its legitimate security concerns.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive briefing on his visit to Ukraine last week. We also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I join my Foreign Minister today in conveying our greetings to the people of Ukraine on the occasion of their Independence Day.

As we meet today to mark six months since the beginning of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, India is ready to dispatch its twelfth consignment of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, which consists of 26 types of medicines, including haemostatic bandages meant to stem the bleeding of deep wounds in children and adults. That was a specific request by the Ukrainian side, and we have made sure that we will react in the fastest possible time to meet it.

In the past six months, India has dispatched 11 consignments, approximately 97.5 tons, of humanitarian aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries, such as Romania, Moldova, Slovakia and Poland. Ukraine and its neighbouring countries offered their full support in the relief and evacuation operation involving approximately 22,500 Indian nationals in February and March. That humanitarian aid and assistance symbolizes the human-centric development approach of the Government of India, a central tenet of our national beliefs and values, which perceives the whole world as one family.

India remains deeply concerned over the situation in Ukraine. The conflict has resulted in loss of lives and countless miseries for its peoples, particularly for women, children and elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries. We believe that, going forward, we need to focus on the following aspects.

First, in terms of diplomacy, India continues to advocate for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to violence. We encourage talks between Ukraine and Russia. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has himself, more than once, spoken to them in that regard.

Secondly, the situation on the ground calls for sustained prioritization of urgent humanitarian relief. I have just elaborated that we continue to give the highest priority to the requests that we receive in that regard. We also reiterate the importance of the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian action must always be guided by those principles, that is, humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Those principles should never be politicized.

Thirdly, we will work with the international community and partner countries to mitigate the economic hardships that are resulting from this conflict. The impact of the Ukraine conflict is not just limited to Europe. The conflict is exacerbating concerns

over food, fertilizer and fuel security, particularly in developing countries.

Fourth, food security remains a major concern. It is necessary for all of us to adequately appreciate the importance of equity, affordability and accessibility when it comes to food grains. India has been approached for the supply of wheat and sugar by many countries, and we are responding positively. In the past three months alone, India exported more than 1.8 million tons of wheat to countries in need, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Sudan and Yemen.

Fifthly, we are also trying to increase the production in India of essential agrarian inputs, such as fertilizers. There is also a need to focus on the availability of fertilizers and to keep the supply chains for fertilizers smooth at a global scale.

Sixthly, efforts should be made to ensure stability in the global supply of fuel commensurate with demand. Open markets must not become an argument to perpetuate inequity and promote discrimination.

Lastly, we have delivered for the world in terms of vaccines; we did it earlier for medicines. I would therefore like to assure the Security Council that India will step forward whenever the global South is constrained on aspects of food, health and energy security, and we will do so in a manner that is helpful to the global economy and does not take undue advantage of countries in distress.

In conclusion, India's approach will be to promote dialogue and diplomacy with an overarching aim to end the conflict and work with other partners to mitigate the economic challenges emerging from the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

It is in our collective interest to work constructively, both inside the United Nations and outside, towards seeking an early resolution to this conflict. We continue to reiterate that the global order is anchored on international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): With regard to the statement by the President of Ukraine, the reason that the Security Council at one point decided not to invite foreign leaders via video-conference included avoiding technical difficulties, as we just saw during Mr. Zelenskyy's statement. It was very difficult to make out anything at certain points.

We hope that our position with regard to the usefulness of the in-person participation of such guests — at the very least out of respect for them — has become clearer as a result to those following today's meeting.

We met here yesterday (see S/PV.9114) in connection with a concrete threat to international peace and security, namely, Kyiv's ongoing bombardment of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, which is bringing Europe to the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. We took note of the explanations of the Secretary-General for why he did not participate in yesterday's meeting. Today's meeting, however, is formally not related to developments on the ground at all and is meant to demonstrate the unfailing support of Western delegations for all actions by the Kyiv regime. Predictably, we heard numerous mantras about Russian aggression. As we have already said, over the past 200 years no other explanation for European security issues, except for references to Russia's actions, has emerged in the West.

We also heard many claims today about the catastrophic consequences of six months of hostilities for the civilian population of Ukraine. No one is arguing that things are not difficult for Ukrainians today. However, the responsibility for that lies with the Kyiv regime, which came to power in 2014 as a result of an unconstitutional coup carried out with the help of a number of Western States.

From the very beginning, the new Maidan authorities steadily led the country towards disaster, choosing the path of Russophobia and the glorification of Nazi criminals. According to the most conservative estimates, more than 60 per cent of the population of Ukraine has been deprived of an opportunity to realize their Russian-speaking identity, contrary to all relevant international conventions and Ukraine's obligations. Their Western backers, blinded by the geopolitical goal of weakening Russia, made it clear from the outset that they would cover up any crimes committed by the Kyiv authorities and turn a blind eye to things they would never allow in their own countries.

The Kyiv regime fully demonstrated its criminal nature when it burned dissenters alive in the House of Trade Unions in Odesa and dropped bombs and shelled the civilian population of Donbas. In that senseless crusade against itself, Ukraine lost Crimea and provoked armed resistance from Donetsk and Luhansk

residents, who took up arms in the name of freedom and the future of their children.

This war, which has claimed civilian lives for eight years, could have ended if Kyiv had fulfilled the Minsk agreements. However, neither the Ukrainian authorities nor their foreign patrons needed that. They openly stated that once again at the beginning of the year while threatening to abandon their non-nuclear status. In such a context, in order to establish peace in Donbas and prevent the obvious threats to Russia emanating from Ukraine, we had no choice but to launch a special operation to de-Nazify and demilitarize Ukraine, the goals of which are being steadily and successfully met. I repeat again: had the Minsk agreements been implemented, no special operation would have been necessary. But the regime in Kyiv decided otherwise.

The criminal shelling of the Donbas republics continues. In the Donetsk People's Republic, more than 840 people are estimated to have died at the line of contact since the beginning of the escalation in February, while 2,800 have been injured. In the Luhansk People's Republic, 80 people have been killed and more than 250 have been injured. Approximately 100 civilians were killed in the four weeks since the previous meeting on 29 July (see S/PV.9104). The Armed Forces of Ukraine are deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure, including kindergartens, schools and medical facilities, power lines and gas pipelines. Even towns in Donbas that were recently under their control, such as Lysychansk, are not spared. And our former Western partners, instead of condemning their Ukrainian mentees, are supplying them with more and more types of weapons, which reach areas where Kyiv could not previously reach. In doing so, they are becoming complicit in crimes against civilians, and given that the use of some artillery systems, as Ukrainians themselves admit, is impossible without coordinating the targets with the suppliers, they are becoming co-conspirators as well. This applies first and foremost to the American High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, multiple launch rocket systems which were used, in particular, to strike the prison in Olenivka on 29 July and claimed the lives of more than 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war. We know that the President of Ukraine is well aware of the facts that it is the Armed Forces of Ukraine who are behind this crime, despite the fact that he sold us a false version of events today in which Russia was responsible.

From the very beginning, we warned that Ukrainian armed groups were actively using civilian facilities

for military purposes. Meanwhile, local residents are forbidden from leaving their homes, while all their attempts to independently evacuate to safe areas are brutally suppressed. There have been so many instances of Ukrainian artillery and ammunition being located on the premises of educational and medical facilities over these six months that even pro-Western human rights organizations, such as Amnesty International, can no longer ignore them. However, instead of forcing Kyiv to comply with international humanitarian law, our Western colleagues, after the tantrum thrown by the Ukrainian authorities, who are used to getting away with everything, chose to publicly castigate Amnesty International itself instead. And today Ms. DiCarlo expressed her concern about the upcoming trial of Azov Nazis and sadists, but said nothing of the horrific crimes they committed or their violations of international humanitarian law, including brutal torture, information about which is available to the international civil service community, including Ms. DiCarlo herself. The United Nations, which Ms. DiCarlo represents, also has sufficient information about this.

Frankly, this all looks extremely cynical and denigrates the value of the freedom of speech and human rights protection. It is too bad that Council members do not understand that, but ordinary Ukrainians are well aware of it. They encounter the atrocities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and their national battalions and their inhumane methods. Allow me to cite just one example. At the meeting in July, we already showed members of a photo of a "petal" anti-personnel mine. Today, to make it even clearer, I will show Council members the training models for those mines, which Ukrainian troops are scattering by the hundreds in Donbas, in the territories liberated by the Russian army and even on Russian territory.

Imagine such an inconspicuous petal lying on the ground in the grass. It can also be camouflaged, which makes it virtually invisible on the ground. Considering that the Ukrainian Armed Forces scatters those mines in towns and villages far behind the front lines, it is not soldiers that they pose a threat to at all. No, they are purposefully designed to target civilians, especially children, who risk stepping on them or picking up such a "toy" out of curiosity. A total of 47 explosions of such mines have already been recorded in the Donetsk People's Republic. The petal mine is living proof of the sadistic, barbaric nature of the Ukrainian regime, a

symbol of its true attitude towards the people of the east and south-east of the country.

Of course, the people see and understand that. Hence the treatment of Russian soldiers as liberators, which is widespread in the liberated territories. That does not in any way fit the narrative promoted by Kyiv and its Western sponsors. Ukraine is therefore resorting to terror and intimidation tactics in the Kherson, Zaporizhzhya and Kharkiv regions. But that cannot change the minds of people who have seen the true face of the Kyiv regime. Kyiv is losing the battle for minds, and its Western backers, who are waging a proxy war against Russia to the last Ukrainian, are getting mired deeper and deeper in support of that anti-popular, anti-human regime, turning a blind eye to examples of neo-Nazism, extreme nationalism and Russophobia. They are also shooting themselves in the foot with futile attempts to isolate Russia politically and economically. Then again, that is something Council members will have to answer for to their own voters and taxpayers, as well as to the international community — for the unprecedented mendacious campaign to discredit Russia. Not since the propaganda of the Nazi Joseph Goebbels has the world encountered such a degree of fabrication, which is being used by Western and Ukrainian experts of psychological operations. There is no doubt that history will afford a correct assessment of this.

Our Albanian colleague propounded today, *à la albanaise*, about Russian prisoners who are allegedly being recruited by the Russian authorities. However, he forgot to mention those released from Ukrainian prisons, Ukrainian prisoners, who were handed weapons in the first days of the special military operation and who made themselves known by pillaging and murdering and who continue to terrorize Ukrainian towns. We will address that in detail at a future Council meeting.

The Secretary-General's so-called Black Sea initiative is considered a kind of success story, especially as it concerns the unhindered export of food from Ukraine. However, there are alarming trends there as well. In four weeks of export operations, only one of 34 dry cargo ships went to Africa. That is completely inconsistent with the originally stated goal of combating hunger in the countries in dire need of grain. In that regard, of course, it is worth remembering the public relations failure with the dispatch of the first vessel, the *RAZONI*, which instead of bringing long-awaited wheat to Lebanon, brought corn for animal feed instead.

Against that backdrop, there is much to consider with regard to the Secretary-General's comment at the port of Odesa on 19 August that grain exports and lower prices in global food markets will not bring relief to needy countries that cannot afford to buy it anyway. This situation clearly reveals the true causes of global food security issues. It is not about Ukrainian grain at all. The main reason is the Western countries' own economic miscalculations and the consequences of anti-Russian sanctions, which we have spoken about repeatedly in this Chamber. It was the sanctions that caused the breakdown of logistical and financial chains, which provoked a sharp decline in market supplies. Excuses about the supposedly targeted nature of the unilateral measures cannot fill hungry people's stomachs.

We urge all those involved to take the package nature of the Black Sea initiative seriously and not to postpone resolving the financial and logistical problems that prevent the export of Russian food and fertilizers to the global market. We emphasize that the extension of the grain deal, the term of which is 120 days from the date of its signing, would be facilitated by tangible results for Russian foreign trade operators, equivalent to what we see for Ukrainian exports. So far, there are significant reserves in that part of the grain deal.

It is no secret that our Western colleagues who requested today's meeting resolved to have it coincide with Ukraine's Independence Day. Much has been said about that today. A number of our colleagues directly pointed to Russia as a threat to Ukrainian independence. We do not agree with that. Eight years after the launch of the Maidan project, it has become clear that the main, and in fact the only, threat to Ukraine's independence is the current Government in Kyiv. Over these years, robust mechanisms for the external governance of Ukraine have been formed, which are visible to the naked eye. We know that at all levels of Government, in all key departments of that country, there are Western advisers without whose consent no major decision is made. Suffice it to recall how, in 2014, the notorious Victoria Nuland resolved issues concerning the formation of the Ukrainian Government by phone with the American Ambassador in Kyiv, or that the current President of the United States, Joe Biden, boasted that he had used blatant blackmail to remove the Prosecutor General of Ukraine. If that is independence, then what is dependence? And is there anything for Ukrainians to celebrate today?

Throughout Zelenskyy's rule, and especially since 24 February, the opposition has been completely eliminated in the country, dissent has been suppressed and opposition media have been shut down. People are being persecuted, arrested and imprisoned just for reading Russian-language news and watching Russian television channels. And now, in accordance with the new law on collaboration, they are also being imprisoned for accepting humanitarian assistance from Russia.

Ukraine has fully transformed into a backwards, ruthless, anti-Russia country and is confidently moving towards complete ideological and political bankruptcy.

In order to assess the degree of that deep Russophobic degradation, I would like to once again quote the words said the other day by the Ukrainian Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Petro Vrublevskiy, after the murder of Daria Dugina. He openly declared:

“We are trying to kill as many of them as possible. The more Russians we kill now, the fewer our children will have to kill. That is all.”

That was said by the Ambassador of a country in which those same Russians not only live, but make up a very significant part of the population. Does such a country and such an inhumane regime have a future? Our Western colleagues can prolong its agony, but they cannot prevent its fiasco.

In conclusion, I would like to express my wish for the brotherly people of Ukraine to finally gain freedom and the opportunity to build a society that respects fundamental human rights and national identity and lives in peace with its neighbours. That hour is already close, despite all the efforts of the Kyiv regime and its patrons.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for their presentations. We listened with great interest and deep respect to the statement of President Zelenskyy of Ukraine, whose independence we celebrate today, tomorrow and always. We also followed with great attention the Secretary-General's recent visits to Ukraine and Türkiye. We recognize his leadership and efforts, which have led to important agreements to limit the impact of the food crisis and to restore hope.

In that regard, we are pleased that the Black Sea Grain Initiative continues to operate on a regular

basis and that it allows 560,000 metric tons of grain to access markets around the world, as well as to World Food Programme supplies. That appears to be having a significant stabilizing effect, finally.

Mexico considers the progress under the Black Sea Grain Initiative to be a major diplomatic milestone in times of armed conflict. In that regard, I would also like to recognize the important work of the President of Türkiye in facilitating that agreement. We once again urge all parties, especially those with leverage, to spare no effort to keep channels of communication open in order to establish a dialogue to end hostilities.

Despite those advances, it is clear that the multilateral system and, in particular, the Security Council, has not been able to put an end to this war. The invasion of a sovereign country, Ukraine, by Russia is a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations. Any territorial acquisition obtained through the illegal use of force is null and lacks any validity.

It is necessary to put an end to the war and, with it, to the numerous violations of international law, especially international humanitarian law. There have been six months of bombardment of hospitals, schools, residential areas and basic civilian infrastructure, including the Zaporizhzhya power plant and the destruction of cultural heritage. There have been six months of violations of the methods and means of warfare; of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence; and of the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects, such as cluster munitions or mines.

We call most emphatically for an end to all those attacks, especially those directed against the civilian population and indiscriminate attacks. We also call on the parties to comply with the rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution in the conduct of hostilities.

We express our unwavering support for the investigative work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and for the establishment of a fact-finding mission on the alleged war crimes committed in Olenivka. Accountability is a fundamental pillar of our multilateral system, and those responsible for the crimes that have been and are being committed in Ukraine — or will be committed in future — must be brought to justice.

Mexico reiterates its deep concern about the threat posed by the illicit flow and trafficking of arms to the region. It is necessary to continue monitoring the full life cycle of weapons — starting with their transfer and intermediation and concluding with those who turn out to be the end users. We must take action to prevent weapons from falling into the hands of those who should never have them, especially when hostilities have ended.

Mexico's work in the Council will continue to focus on advancing and cementing peacebuilding in Ukraine. In that regard, I would like to reiterate our urgent call to negotiate a cessation of hostilities and to seek a solution through dialogue and diplomacy.

I conclude by reaffirming our support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Those are principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and all of us present here pledged to respect and uphold them.

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

China's position on the Ukraine issue is consistent and clear. We have always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations upheld, the legitimate security concerns of all countries taken seriously and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of crises supported.

However, the Ukraine crisis continues. The fighting continues to spread, with growing spillover effects. The prospect of peace has yet to materialize. The international community eagerly awaits the early resumption of peace. It also expects the Security Council to play its due role to that end. What we need to reflect on is — has the Council found the right tack to solve this issue? Has the Council made earnest efforts to alleviate the situation?

China stands ready to work with all peace-loving countries to promote peace and dialogue and facilitate the easing of the situation. At present, the priority — in our opinion — should be the following.

First, there is a need to set up a safety valve for the conflict. International humanitarian law should

guide the conduct of the parties to the conflict. Civilians and civilian facilities cannot be the targets of military strikes.

Recently, frequent attacks on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant have led to extensive attention and concerns, casting a nuclear shadow over the world.

China once again calls on all the relevant parties to exercise restraint, act with caution, refrain from any action that could compromise the safety and security of the nuclear facility and avoid crossing the nuclear-safety red line. We also expect the International Atomic Energy Agency to conduct a site visit to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant as soon as possible in order to make a professional and technical assessment of the situation that will enable it to take follow-up measures to prevent a nuclear disaster.

Secondly, it is important to reduce the humanitarian impact as much as possible. On the one hand, the international community should work to help Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons weather their difficulties and to reduce the conflict's effects on global food supplies, energy and financial stability, on the other. China commends Secretary-General Guterres and the relevant parties for their efforts to facilitate the Black Sea Grain Initiative. We are pleased to see that more than 20 ships, carrying more than 700,000 tons of food, have left Ukraine for multiple destinations around the world. That will go a long way to curbing rising food prices, stabilizing the international food market and easing the food shortages in developing countries.

At the same time, removing barriers to the export of food and fertilizers from Russia is also highly important. We hope that in accordance with its memorandum of understanding with Russia, the United Nations can help address the chilling effect caused by countries that have been abusing sanctions and ensure that the global industrial and supply chains are stable and run smoothly. These are challenging times for developing countries, and cutting official development assistance will only make things worse. Developed countries should face up to the humanitarian impact of such cuts and adopt responsible policies and measures.

Thirdly, it will be vital to ensure an exit ramp for diplomatic solutions. Peace can never be achieved by imposing sanctions or other types of pressure, or by sending weapons. It must be fought for and maintained by all the parties, working together. However complex

the situation or serious the differences, the door to diplomacy and dialogue must not be closed. The positive progress on the issue of grain exports shows the potential of diplomacy and the possibility of a political solution. We hope that Russia and Ukraine will continue their dialogue and communication in order to return to diplomatic negotiations as soon as possible and create the momentum and conditions needed for a ceasefire. The United States and NATO should seriously reflect on the roles they have been playing and focus their efforts on what is truly conducive to peace rather than adding fuel to the fire.

The Ukraine crisis and the series of recent tense developments around the world have shown that in this era, when the world is in urgent need of solidarity and cooperation to collectively address its challenges, we must be highly vigilant with regard to any deliberate attempts to deliberately provoke and intensify division and confrontation — and we must safeguard global strategic stability. We should never allow the world to slide into a new Cold War. The facts have shown that a Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation should be firmly rejected. More than 30 years after the end of the Cold War, NATO is still expanding eastward, which has made Europe no safer but has rather sown the seeds of conflict. Humankind lives in an indivisible security community, and common security is the most vital common interest of all countries. One country's security should not come at the expense of another's, and beefing up military blocs cannot ensure a region's security. Today, in the twenty-first century, a Cold War mentality and zero-sum games are long-outdated concepts. Obsessing about military force and seeking absolute security will lead only to a constant escalation of the situation in the region, which is not in the interests of any party.

The facts have shown that decoupling and choosing sides should be firmly rejected. The world's economies are deeply integrated. Certain countries have been wantonly imposing unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction, politicizing and weaponizing the economy, trade and technology, insisting on decoupling and building small yards with high fences — further aggravating people's livelihood difficulties in developing countries — and threatening the security of global food, energy and finance. Developing countries should not be made to bear the brunt of geopolitical conflicts and major country rivalry. They have a right to decide

their foreign policies independently and should not be forced to choose sides.

The facts have shown that applying double or selective standards should be firmly rejected. Upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity go beyond merely citing them. All countries should actually abide by those principles in practice, maintain consistent positions on issues involving different countries and match their words with deeds. The Chinese people have a deep understanding of and strong feelings about State sovereignty and territorial integrity through first-hand experience. China consistently respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries and is determined to firmly safeguard its own.

The Ukraine crisis is a major test of our generation's ability to maintain peace. As we stand at this historic crossroads, we need to ask ourselves what we want. Do we want peace or turmoil? Cooperation or confrontation? Progress or regression? We must make the right choice — one that is worthy of the people's trust and of our times.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Mr. Gonzato.

Mr. Gonzato: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its 27 member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, the Republic of Moldova; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Georgia, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

We welcome today's discussion on Ukraine. It is essential that the Security Council remain seized of Russia's war of aggression on Ukraine. I thank the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for their briefings and welcome President Zelenskyy's statement at this meeting.

Let me first of all congratulate Ukraine on the thirty-first anniversary of its independence. The fact that today also marks the six months that have passed since Russia's unprovoked and illegal aggression is a stark reminder that independence can never be taken for granted. The EU recognizes the tremendous courage displayed by Ukraine and its people in defence of its

independence. As the Under-Secretary-General told us, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified more than 13,000 civilian casualties since Russia's attack, with the true numbers being considerably higher. We express our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and reaffirm our commitment to continuing our support to Ukraine in any way we can.

The EU reiterates its strongest condemnation of Russia's continued violation of the Charter of the United Nations and disregard for General Assembly resolution ES-11/1, adopted in March by an overwhelming majority of the States Members of our Organization (see A/ES-11/PV.5). We also deplore Russia's failure to comply with the International Court of Justice's legally binding order for it to immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine. We call on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under international law, including the Charter, international humanitarian law and human rights law. The perpetrators of war crimes and other serious violations, as well as the responsible Government officials and military representatives, will be held accountable. The EU actively supports all measures to ensure accountability for human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law committed during the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Over the past months, we have seen an emerging risk of nuclear calamity in Europe. It is deplorable that we even need to say that a nuclear power plant should never be used as a military base. The deployment of Russian military personnel and weaponry at the nuclear facility is unacceptable and disregards the safety, security and safeguards principles that all members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have committed to uphold.

We urge the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military forces and all other unauthorized personnel from the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and its immediate surroundings so that the operator and Ukrainian authorities can resume their sovereign responsibilities within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, and so that the legitimate operating staff members can carry out their duties without outside interference, threat or unacceptably harsh working conditions. An IAEA mission urgently needs to enter the power plant to address nuclear safety, security and safeguards concerns, in a manner that respects full Ukrainian sovereignty and the country's control over

its territory and infrastructure. IAEA staff must be able to access all nuclear facilities in Ukraine safely and without impediment and engage directly and without interference with the Ukrainian personnel responsible for the operation of those facilities.

The global implications of Russia's aggression are well documented. We support the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, launched in the aftermath of Russia's invasion, with a view to addressing sky-rocketing food and energy prices. We welcome the progress made in implementing the Black Sea Grain Initiative, reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General and Türkiye for facilitating its agreement and acknowledge the positive role played by other actors, such as the African Union leadership, in coming to an arrangement.

We call for the continued strict implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative with a view to addressing rising food prices globally. With its own Solidarity Lanes initiative, aimed at boosting exports from Ukraine over land, the EU is proud to have contributed to increasing Ukrainian exports of cereals, oilseeds and related products — from 1.3 million tons in April to 2.8 million tons in July. We are also supporting agricultural production and resilience in the most affected countries.

The EU welcomes the active involvement of the Secretary-General. His recent visits to Ukraine and Istanbul demonstrate his dedication to address the crisis, and the EU will continue to support his efforts and those of his staff, including in the Joint Coordination Centre. We welcome the Secretary-General's calls to demilitarize the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, as well as the establishment of a fact-finding mission to investigate the incident at a detention facility in Olenivka.

In conclusion, the EU and its member States reaffirm their commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders and extending to its territorial sea. This war is senseless. The humanitarian consequences for millions of civilians are disastrous. Russia could end it tomorrow if it wanted. Until that happens, human lives will be wasted and the war's global fallout will continue, at a time in history when we should focus on the planetary crises, which are impacting us all. That is why we reiterate our demand for the immediate cessation of the military aggression against Ukraine

by the Russian Federation, as well as for the full, immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its forces and military equipment from Ukraine's territory. In the meantime we would like to assure our partners around

the world that the EU will continue to demonstrate its global solidarity to address the impact of Russia's aggression, especially on the most vulnerable.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.