



Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

Provisional

9269th meeting

Friday, 24 February 2023, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Borg/Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Xhaçka
	Brazil.....	Mr. Costa Filho
	China.....	Mr. Dai Bing
	Ecuador	Mr. Holguín Maldonado
	France	Ms. Colonna
	Gabon	Mr. Biang
	Ghana	Mr. Ampratwum-Sarpong
	Japan	Mr. Hayashi
	Mozambique	Mr. Afonso
	Russian Federation.....	Mr. Nebenzia
	Switzerland	Mr. Cassis
	United Arab Emirates	Mrs. Nusseibeh
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ..	Mr. Cleverly
	United States of America.....	Mr. Blinken

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*speak in Russian*): I would like to say a few words regarding a point of order.

We would like to ask you, Mr. President, to please clarify the basis on which you propose to give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, before the members of the Council speak. We have nothing against his statement, but the Council has its rules, which were established long before Malta became a member of the Security Council. You, Mr. President, should abide by them. I would like to get an answer to my question.

The President: I take note of the points raised by the representative of the Russian Federation.

This debate is being held on the one-year anniversary of the beginning of the war in Ukraine, and the presidency sees value in allowing Ukraine's Foreign Minister to take the floor before the members of the Council on this occasion, as per paragraph 33 of presidential note S/2017/507.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*speak in Russian*): I would like to warn you, Sir, that the moment you strike the gavel, thereby formalizing your decisions, you will create an egregious precedent whereby the representatives of Ukraine in the Council are given the kind of privileges that are denied to representatives of other regions of the world. Let me give you some specific examples from recent practice: the meeting on the Central African Republic held on 21 February (see S/PV.9265), where Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, spoke after the members Council; the meeting held on 27 January on Mali (see S/PV.9251), where the Minister for Foreign Affairs of that country, Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, also spoke after the members of the Council; the meeting held on 11 January on Colombia (see S/PV.9240), where the Vice-President — I emphasize, not even the Minister for Foreign Affairs but the Vice-President, Ms. Francia Márquez Mina — spoke after the members of the

Security Council; the meeting held on 24 January on Haiti (see S/PV.9247), where the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, Mr. Roberto Álvarez Gil, spoke after all the members of the Security Council. Similarly, Mr. Álvarez Gil spoke after the members of the Security Council at the meeting on Haiti held on 21 December 2022 (see S/PV.9233). The list of such examples can go on and on.

If we talk about precedents, then Mr. Dmytro Kuleba himself spoke in the Security Council on 22 September 2022 (see S/PV.9135) after all the members of the Security Council. Not once did any Western delegation offer to hear representatives of African, Latin American, or indeed any other regions, except Ukraine speak before the members of the Security Council spoke at meetings that those regions are directly affected by.

Do you understand, Sir, how it will look in the eyes of the rest of the world if you decide today to give Mr. Kuleba the privileged right to speak at the beginning of the meeting? I want to emphasize once again that we have nothing against the statement to be made by Mr. Dmytro Kuleba as such; we are ready to listen to him. But that should be in strict accordance with the prevailing practice under rule 37, that is, delegations take the floor after the members of the Council.

What we are seeing now is another attempt to give certain rights to a given country, whereby you, Sir, as a representative of the "golden billion", openly give preference to Ukraine just because it is part of your geopolitical project. It would seem that the problems of the rest of the world are of no concern to you. The same goes for the unprecedented number of delegations to be invited today under rule 37 — 12 European Union (EU) countries, in addition to High Representative Joseph Borrell Fontelles. It is obvious that all those countries, sharing the same EU position dictated by Brussels, will add no value to the discussion. Such an approach degrades the value of our debate and damages the Council's reputation.

Your British colleagues have already gone down in history as a bad-faith President of the Council when they rejected our request for a special emergency meeting of the Council — something unprecedented.

We regret the fact that, time and again, the Maltese presidency has openly ignored the Security Council's rules of procedures and practices and put its own national position and the EU common position over its

responsibilities as President of the Security Council, which is supposed to be the guardian of the Council's procedures and to adopt an impartial stance. We are forced to say that Malta is not up to the task. That serves to confirm our belief that there is no added value in expanding the Council with Western countries, because they are turning the Council into the instrument for satisfying their whims.

The President: Once again, I take note of the points raised by the representative of the Russian Federation.

May I also recall, for instance, that the Foreign Minister of Serbia spoke before the members of the Security Council at least twice, during the past two meetings on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (see S/PV.9155 and S/PV.9019).

With regard to the list of speakers under rule 37, the presidency took note that all those requests came from Foreign Ministers who took the time to travel to New York to be at the United Nations on this anniversary. That clearly indicates that they feel that their countries have been, and are still being, directly impacted by this war.

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

The President: I would like to warmly welcome the Secretary-General and the distinguished Ministers and other high-level representatives. Their presence here today underscores the importance of the subject matter under discussion.

In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres.

The Secretary-General: The purposes and principles embedded in the Charter of the United Nations are not a matter of convenience. They are not merely words on paper. They are at the core of who we are. They reflect the driving mission of our United Nations. And they exist precisely to address any grievance, whatever it might be.

One year ago, following a Security Council meeting on Ukraine (see S/PV.8974), I urged,

"[i]n the name of humanity do not allow to start in Europe what could be the worst war since the beginning of the century, with consequences not only devastating for Ukraine, not only tragic for the Russian Federation, but with an impact we cannot even foresee in relation to the consequences for the global economy".

I said then that we must give peace a chance, but peace has had no chance. War has ruled the day.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a blatant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. It has unleashed widespread death, destruction and displacement. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure have caused many casualties and terrible suffering. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented dozens of cases of conflict-related sexual violence against men, women and girls. Serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law against prisoners of war — and hundreds of cases of enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions of civilians — were also documented.

Life is a living hell for the people of Ukraine. An estimated 17.6 million people — nearly 40 per cent of the population of Ukraine — require humanitarian assistance and protection. The crisis has erased 30 per cent of pre-war jobs. The World Food Programme estimates that nearly 40 per cent of Ukrainians are unable to afford or access enough food. The war has sparked a displacement crisis not seen in Europe in decades. More than 8 million Ukrainian refugees have been recorded across Europe, in addition to an estimated 5.4 million people who have been internally displaced. More than half of all Ukrainian children have been forced from their homes, with unaccompanied and separated children facing grave risks of violence, abuse and exploitation. Vital infrastructure is under fire. Water, energy and heating systems have been destroyed in the depths of a freezing winter. The World Health

Organization has verified over 700 attacks on health-care facilities. More than 3,000 schools and colleges have been damaged or destroyed. Millions of students have had their education severely disrupted.

Less measurable, but no less important, is the devastating impact of months of displacement and bombardment on the mental health of Ukrainians. Nearly 10 million people, including 7.8 million children, are at risk of acute post-traumatic stress disorder.

And make no mistake, the Russian Federation is also suffering the deadly consequences.

(spoke in French)

We need peace — peace in line with the United Nations Charter and international law. As we work for peace, we will continue calling for action on many fronts. The protection of civilians must remain the top priority. Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure must stop. The use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas — in towns, cities and villages — must end. Safe and unimpeded humanitarian access for life-saving assistance must be ensured.

We must also invest in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction. At the request of the Ukrainian Government and on behalf of the United Nations system, the United Nations Development Programme is co-leading an assessment of damage to energy infrastructure, jointly with the World Bank.

Since the start of the war, the International Atomic Energy Agency has supported Ukraine to ensure the safety and security of its 15 operating reactors at four nuclear plants, including Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhya. We continue to urge all parties to swiftly agree and implement a nuclear safety and security protection zone at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant to avoid a serious accident with potentially disastrous consequences.

Veiled threats to use nuclear weapons in the context of the conflict have spiked nuclear risks to levels not seen since the darkest days of the Cold War. Those threats are unacceptable.

(spoke in English)

Progress continues to be made under the Black Sea Grain Initiative, an agreement brokered with the parties by the United Nations and the Government of Türkiye. More than 20 million metric tons of foodstuffs have

now been safely reconnected to global supply chains on more than 700 ships, helping to bring down prices around the world. I want to underscore the importance of all parties remaining engaged in the Initiative, and reiterate our call for it to be extended beyond March 2023.

The United Nations is firmly committed to working to remove remaining obstacles to Russian food and fertilizer exports, including ammonia. Those exports are essential to our broader efforts to bring down prices and ease food insecurity around the globe. Both efforts demonstrate that international cooperation is essential, valuable and possible, even in the midst of conflict.

Over the past year, the Security Council has held more than 40 debates on Ukraine. The guns are talking now, but in the end we all know that the path of diplomacy and accountability is the road to a just and sustainable peace, peace in line with the United Nations Charter, international law and the resolution adopted yesterday (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6) by the General Assembly. We must prevent further escalation. We must all encourage every meaningful effort to end the bloodshed and, at long last, give peace a chance.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Mr. Kuleba (Ukraine): First of all, I would like to thank the presidency of Malta for convening this important meeting.

The General Assembly just adopted a resolution (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6) on the principles of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. One hundred and forty-one Member States took the side of the Charter of the United Nations, while seven took the side of Russia. No additional explanations are required. The resolution follows the logic of President Zelenskyy's peace formula. The goal of his 10-point plan is to restore respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, in full compliance with the United Nations Charter, which we all have committed to respect and uphold. In brief, the goal of the plan is to get Russia out of Ukraine and make the world a safer place. Obviously, any new peace proposals should now be aligned with the demands set forth by the Assembly's resolution. We invite all countries from every corner of the world to

facilitate the implementation of the resolution and the peace formula.

We need to act jointly and quickly: to ensure nuclear safety and security, by forcing Russia to withdraw from the illegally occupied Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant and stopping missile attacks that endanger nuclear power plants across the territory of Ukraine; to avoid the threat of hunger, by furthering the Black Sea Grain Initiative and countering Russian efforts to undermine it, as well as by developing our Grain From Ukraine initiative; to prevent an energy crisis, which will require the cessation of Russian missile terror against the critical infrastructure of Ukraine; and to protect the environment, as the Russian shelling that has burned millions of hectares of Ukrainian forests threatens our efforts to counter global warming.

But first and foremost, people must be saved. Their lives and their rights are at the centre of our struggle for peace. The magnitude of the humanitarian crisis brought on by Russia's aggression against Ukraine cannot be overstated. I would like to highlight here one of the numerous horrendous facts — Russia is now implementing in Ukraine what is probably the largest instance of State-sponsored kidnapping of children in modern history.

Ukraine will resist as it has done so far, and Ukraine will win. Putin is going to lose much sooner than he thinks. Here is what Russian officials and servicemen have to know. You think you will get away with what you did? No, you will end up on trial. You will be testifying about how strongly you were opposed to the aggression and how you just followed orders. You think that the world will get tired of supporting Ukraine? The support will only grow stronger. You think that Ukraine will eventually tire of defending itself? The more and the longer you keep attacking Ukraine, the more resolve we will have and the more humiliating your defeat will be.

Russian propaganda has fabricated this hypocritical narrative that supplying Ukraine with weapons fuels the war. Ukraine indeed needs weapons, just as a firefighter needs water to extinguish a fire, the fire that is destroying your home and killing innocent people. The sooner and the more we get, the sooner the fire will be extinguished. Arming a country that defends itself from aggression is absolutely legitimate and is an act of defending the United Nations Charter. On the contrary, helping an aggressor is illegitimate and defies the Charter. Any supply of weapons or military

equipment to Russia means complicity in the trampling of the Charter. Whoever gives weapons to Russia is committing a crime.

In the short term, Ukraine needs to restore its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. In the long term, justice must be served. The verdict of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal was crystal clear: a war of aggression is not only a war crime; it is the supreme international crime, distinguishing itself from other war crimes only in that it contains the accumulated evil of the whole. We therefore call for the establishment of a special tribunal with specific jurisdiction over the crime of aggression against Ukraine and with the ability to deal with the personal immunities of the principal perpetrators of that crime.

The geography of Russian crimes against international peace and security goes far beyond the borders of Ukraine and reaches Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Russia not only incites conflicts, but also systematically obstructs the Security Council decisions needed to resolve them. Today Russia argued that the Council is overly focused on Ukraine and ignores problems in the rest of the world. Let us all remember the truth — Russia is the problem of the world.

I open the United Nations Charter and I do not see the words "Member States can attack other Member States at their will". I do not see the words "violating borders is allowed". Furthermore and most important, I do not see the words "the Russian Federation" in the Charter on the list of permanent Security Council members. In 1991, Russia usurped the seat of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a permanent Security Council member and turned it into the throne of impunity. The future of Russia in the United Nations should be determined in the context of the illegitimate change of plates from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to Russia in 1991 and responsibility for crimes committed on the territory of Ukraine, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

I say it again and again — peace means justice, and all the peace-loving nations will win peace on the battlefield and at the diplomatic table.

Finally, on this tragic day, as we mourn lives and destinies broken by Russia, I kindly ask everyone to observe a minute of silence in memory of the victims of the aggression.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*speak in Russian*): We are on our feet to honour the memory of all the victims of what has happened in Ukraine, starting in 2014 — all of those who perished. All lives are priceless, and that is why we are standing, to honour the memory of them all.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta.

I begin by thanking Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing and Minister Kuleba for his statement.

We have convened to mark one year since the Russian Federation launched its aggression against Ukraine. This brutal, unprovoked and unjustified war is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It has brought about immense suffering, destruction and misery on Ukraine and its population. The war is also a stain on the very principles that we here are bound to uphold. It has also compounded the global food and energy crisis, further exacerbating the already difficult humanitarian situations being experienced by vulnerable countries and populations around the globe.

At the outset, I reiterate that every State has the sovereign right to self-determination, including the choice of its own destiny in order to ensure its safety and security. Over the past 12 months, Ukrainians have shown incredible courage and resilience by defending not only their right to exist in the face of a brutal military aggression, but also the values and principles underpinning the international rules-based order. Over the past year, various United Nations and international mechanisms have provided evidence of indiscriminate killings of civilians, attacks on civilian infrastructure, torture and other forms of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, sexual and gender-based violence, abductions and forcible deportation of children.

Such actions constitute serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law and are a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Those children must be returned to their families or legal guardians without delay. The

tragic impact of those transfers and deportations on Ukraine's children will be felt for generations to come.

We must redouble our efforts to ensure accountability for violations of the United Nations Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law. That must include justice for victims of atrocity crimes and sexual violence. Perpetrators must be brought to justice and held to account without delay. We therefore welcome the important work being carried out by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine.

We also reaffirm our support for the mechanisms that are working in this fight against impunity. We stand with the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in his investigations and continue to consider ways to ensure accountability for the crime of aggression. We also call on the Russian Federation to respect the ruling of the International Court of Justice ordering an immediate suspension of military operations.

On this occasion, I must also express our deep concern with regard to nuclear safety in Ukraine. Shelling in and around nuclear power plants in Ukraine, including the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, constitutes a grave environmental and health threat and a serious risk to international peace and security. Such actions can lead to a grave humanitarian and environmental catastrophe, with long-term repercussions.

In the context of a deteriorating global non-proliferation architecture, any declaration by Russia suggesting that the possible use of nuclear weapons is in any way justified are unacceptable. Such rhetoric leads only to uncertainty, further undermines trust between the parties and serves only as a means to escalate the conflict and heighten tensions.

This aggression has also had serious repercussions for the rules-based international order to which we all agreed. As members of the international community, our collective security depends on such common principles, underpinned by the notion that might is not right. No State or Power has the right to redraw borders in accordance with its geopolitical interests. Malta reaffirms its full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. As committed multilateralists, it is our duty to defend and promote such principles and counter contempt for them.

In conclusion, as a member of the Security Council, Malta will continue to support all efforts to address the consequences of Russia's aggression. We also reiterate that the only step towards a lasting peace would be for Russia to immediately cease all hostilities and unconditionally completely withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now call on the Secretary of State of the United States of America.

Mr. Blinken (United States of America): One year and one week ago, on 17 February 2022, I warned the Security Council that Russia was planning to invade Ukraine (see S/PV.8968). I said that Russia would manufacture a pretext and then use missiles, tanks, soldiers and cyberattacks to strike pre-identified targets, including Kyiv, with the aim of toppling Ukraine's democratically elected Government. Russia's representative — the same representative who will speak today — called those "groundless accusations". Seven days later, on 24 February 2022, Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

Due to fierce resistance by Ukraine's defenders, President Putin failed in his primary objective to conquer Ukraine and its existence as an independent country and absorb it into Russia. He then dusted off his Crimea playbook from 2014. He called snap referendums in four occupied parts of Ukraine, deported Ukrainians, bussed in Russians, held sham votes at gunpoint and then manipulated the results to claim unanimous support for joining the Russian Federation.

When President Putin could not break the Ukrainian military, he intensified efforts to break the Ukrainian spirit. Over the past year, Russia has killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian men, women and children, uprooted more than 13 million people from their homes, destroyed more than half the country's energy grid, bombed more than 700 hospitals and 2,600 schools, abducted at least 6,000 Ukrainian children, some as young as four months old, and relocated them to Russia. Yet the spirit of the Ukrainians remains unbroken. If anything, it is stronger than ever.

When Ukraine launched a counter-offensive that retook large swathes of its territory, President Putin conscripted an additional 300,000 men, throwing an

increasing number of Russia's young people into a meat grinder of his own making. He unleashed the Wagner Group — mercenaries who have committed atrocities from Africa to the Middle East, and now in Ukraine.

Of course, that is not the whole story of the past year. There is also the story of Ukraine's people. Vastly outnumbered, they have fought bravely to defend their nation, their freedom and the right to determine their own future, and they have demonstrated inspiring unity in helping one another to endure Moscow's relentless assault. Teachers and community members give classes to children in bunkers. City workers improvised patches to restore heat, power and water to residents. Neighbours set up soup kitchens to feed the hungry.

There is also the story of how the international community has come together. The vast majority of Member States voted multiple times to condemn Russia's violations of the Charter of the United Nations and reject its illegal attempt to seize Ukrainian territory. Yesterday in the General Assembly, 141 countries voted in favour of resolution ES-11/6, which reaffirms the core principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, denounces Russia's atrocities and expresses support for a just and comprehensive peace, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

When President Putin tried to weaponize hunger, exploiting the worst global food crisis since the creation of the United Nations, the international community responded swiftly. Since the United States presided over a meeting on food security last May (see S/PV.9036), more than 100 countries have signed up to a set of concrete commitments to alleviate hunger. Thanks in large part to Secretary-General Guterres and Türkiye, the Black Sea Grain Initiative loosened Russia's stranglehold on Ukraine's ports and brought down the cost of grain for the world. As Moscow again tries to throttle its output, we now have to ensure that the Initiative is extended and expanded. When President Putin tried to weaponize energy, we redirected natural gas supplies from across the world so that the countries that Russia targeted could keep their people warm in the winter, and Europe took extraordinary steps to end its dependence on Russian energy.

No country has endured greater hardship as a result of Russia's war than Ukraine, but almost every country has felt the pain. Yet nations around the world continue to stand with Ukraine because we all recognize that, if we abandon Ukraine, we abandon the United Nations

Charter itself and the principles and rules that make all countries safer and more secure — no seizing of land by force, no erasing of another country's borders, no targeting civilians in war and no wars of aggression. If we do not defend those basic principles, we invite a world in which might makes right and the strong dominate the weak. That is the world that this organ was created to end, and members of the Council have a unique responsibility to ensure that we do not return to it. We can do that in three ways.

First, we must push for a just and durable peace. I expect that many countries will call for peace today. No one wants peace more than the Ukrainian people. The United States has long made clear, even before this war, that we are prepared to engage in any meaningful diplomatic effort to stop Russia's aggression against Ukraine. But history teaches us that it is the nature of peace that matters. For peace to be just, it must uphold the principles at the heart of the United Nations Charter — sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. For peace to be durable, it must ensure that Russia cannot simply rest, rearm and relaunch the war in a few months or a few years. Any peace that legitimizes Russia's seizure of land by force will weaken the Charter and send a message to would-be aggressors everywhere that they can invade countries and get away with it.

President Zelenskyy has put forward a 10-point plan for a just and durable peace. By contrast, President Putin has made it clear that there is nothing to talk about until Ukraine accepts "the new territorial realities", while doubling down on his brutal tactics.

Members of the Security Council have a fundamental responsibility to ensure that any peace is just and durable. Council members should not be fooled by calls for a temporary or unconditional ceasefire. Russia will use any pause in fighting to consolidate control over the territory that it illegally seized and will replenish its forces for further attacks. That is what happened when Russia's first assault on Ukraine froze in 2015. We should look at what followed.

Members of the Security Council should not fall into the false equivalency of calling on both sides to stop fighting or of calling on other nations to stop supporting Ukraine in the name of peace. No member of the Council should call for peace while supporting Russia's war on Ukraine and on the United Nations Charter. In this war, there is an aggressor and there is a

victim. Russia fights for conquest. Ukraine fights for its freedom. If Russia stops fighting and leaves Ukraine, the war ends. If Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine ends. The fact remains that one man, Vladimir Putin, started this war. One man can end it.

Secondly, even as we work to end Russia's war against Ukraine, members of the Council must continue to address other challenges to international peace and security. We hear the concerns of countries who worry that standing with Ukraine and holding Russia accountable is diverting focus and resources from others in need. To those countries, I would say simply: look at our actions. And when you hear Russia and its defenders accuse the countries who support Ukraine of ignoring the rest of the world, I say look at Moscow's actions. Compare the numbers. In addition to the \$13.5 billion in food aid that the United States contributed to fighting hunger over the past year, we also fund more than 40 per cent of the World Food Programme's budget. Russia contributes less than 1 per cent of that budget. That is not an outlier. Based on the latest United Nations figures, the United States donates more than nine times as much as Russia to United Nations peacekeeping. We donate 390 times as much as Russia to UNICEF. We give nearly 1,000 times as much as Russia to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Thirdly, we must reaffirm our commitment to upholding what the Charter of the United Nations calls "the dignity and worth of the human person". We must continue to compile evidence of Russia's ongoing and widespread atrocities, including executions, torture, rape and sexual violence and the deportation of thousands of Ukrainian civilians to Russia. We must continue to document Russia's war crimes and crimes against humanity and share that evidence with investigators and prosecutors so that one day the perpetrators can be held accountable. With day after day of witnessing Russia's atrocities, it is easy to become numb to the horror — to lose our ability to feel shock and outrage. But we can never let the crimes Russia is committing become our new normal. Bucha is not normal. Mariupol is not normal. Irpin is not normal. Bombing schools, hospitals and apartment buildings to rubble is not normal. Stealing Ukrainian children from their families and giving them to people in Russia is not normal. We must not let President Putin's callous indifference for human life become our own. We must force ourselves to remember that behind every atrocity

in this wretched war and conflicts around the world is a human being.

I recently visited an exhibit of artwork made by Ukrainian children affected by the war. One painting I saw was made by a 10-year-old girl named Veronika. Last April, Russian forces shelled her home in Vuhledar, killing her whole family. When first responders dug her from the rubble, a piece of shrapnel was lodged in her skull. Her left thumb had been ripped off. Doctors saved her life. But the attack left her right hand mostly paralysed, and she cannot see out of her left eye. In her painting, Veronika drew herself in a bright pink and orange dress, holding a bouquet of flowers. A building stands next to her. When asked who lived there, she said it was a place where all the people she knew who had been killed in the war could be safe.

We, the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war — that is how the Charter begins. Now is the time to meet that promise. There are so many people in Ukraine who want the same thing as that little girl, Veronika — a world where they can live in peace in their own country and keep the people they love safe. We have the power. We have the responsibility to create that world today and for generations to come. We cannot and will not let one country destroy it.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of Albania.

Ms. Xhaçka (Albania): Let me start by thanking Malta for organizing today's meeting and you, Minister, for chairing it. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his powerful words, his continued genuine efforts to end the war in Ukraine and, above all, his moral clarity during this unprecedented crisis.

This is a tragic anniversary. There is nothing to celebrate, but rather everything to regret. But still, there is one crucial thing to note and never forget. Out of a disastrous war and its terrible consequences, we have seen a world remarkably united in condemning a war of choice, refusing territorial annexation by force, upholding international law and defending the Charter of the United Nations. Yesterday (see A/ES-11/PV.19), 141 Member States from all corners of the world once again confirmed with a resounding voice that they do not want a world according to Russia, but a world according to the Charter. They want peace — a just peace for Ukraine and its people, in line with President Zelenskyy's peace plan.

One year ago, Russian troops rushed across the borders of Ukraine, and Russian missiles filled its sky, unleashing the brutal war that continues to this hour. What Russia started on this very day last year has been cataclysmic for Ukraine, earth-shattering for Europe and history-shaping for the world. Thousands of civilians have lost their lives. Millions of children have lost their schools. Countless people have lost their homes. Millions more have been displaced. And the damage to the infrastructure and economy of Ukraine is simply unfathomable. Millions around the world, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, have suffered greatly because of the global ripple effects, especially the spike in the food crisis.

Throughout the year, the world has witnessed with dismay and verified and documented despicable crimes, executions, rape, pillaging, torture, deportation of children, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the invader. We have witnessed thousands of convicts being pressed into service and used as cannon fodder in the ranks of the Wagner Group, a murderous machine with a notorious footprint in other parts of the world. And the most appalling of all of it is that an unjust, illegal and unprovoked war of aggression against an innocent country and people is perpetrated by a permanent member of the Council, who bears a special responsibility for guaranteeing peace and security and upholding the Charter and international law. Instead, it has chosen to behave like a rogue State, going against the law, the rules and the world. The truth is that despite everything, Ukraine is still here. Its people are suffering, but fighting, resisting bravely in defending their land, freedom and future. And they are not alone. Their fight is also the fight of everyone who aspires to peace. And I have to echo Minister Kuleba and strongly agree with him that peace means justice.

Russia's leaders like to talk about history and their country's role in it. And of course, Russia has had much to be proud of throughout its history. But countries and their leaders are judged, above all, by their ability to learn from the past and their actions in the present. And at present, Russia has nothing to be proud of. With its wrong actions, disastrous policy and criminal war, Russia has isolated itself and has only itself to blame for that. The sooner ordinary Russians understand that, the sooner this madness will stop.

This war must end, and it will end. But the end we envisage is the end of aggression, not the end of the rules-based world order. It is the end of the presence

of Russian troops in Ukraine, not the end of life there. It is the end of unnecessary suffering, not the end of hope. There must and will be a future with a just and stable peace and a free and secure Ukraine that is sovereign and with its territorial integrity restored. We look forward to the day — I hope soon — of the start of a process of healing and reconstruction. But until that day comes, Ukraine and its people deserve all our political, economic and military support and all our continued solidarity in their heroic resistance to defend themselves and to defend what is right and just. *Slava Ukraini.*

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador.

Mr. Holguín Maldonado (Ecuador) (*speak in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for convening this debate on the one-year anniversary of the military aggression against Ukraine. The first bombardments, which began while the Security Council was meeting in this very Chamber, crushed the diplomatic efforts of the international community and the plea by Secretary-General António Guterres, who called on the Russian Federation to give peace a chance.

I will focus on three key points today: first, the grave humanitarian and global consequences of the war; secondly, what the Council and the United Nations have been able to do; and, thirdly, what is needed to restore peace and security.

The consequences of the military aggression have been disastrous from its first day. In fact, 72 hours after it began, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed this organ (see S/PV.8983) on the horrific humanitarian situation. Among the hundreds of thousands of people who sought to flee Russia's preposterous aggression, there were close to a thousand Ecuadorians, many of whom we had to evacuate through emergency operations in coordination with other South American countries, such as Colombia, Peru and Mexico. Many of the fleeing Ecuadorians provide a living testimony for us of the serious humanitarian consequences of the invasion that continue to worsen every day and every minute, even as we speak. The war is not solely focused on Ukraine — it was an attack against the world. It is also an aggression against Latin America. With 14 million people forced from their homes, 8 million refugees in Europe and almost 6 million internally displaced persons, those most affected are women and

children. The war has left approximately 18 million people in need of protection and assistance. The loss of jobs and economic devastation have exacerbated this preventable tragedy and put human rights protection mechanisms under stress. Summary executions, sexual and gender-based violence, torture and other inhumane and degrading treatment are part of the cruel calculus of the war.

A year ago, the Council was warned of how brutal and prolonged such an urban war would be. That warning was not enough to stop the use of explosives in populated areas and the attacks targeting critical energy, residential, health, educational and productive infrastructure and Ukrainian cultural identity and heritage sites, including museums and religious sites. The conflict, which is inflicting pain and destruction on the people of Ukraine, has moreover increased the nuclear threat, has exacerbated global food insecurity and has affected economies, particularly in developing countries. Likewise, it has also affected the dynamics of the work of the Council and confidence in the United Nations system, which brings me to my second point.

Over the past 12 months that the United Nations system has been seized of the matter, the Security Council has met at least 40 times to consider the situation in Ukraine, and its President has been able to participate in the relevant meetings via video-teleconference. Through the "uniting for peace" mechanism, through its resolution 2623 (2022), the Security Council convened the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly, which adopted six resolutions focusing, *inter alia*, on territorial integrity (resolution ES-11/4), humanitarian issues (resolution ES-11/2), accountability (resolution ES-11/5) and — the subject of the resolution we adopted yesterday by an overwhelming majority (resolution ES-11/6) — the principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

For its part, on 16 March 2022, the International Court of Justice ordered the Russian Federation to immediately suspend its military operations, and the Secretary-General has been instrumental in implementing that order in terms of the evacuation of civilians, the release of prisoners and other humanitarian measures, including the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has also been deployed to Ukraine's nuclear power plants to reduce the current risks.

As I have stated, the United Nations is mobilized, but no effort will be enough to address the pain of the thousands of fathers and mothers who continue to bury their children and the tragic fate of the thousands of orphaned children. How do we justify our actions to a generation of Ukrainians who one day woke up under the onslaught of bombs, missiles and ammunition to never again see their loved ones, because they either died or fled? How many other horrors must they endure for this absurd war to end? How many more Council meetings are needed to stop the military aggression against Ukraine?

That brings me to my third and last point about what we still can and must do.

First, the Council must unequivocally reject attempts to annex territories by force and violence as a tool of domination between States. This is not a vision of the West, as we have heard time and again; this is a sacred principle for developing countries, whose only arsenal is international law, and ammunition the provisions of the Charter.

Secondly, the abuse and partial application of Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter, whereby a party to a dispute must abstain from voting, must end.

Thirdly, members of the Council must collectively or individually redouble their support for the efforts and good offices of the Secretary-General and inter-agency work.

Fourthly, what better way is there to honour the lives of the victims of this conflict than by ensuring independent investigative mechanisms, accountability and reparations, as tools for providing remedy and deterrence?

Lastly and most importantly, the Russian Federation must immediately end the unprovoked and unjustifiable war by withdrawing its occupying troops to allow for a realistic ceasefire aimed at restoring peace and security in Ukraine, based on respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. Today, for all the children who have died, who have been injured and who continue to live under the spectre of bombs, we call for this war to not continue for even one more day.

The President: I now call on the Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation.

Mr. Cassis (Switzerland) (*speak in French*): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his commitment to peace. I would like to assure you, Mr. President, of Switzerland's support for the work of the Security Council.

During my first visit to Ukraine in October 2021, I discussed reforms and development with the political authorities. At the time, we talked about a stable and prosperous future for the country. The contrast of that visit to my second last fall to bomb-struck Kyiv was chilling and distressing. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has been a huge shock for Switzerland, as the depositary and a party to the Geneva Conventions. My country is committed to the principles of peace and sovereignty, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Over the past 12 months, the Charter has been violated and the Geneva Conventions, which set out limits to the barbarity of war, have been flouted.

Switzerland, however, believes in the rule of law. I therefore call for full respect for the fundamental provisions of international humanitarian law. The civilian population, those injured, those taken prisoner and vital infrastructure must be protected by all parties to the conflict and all combatants. It is more than necessary to recall those commitments to which all of us in this Chamber, at the United Nations, have subscribed. We must do everything possible to ensure that they are respected on the territory of Ukraine, which is being torn apart by war. And what can we do, specifically?

We could, for example, meet in the spirit of the Geneva Conventions. We could meet together to discuss the means necessary to ensure that, in the midst of this heart-wrenching conflict, we do not forget what defines us as human beings: the principle of humanity. Switzerland is ready at any time to gather everyone around the table in order to work for greater respect for international humanitarian law and, ultimately, for peace. Next year we will commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions. Let us not wait a year, we must act now.

After a year of war, we must pool our strength, ideas and resources to restore security in Europe and ensure the return of a complete, just and lasting peace in Ukraine. Switzerland therefore welcomes the resolution adopted yesterday by the General Assembly (resolution ES-11/6). It is a clear signal from the vast

majority of Member States in favour of solidarity, dialogue and peace.

In order to make peace in Ukraine possible, I reiterate today our appeal to Russia: it is high time to cease all hostilities and to withdraw all its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay.

Aggression, threats and misinformation undermine the basis of the international order. To prevent that, we need strong and effective multilateralism. We need to restore our mutual trust and to ensure that justice is done, so that peace can be built on solid foundations.

As a permanently neutral State, Switzerland fully respects its obligations under the law of neutrality. It does not favour any of the belligerents in military terms, but neutrality does not mean indifference. We cannot be indifferent to violations of our fundamental rights.

Along with 40 other States, Switzerland has referred the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court. And I now call on all States to cooperate with the Court. Faced with reports of war crimes, sexual violence and other serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, we cannot stand idly by.

Switzerland continues to support Ukraine. At the same time, Switzerland does not forget the victims of all other conflicts in the world. The Charter of the United Nations must serve as a compass beyond borders and convictions. Switzerland is on the side of international law. That is an essential condition for lasting peace — the goal to which we have committed ourselves as members of the Security Council.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important meeting. My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General.

One year ago today, right here in this very Chamber, right in the middle of the discussion on how to prevent aggression against Ukraine (see S/PV.8974), a permanent member of the Security Council, launched an aggression against Ukraine, in front of the wide-open eyes of Council members. It was an insult to the Security Council and to the entire United Nations. It demonstrated how little Russia cares about the United Nations.

At that very moment, I remember vividly, Secretary-General Guterres called on the Russian leader, "President Putin, stop the military operation. Bring the troops back to Russia." His call still echoes in my ears.

The call of the Secretary-General represents the collective will of the Member States — maybe except for a few — and it is reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly, including the one adopted just yesterday (resolution ES-11/6), and in the International Court of Justice order on provisional measures. It is unfortunate that, one year later, we still have to repeat the same call.

Japan condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. It is a clear violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, by a permanent member of the Security Council, which is supposed to bear the heaviest responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Russia must immediately stop its war of aggression, withdraw all its troops and military equipment from Ukraine, and respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. No country is allowed to rewrite borders by force or coercion. Japan also condemns Russia's attacks against critical infrastructure. Indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians are a violation of international humanitarian law and constitute a war crime.

Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and its seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant must be denounced as well. We commend and fully support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure nuclear safety and security at the plant. We must hold Russia accountable in accordance with international law.

We will stand firmly with Ukraine. Japan welcomes President Zelenskyy's sincere efforts to demonstrate fundamental principles in his peace formula and to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Before conclusion, allow me to reiterate that any attempts to change the status quo of territory by force or coercion anywhere in the world must be rejected. At the same time, the Security Council should not leave

behind the many other challenges that it has to deal with. Let us return to the unshakeable principles that the Member States have built upon since 1945. Let us unite for the rule of law. Let us uphold the rule of law for peace.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France.

Ms. Colonna (France) (*speak in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting and to express my special thanks to the Secretary-General and Mr. Dmytro Kuleba for their statements.

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched a war of aggression against Ukraine. It had already occupied part of the country's territory for eight years. It did so with no other justification than its obsessive desire to resurrect the past — which had nonetheless been condemned by history — and since then, it has used the most extreme violence to deny the identity of a country and a people.

Today marks one year of Russia sowing death and destruction, one year — 365 long days — of it flagrantly violating the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, even though it is a permanent member of the Security Council. It has been one year of inhuman suffering for the Ukrainian people, whose resistance and courage commands admiration; one year of war crimes and crimes against humanity; one year of abuses, executions, shelling of civilian targets, torture, rape, abductions and deportations of children; and one year of systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, crimes that the International Criminal Court is investigating and for which it will, when the time comes, establish the responsibilities of both the perpetrators and their sponsors. It has been one year, and millions of lives have been stolen, destroyed or disrupted.

It has been a year in which Russia has blatantly violated numerous Security Council resolutions. This is the case, for example, with resolution 2231 (2015), on Iran. Accordingly, we again call on the United Nations to investigate Iran's transfers of drones to Russia and North Korea's deliveries of missiles and ammunition to Russia.

For a year, Russia has been using nuclear rhetoric irresponsible for a nuclear-weapon State and endangering the safety of Ukrainian power plants,

which it has not hesitated to occupy to support its aggression. I therefore would like to commend the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Director General to ensure the safety and security of the Zaporizhzhya plant and other nuclear power plants in Ukraine.

One year on, many countries are forced to deal with growing food insecurity and energy price pressures as a direct result of the Russian war.

It is one year later, and the facts are clear: there is an aggressor, Russia, which denies its responsibilities, and an aggrieved, Ukraine, which defends itself but also speaks of peace and has made a proposal to that end respectful of the principles of our shared Charter and the values of the Organization, which are the foundation of our collective security. This is the path to be followed that the General Assembly, by a very large majority of 141 States, called for yesterday (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6), as it has done in recent months in resolutions condemning Russian aggression and illegal annexations.

Ukraine is exercising its right to defence, a right recognized by the United Nations Charter. That is why we and our partners will continue to give Ukraine the support it needs for as long as it takes, because there will be no peace and stability anywhere if aggression is rewarded — no peace and stability anywhere.

One year on, Russian aggression must stop. The rules of international law must at last be respected, and Ukraine must regain its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The International Court of Justice demanded it on 16 March 2022. We therefore call on Russia to finally show itself worthy of its responsibilities as a permanent member of the Security Council and put an immediate end to its war of aggression against Ukraine.

The President: I now call on the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Mr. Cleverly (United Kingdom): Today we mark one year since President Putin began his full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Three months ago, I travelled to Kyiv. Ukraine's Foreign Minister, who is sitting with us in the Chamber today, greeted me. He had promised to host me for lunch, as representatives of countries often do. But I arrived just after another Russian missile attack on

civilian infrastructure had knocked out the water and electricity supply to that city. But Foreign Minister Kuleba — Kyiv — was not going to let Putin's bomb stop him from doing his job. The restaurant that hosted us rigged up a generator, brought in litres of bottled water and provided the lunch.

We have all given and received diplomatic hospitality in our jobs, but that is the kind of diplomatic hospitality that shows something very important. It was a clear demonstration that while the Ukrainians may have been hit — and hit hard — their spirit will not be broken. That restaurant's personnel wanted to show me that they would not give up, but they would keep calm and carry on.

Foreign Minister Kuleba kept his promise to me, and all of us in the Security Council Chamber today need to keep our promise to Ukraine and keep our promise to world to protect and defend the United Nations Charter.

Over the past year, Putin has shown us that he is willing to wage a war of attrition. The twentieth century's two World Wars have shown us what a horror that would be — hundreds of thousands more dead or wounded, global shortages of fuel and food, and skyrocketing prices. For these reasons and many more, Putin cannot and must not win in Ukraine.

What is at stake on the battlefield is the international order itself, and that is at the heart of the United Nations. The United Nations Charter, territorial integrity and international law exist to protect countries that do not themselves have big and powerful armies; they are there to protect them from the aggression of those countries that do.

At the end of the Second World War, the United Nations saw a unique thing in human history. Powerful, victorious nations chose to limit their own power to protect the countries less powerful than themselves. That is the bottom line. That is why the United Nations Charter needs to be protected and why it needs to be enforced. It is also why three quarters of the entire membership of the United Nations have repeatedly voted to condemn this invasion in the General Assembly.

But President Putin ignores the will of the United Nations. He does not care about the United Nations Charter. On 24 February last year, he told us it was not Russia's plan to occupy Ukrainian territory. On 8 December, he called his illegal so-called annexations

a significant result for Russia. His land grabs in eastern and southern Ukraine show us that his heart is set on imperial expansion. But 800 Russian soldiers a day are dying for his hopeless ambitions; they are paying for his ego with their lives.

As he sees that his aggression against Ukraine is failing, we should expect him to try and strong arm us into backing down with every dirty coercive instrument at his disposal: with cuts to grain and energy shipments, with threats of escalation, and with poisonous disinformation and cyberattacks. We must be prepared for this, and we must recognize that these things are a sign of weakness, rather than a sign of strength.

Those of us in this Chamber have a special responsibility to the United Nations Charter. We cannot allow Putin's invasion or his threats to succeed. We must not deviate from our resolve. The United Kingdom is proud of the support that we have given to Ukraine.

But military assistance and humanitarian aid are not enough. When this war is over — and it will be over with Ukraine's successful defence of its territory — we must never allow Ukraine to be left vulnerable to attack again. We must make sure that Ukraine is safe and secure and economically viable. That is why the United Kingdom is proud to co-host the Ukraine recovery conference in London in June 2023.

Together, we must mobilize the combined might of public and private finance to ensure that Ukraine gets the reconstruction investment it needs. But what Ukraine wants — what we all want — is for this war to end now, and to end with a victory for Ukraine and a just and enduring peace, based on the United Nations Charter. Only this can bring an end to the food and fuel shortages from which the whole world is suffering.

One year on, on year into this terrible war, let us in the Chamber send a clear message. Our support for Ukraine is not and will never be time-limited. Our defence of the Charter of the United Nations is not and will never be time-limited. We will keep the promises that we made to the United Nations Charter and to the Ukrainian people. We will give the Ukrainians the help that they need for as long as it takes, until Ukraine prevails, until its sovereignty and territorial integrity are restored and until the Charter of the Organization is upheld.

Mr. Ampratwum-Sarpong (Ghana): I thank Malta, in its capacity as the President of the Security Council, for convening today's debate on the maintenance of peace and security in Ukraine.

I also thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement and for his leadership over the past 12 months on the humanitarian, security and political aspects of the war, in support of our shared ambition for an end to the war in Ukraine and a return to the cherished principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

At the outset, I wish to reaffirm Ghana's deep commitment to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We reiterate our solidarity with the people of Ukraine as war ravages their farms, towns and cities. We recall that as the Security Council convened in an emergency session on the night of 24 February 2022, amid widening concerns of an imminent attack against Ukraine, our worst fears were borne out before our very eyes. Given the firm denials by the Russian Federation of any assertions that the mounting presence of its troops along its shared borders with Ukraine was in preparation for an invasion of Ukraine, Ghana, at that time, had urged for the de-escalation of tensions and the tempering of war rhetoric.

Regrettably, that night, as the Council met, the Russian Federation, without justification, began its actions to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbour, Ukraine. As has been asserted so many times, the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine constitutes a serious violation of international law and stands today as one of the clearest violations of the prohibition against the use of force under Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations.

Over the past year, as we have called upon the Russian Federation to end that destructive war, we have listened carefully, at each turn, to its attempts to rationalize its ongoing actions in Ukraine. Between the reality on the ground and the changing narratives, including the protection of ethnic Russians in parts of Ukraine from Russophobic attacks, our assessment remains that the ongoing aggression against Ukraine is by all standards, unlawful, unjustified and unacceptable.

In our view, conventional frameworks and judicial mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice should serve as the only acceptable recourse in addressing any claims of human rights violations. We therefore consider it untenable that

a permanent member of the Security Council, entrusted with the distinct responsibility for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security, would choose the path of war to the exclusion of the diplomatic and internationally acceptable means at its disposal.

The veto by the Russian Federation on 25 February of the Security Council's draft resolution intended to end the military offensive has, regrettably, prevented the Council from taking decisive action. The present circumstances underscore the long-standing arguments for the urgent reform of the Council and for a prohibition on the use of the veto, especially in matters affecting international peace and security, more so where a permanent member of the Council is the one in breach of the Charter and international law.

The war on Ukraine, as we know, was preceded by efforts to address certain concerns about the post-Cold War European security architecture. We believe that any revisions to existing structures that guarantee the collective security of its members must emerge from broad dialogue, involving all relevant actors in the region. We are concerned that the fallout from the continuing war in Ukraine attempts to create or reinforce opposing alliances — a situation that took us to two world wars. We believe that this is the time for cooler heads and a rededication to mutually beneficial cooperation and multilateralism, not competition for hegemonic advantage. Those who wish to dig in their heels for selfish advantage in the geopolitics of the twenty-first century would lead us down the path of even greater disaster.

The war has unleashed a devastating humanitarian toll and claimed thousands of lives. Sustained missile bombardments mainly targeted at civilian populated areas have resulted in more than 21,000 casualties, including 8,006 deaths and 13,287 injured. It is saddening to note that 478 innocent children have been killed, and 954 injured. Millions of people have been displaced, with 8 million living as refugees in neighbouring countries. Our own national compatriots, most of whom were college students, had their education disrupted and truncated when they were forced to flee from Ukraine.

We are informed that approximately 50 per cent of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed or damaged. That situation has left many households without heating or water and at the mercy of the harrowing winter conditions. We regret that hostilities

have carried on without regard for the principles of proportionality and distinction and, therefore, we reiterate our condemnation for the targeted attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure. Warring parties have obligations under international humanitarian law, with which they must comply.

It is impossible to see the aggression against Ukraine in any other light than as an attack on the accepted standards of our international order, and allowing it to stand imperils the independence and equality of States, especially less powerful States, under the Charter. We must therefore sustain the political will for accountability, first to ensure justice for the people of Ukraine and not least for the preservation of the present international order. The coordination of ongoing investigative processes, as well as the strengthening of our international justice system, including the universalization of the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court, remain crucial to ensuring that the perpetrators of atrocities in Ukraine, as elsewhere, do not go unpunished.

We recognize the courageous efforts of the humanitarian workers who have worked under very difficult circumstances to provide life-saving and life-sustaining assistance to some 16 million people. We urge international support to help fund the Ukrainian humanitarian response plan with the \$3.9 billion that is required to aid nearly 40 per cent of the population, with varying humanitarian requirements.

The rest of the world has not been spared the aftershocks of the war, which continue to reverberate, with crippling and systemic impacts on global food, energy and finance systems. Developing countries, already hard-hit by the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic, debt and inflation, have little coping capacity for the worsening economic conditions.

We take note of the useful policy recommendations put forward by the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to address the vicious cycle of the crisis, including the restructuring of the global debt architecture. We believe priority should be given to implementing those recommendations, especially to support Africa's economic transformation and its capacity to address the growing debt crisis and the interlinked consequences of the war. Given the centrality of the Russian Federation and Ukraine to the global grain and fertilizer markets, we support the further renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative

to ease global market volatilities that hold long-term economic effects. The necessary attention must also be paid to realizing the effective implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Russian Federation on the export of agricultural products and fertilizers.

We are acutely concerned about the growing appeal of military logic and the hardening of the conflict into a war of attrition. The war in Ukraine is moving in a direction that is cause for great concern, as the events of the past 12 months have demonstrated that no one is immune to its consequences. We have a responsibility to redouble our efforts to avert the catastrophe of a war that is even more brutal than what we have witnessed so far.

General Assembly resolution A/ES-11/6, on a just peace in Ukraine, adopted yesterday by the Assembly at its eleventh emergency special session (see A/ES-11/PV.19) in affirmation of the purposes and values of the Charter of the United Nations, should ignite a renewed commitment to taking the action needed to realize our collective desire for lasting peace between the two countries. We strongly believe that the channels of diplomacy and dialogue offer the best chance of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, and we urge the members of the Council to strengthen their efforts in support of credible negotiations between the two parties. We have few options other than to invest in peace.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to return to the status quo ante through the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of its troops from all areas within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates): I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and I welcome the participation of Ukraine's Foreign Minister in this meeting today.

We cannot begin without expressing our deep sorrow for the lives lost and shattered in the war in Ukraine. We mourn the deaths of at least 8,000 civilians and share in the grief of their loved ones. We are appalled, as we mark one year of this cruel war, that we do so in the knowledge that it enters its second year.

Over the past two days, from the rostrum of the General Assembly, we heard a virtually uninterrupted appeal for peace. A global, diverse and representative majority issued an unambiguous message — enough.

That majority is united neither in allegiance to one side nor hostility to the other. They come together not to preserve geopolitical gain or reverse loss, they are not motivated by petty grievance or grand ambition and they have no interest in or ability to wade into great-Power conflict. In the historical processes and events that forged today's Europe, they were — for the most part — observers, too often unwillingly affected. Yet the incontestable fact is that an overwhelming majority of Member States are rising to the defence of the Charter of the United Nations. It is the Charter that upholds sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. It is the Charter that rejects wars of aggression, conquest and annexation. It is the Charter that organizes our open and cooperative international order. The question is simple and it is settled.

Those truths, however self-evident, are nonetheless challenged by the war still raging in Ukraine. Military setbacks have been met with military escalation, while the front lines are little changed. The costs, however, have only grown — in Ukrainian lives and livelihoods, in the damage to cities and towns and in the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The war's reach has extended far beyond Ukraine, disrupting food and energy markets, worsening the global debt crisis and weakening international norms, rules and laws.

Exactly one year ago today, the global call for diplomacy and peace went unheeded as the war broke out. Now we risk seeing it escalate as more battalions mobilize for new offensives. Yesterday Member States renewed their urgent and sincere call for an end to the war (see A/ES-11/PV.19). Leaders across the world are responding with mediation efforts and peace plans. Now is the time to invest in inclusive and imaginative diplomacy by truly leveraging the global majority for peace. We must reinforce the Secretary-General's offered role as a mediator with consistent, robust and determined backing. The post-war vision must also incentivize Russia and Ukraine to come to the negotiating table, not the battlefield. The war will not end if either side is more threatened by the alternative. Steered by the Charter and by history, we can dedicate ourselves to working for a peace that is neither vindictive nor callous. We are under no illusions that such efforts will be easy — too much blood has been spilled and too much damage done — but all of us should dread, with equal certainty, what looms in the wake of its failure.

Richard Holbrooke once described an effort to end another war in Europe as something like a combination of chess and mountain climbing. Reaching the summit at which this war ends will require a series of small moves — renewing the Black Sea Grain Initiative; realizing the memorandum of understanding on Russian fertilizer and food products; preserving the non-proliferation regime; enhancing humanitarian assistance; continuing prisoner exchanges; and refraining from turning multilateral institutions into a battlefield. To achieve all of that, we must aspire to coordination in our approaches, not conformity, and we must encourage — and indeed nurture — all efforts motivated by a genuine desire to peacefully resolve this war. To do so, we must value, not vilify, open lines of communication. That is the path the United Arab Emirates has chosen and the path we have pursued in defence of the Charter for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, preserving its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*speak in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for re-establishing the significance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and for outlining the terrible state of affairs of the war in Ukraine, 12 months after its outbreak.

It is a year to the day since the war in Ukraine began — an entire year of a deadly war that has shaken and tested the entire international system and whose shockwave has impacted most of the world's nations. In the past year, the dead have been numbered in their thousands and civilian infrastructure has suffered immeasurable destruction. It has been an entire year of distress, fear and exodus, as the number of refugees and displaced persons continues to grow in the wake of the bombings and the rattle of weapons. Every day that passes in this terrible war brings with it the risk of a spillover and the globalization of hostilities. Each day of war raises the spectre of nuclear risk, which would undoubtedly lead us down a path of no return towards irreparability and chaos. The war is unsustainable and must be stopped immediately.

When the hostilities broke out, my country expressed its opposition to the war and condemned the violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity. Gabon unequivocally reaffirms the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as the cement that holds the coexistence of the international community in place. Above all, my country has repeatedly called for an

immediate ceasefire and good faith negotiations between the parties in order to silence the weapons in Ukraine.

For the past 12 months, the members of the Council have talked loudly around this table without listening to one another. For the past 12 months, every United Nations forum and organ has been a theatre of invective and antagonism that has been of no help or recourse to those who fall in the trenches or are crushed under the rubble on the battlefields and in cities and villages. It is time to pause before the torrent of blood and the waves of human distress that stir our conscience. It is time to mobilize in order to end the war in Ukraine.

As members of the Security Council, we owe a response to all those wounded in the war. We owe a response to the countless victims who wonder when the war will end. We owe a response to the countless refugees who wonder when they will be able to return home. We must, without delay, reconcile ourselves with the spirit of the United Nations Charter, which sets out to save this generation from the scourge of war.

My country reiterates its call to the parties to negotiate in good faith, with a view to ending this war. The hope raised by the Black Sea Grain Initiative must be revived — not only to renew said agreement but also to build bridges for a frank dialogue capable of bringing about the cessation of hostilities.

We call on the parties to show restraint and to assume responsibility before history, which will always be greater than the vainglory of hegemonies without virtue or tomorrow.

I repeat my country's opposition to the war in Ukraine and to all wars in the world, especially the numerous, chronic and cyclical wars in Africa. Rejecting the logic of war is not a form of escape or cowardice or, much less, an opportunistic posture. Above all, it is certainly not a rhetoric of impotence or indifference. Rather, it is to remember the indelible lessons of the history of unjust wars, which hammer home the fact that those who cause, maintain or unleash those wars are rarely the victors. Extracting ourselves from the logic of war, the options of which are so narrow and so poor in the belligerence of Powers, is to remain attuned to the ideals that underpin and enoble the United Nations.

War is contrary to the values on which the United Nations Organization and the Security Council are

founded. Every day of war calls into question our mission, our mandate and our credibility.

In conclusion, I would like to once again call for peace in Ukraine. Because we are for peace, we will support every step towards dialogue and every initiative that seeks to activate the channels of diplomacy in order to silence the weapons in Ukraine.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*speak in Russian*): Today is the end of a difficult week for the United Nations. It will be remembered by everyone for the information hype created by Ukraine and its Western sponsors on the anniversary of Russia's launch of a special military operation in Ukraine. It would seem that this is exactly what Mr. Kuleba promised in January — to hold a peace summit in New York.

We could, without exaggeration, dedicate an entire political science conference to analysing what our former Western partners have said this week. Perhaps that will happen in future, when people wish to cast a retrospective eye on the situation. We would suggest the following title for the conference: "Yet another missed opportunity for a peaceful resolution to the Ukrainian crisis."

That would be correct, because any expression using the word "peace", used disingenuously, including today, by high-ranking representatives of Ukraine and Western countries, means something completely different in fact, namely, the capitulation of Russia and inflicting a strategic defeat on it, ideally followed by the disintegration of the country and the redrawing of its constituent territories.

These true goals of Western interference in Ukrainian affairs, which most clearly manifested themselves, by the way, almost exactly nine years ago, on the day of the Maidan anti-constitutional coup of 21 February 2014, were laid bare from the very beginning. And it is those same goals that led to the formation on our borders of a hostile nationalistic Russophobic regime, which zealously rushed to solve the "Russian issue" in Ukraine.

Yesterday, our British colleague, speaking in the General Assembly (see A/ES-11/PV.19), criticized the draft amendments proposed by Belarus to the draft resolution. She argued that the draft amendments equate the aggressor and the victim. Is she not concerned that the "victim" is up to its elbows in blood and Nazi tattoos? And what of the nine years of elimination of the

Russian-speaking residents of Donbas? Why does she think it is normal for Ukraine to send guns and tanks against unarmed civilians in the east of the country and bomb them simply because they do not want to abandon their own identity? That is exactly what the Kyiv regime did in the summer of 2014, and it was then that the intra-Ukrainian armed conflict broke out. Does she think that we should have resigned ourselves to that situation?

Let me remind the Council that NATO justified its aggression against Yugoslavia with the phrase “campaign of terror” and the need for the Kosovars to “live in security and enjoy universal human rights and freedoms on an equal basis”. These are quotes from a NATO statement issued on 23 April 1999.

It turns out that she and her colleagues are denying Russian-speaking Ukrainians universal rights and freedoms if she presents the Kyiv authorities that attacked them as a victim. And she is silent about the campaign of terror unleashed against them. For us, it is obvious that Ukraine is not a victim, because if it had not gone to war against the inhabitants of Donetsk and Luhansk, with the consent of her and her colleagues, but rather heeded their aspirations, then there would have been no need for our special military operation. Crimea would have probably remained part of Ukraine, because the people of Crimea chose reunification with Russia only after they heard direct threats from the Kyiv authorities.

I would like to take advantage of the fact that Ms. Colonna and Ms. Baerbock are participating in today’s meeting to raise another very inconvenient topic for our Western colleagues — the Minsk agreements. We all recently heard the confessions made by François Hollande, Angela Merkel and Boris Johnson that neither France, Germany nor the United Kingdom ever took those agreements seriously, had no intention of urging the Ukrainian authorities to implement them and used the agreements only to buy time for Kyiv to prepare for war with Russia. Even if we disregard the moral side of the issue — and we have long had no illusions about the moral qualities of some of our Western colleagues — the point is that the leaders of those States, in fact, openly admitted that they knowingly violated resolution 2202 (2015), which enshrined the Minsk agreements. But that does not prevent the Foreign Ministers of those same States from lecturing other Member States here in the Council today.

Furthermore, a trite cliché bandied about this week, which appeared much earlier, was the assertion that if Russia stops hostilities, the war would end, but if Ukraine would stop fighting, there would be no Ukraine. It sounds nice, but it is completely false. Where, when and from whom did anyone hear that the goal of our military operation was the destruction of Ukraine, to de-Ukrainize it? We have never declared such a goal. We have always wanted to have what we had before — a friendly neighbour who does not threaten us, does not discriminate against anyone and is not trying to resurrect Nazism.

Their slogan should therefore really be: if Russia stops the hostilities, the discrimination against and persecution of the Russian-speaking population, who do not want to break with Russia, the violation of their rights and freedoms and the glorification of Nazi criminals will continue in Ukraine. If Ukraine stops the hostilities, it will have a chance to rebuild itself as a normal, peace-loving, independent State and to save many thousands of human lives. That is why we have repeatedly stated that we are ready to negotiate on how the goals of our special military operation can be implemented peacefully. Of course, we will not even consider plans that involve other scenarios.

This week, we have repeatedly said that it is only the collective West that is not interested in the cessation of hostilities. As we all now reliably know, it did not allow the Kyiv regime to make peace in March and April last year. Our Western colleagues are now happy: Russians and Ukrainians are killing each other, Western defence companies are making enormous profits and getting access to testing grounds for new weapons, and, by getting rid of old weapons, NATO is slowly rearming. At the same time, Washington is weakening its European rivals, which are showing an unprecedented degree of servility and impotence. We spoke about that in detail in this Chamber yesterday (see S/PV.9268). Most important, the West gleefully hopes that, by having weakened Russia and threatened China, it will maintain its monopolistic position in the world and remain the only flourishing garden on the jungle planet, in the words of Mr. Borrell. Then the golden billion can continue to enrich themselves at the expense of others, unchecked and with impunity, pitting countries against each other, managing their natural resources and exploiting their populations. That is called the rules-based international order, on which Russia has encroached by not being willing to

put up with a Russophobic hornet's nest on its borders. We want developing countries to have no illusions as to what this conflict is really about.

Of course, the solution to this conflict is inseparable from issues related to a fair and indivisible Euro-Atlantic security system. It now only works for the United States and its NATO allies. They have appropriated for themselves the right to interfere in any international matters and the internal affairs of other States. Ukraine is a prime example of that. Their bases are located on our borders in violation of key understandings that ended the Cold War era. Western leaders deceived us then, and they want to continue to deceive us now by positing NATO's absolute right to expand unchecked and trying to bamboozle the entire world with tales of how much money they spend on the Sustainable Development Goals, as United States Secretary of State Blinken just did. I would like to recall that, since the Cold War alone, the United States has conducted 251 military operations overseas, inflicting tremendous damage on such countries. Even if one pays 100 times over, it will not make up for that damage.

The collective West must accept the fact that there are other actors on our planet that have their own interests. One must coexist with them, and it is even quite possible to cooperate in our mutual interest, but on an equal and mutually respectful basis. The unipolar world is a thing of the past, and it is in our common interest to make the transition to a multipolar world with the least amount of turmoil. I would like to believe that the hot phase of that transition will limit itself to the Ukrainian crisis alone.

That in fact is what a real conversation about peace should look like, including perhaps within the United Nations, and the sooner it starts, the better. We tried to start it on the eve of the beginning of the special military operation, at the end of 2021, but the West arrogantly rejected all our proposals for such a dialogue. It was the Ukrainian people who paid the ultimate price for that, and whom the Kyiv regime was happy to sacrifice for Western geopolitical interests. We welcome sincere efforts towards peace, such as China's proposals.

The choice is up to our former Western partners, above all Washington. After all that we have learned about them this year, after the boundless and abhorrent Russophobia and attempts to abolish Russia, after the weapons supplied to the Zelenskyy regime that killed peaceful women, children and elderly people in Donbas,

after their Ukrainian adventure through the attempt to create problems for us on our borders, it is clear that our relations will no longer be the same. We no longer trust their words, and it will be difficult, if not impossible, to regain our trust. It is not words, but deeds that matter now. But it is in their interest to try to do something. So far, they are only making matters worse by continuing to pump weapons into the Kyiv regime and helping it on the battlefield. Meanwhile, they leave us no choice but to militarily eliminate threats to Russia from Ukraine's territory. They should think about that when they come up with new anti-Russian initiatives within the United Nations and pass them off as evidence of global support for Ukraine.

Mr. Afonso (Mozambique): Mozambique wishes to thank the presidency of Malta for having convened this important meeting. We express our profound gratitude to the Secretary-General for his enlightening briefing.

A year has elapsed since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine. Its tragic consequences, spillover effects and ramifications continue to reverberate at the local, regional and global levels, and no end is in sight. As with every conflict, civilians, especially women and children, are bearing the brunt of the violence, and those alive remain traumatized forever.

Meanwhile, the conflict has had a negative impact on the world trade and supply chains. It has brought about economic damage, with global trade disruptions affecting transportation costs and virtually all global value chains. The socioeconomic impact on developing countries, especially in Africa, has been grave.

The International Monetary Fund has found that, while the African continent had been slowly emerging from the coronavirus disease pandemic, the conflict in Ukraine is now threatening that recovery. Many of our countries are vulnerable owing to the higher energy and food prices, reduced tourism and potential difficulty accessing international capital markets.

From an African perspective, we are all too familiar with the devastating effects of conflicts. We know that wars result only in the suffering of the people, and it is our collective duty — the duty of the international community as a whole — to work towards resolving conflict through peaceful and negotiated solutions. We must uphold the fundamental principle of collective security enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, according to which the security of one is the security of all.

In the past, the global community has shown that it is possible to overcome hate and mutual suspicion and find the path to the negotiating table. It is therefore imperative that the international community support all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in Ukraine. That requires the support of all nations, particularly those that occupy seats on the Security Council. We need to assist the parties involved to engage in negotiations and reach a negotiated solution. That means building on the few bright spots of this year-long conflict, such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the regular exchanges of prisoners and the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. More importantly, Mozambique believes that we need to strongly support the good offices of the Secretary-General and tap into his reservoir of moral authority in the quest for a settlement of the conflict.

Mozambique has a long-standing commitment to promoting peace and security in our region and beyond. As a country that has experienced numerous conflicts in the past, we understand the importance of supporting diplomatic efforts and respecting humanitarian law in order to bring about peace. The anniversary of this conflict must serve as a reminder for the international community to work together to find a negotiated solution to it, guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): I thank Secretary-General António Guterres for his statement. A year after the start of the conflict, we see an armed stalemate on the ground, triumphalist rhetoric on both sides and prospects of new military offensives. We should put aside illusions about a military solution to this crisis. We need to discuss the return of the parties to the negotiating table. President Lula has made Brazil's position clear, faithful to our diplomatic tradition. We condemn Russia's invasion and territorial violation of a sovereign State, Ukraine. But a year later, we understand that the time has come to also give voice to those who want to speak of ways to build peace. The violence, which affects the most vulnerable, should stop, with no preconditions. International humanitarian law and its principles are not optional. They are mandatory at all times and under all circumstances. Respecting and ensuring respect for international humanitarian law are essential to the protection of civilians.

Brazil has not come here with the intention of presenting a ready-made solution. We need to explore paths that seek to create conditions for the end of the

conflict. We are convinced that countries like Brazil that are not directly involved in the conflict have a constructive role to play in fostering dialogue. We took action along those lines during the discussions on the General Assembly's adoption yesterday of its most recent resolution, resolution ES-11/6, in which Member States call for "a cessation of hostilities", an expression that appears for the first time and was added at the suggestion of Brazil. The resolution also reaffirmed the resolute commitment of the international community to upholding the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, while underscoring the need to achieve peace. We also encouraged careful consideration of the causes of the conflict so that mutual resentments and suspicions do not manifest themselves in future violence. We should never lose sight of the human tragedy. Nor should we ignore the global economic impact of the war, in particular with regard to the rising input costs for agricultural and food production.

Brazil will continue to persevere on this path. We are convinced that there is sufficient will among Member States to prevent future, new anniversaries of the duration of the war like the sad mark of one year completed today.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*speak in Chinese*): I thank Secretary-General Guterres for his briefing. A year has passed since the full outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, and the situation is of great concern to all of us. The international community, while deeply concerned about the prospect of the expansion and prolongation of the conflict, should think coolly about how to stop the fighting as soon as possible and achieve long-term peace and stability in Ukraine and Europe. Earlier today, China issued a position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. We have always taken an objective and impartial stance based on the merits of the issue and are ready to continue to play a responsible and constructive role in easing the situation and resolving the crisis. In that regard, I would like to highlight the following points.

First, when handling and solving international disputes, universally recognized international law, including the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, must be upheld. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be effectively guaranteed. The observation of universally recognized international law and the basic norms governing international relations has a

bearing on the stability of the international system and on international fairness and justice. They should be equally and uniformly applied in every place and on every issue, without exception. Some countries, while emphasizing sovereignty and territorial integrity with regard to Ukraine, are blatantly interfering in other countries' internal affairs and undermining their sovereignty and territorial integrity, putting their double standards on full display, and the international community sees that clearly.

Secondly, if we are to facilitate a political solution to the issue of Ukraine, we need to pursue shared security. Security is not an exclusive right to be enjoyed by some countries alone. One country's security should not be pursued at the expense of another's. Strengthening and even expanding military blocs will only undermine regional security and will never bring about peace. Russia, Ukraine and the countries of Europe are neighbours that cannot physically move away. To achieve long-term peace and stability in Europe, the Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation must be abandoned, and the legitimate security concerns of all countries must be taken seriously and addressed properly so as to build a balanced, effective and sustainable regional security architecture.

Thirdly, conflicts have no winners. Launching diplomatic negotiations is the right way, and the only way, to resolve the Ukraine crisis. The international community should promote peace and talks with the highest sense of urgency and work to create enabling factors and platforms for a resumption of negotiations. Bringing the parties to the conflict back to the negotiating table is not going to be easy, but it is the first step towards a political solution. This morning Secretary-General Guterres called for giving peace a chance, and we call on Russia and Ukraine to resume negotiations without preconditions. Ukraine is not an arena for fights between major countries. No one should seek to benefit from the conflict at the cost of the Ukrainian people.

Fourthly, it is imperative to ensure that the red line of nuclear security is never crossed under any circumstances. Nuclear weapons must never be used, and a nuclear war must never be fought. Faced with the risk that the Ukraine crisis could lead to an escalation of the conflict, major countries have a special and important responsibility to maintain communications and coordination and do everything they can to prevent a nuclear crisis. The international community should

jointly oppose armed attacks on nuclear power plants and other peaceful nuclear facilities, ensure strict compliance with the Convention on Nuclear Safety, among other instruments, and support the International Atomic Energy Agency in playing a constructive role in promoting the safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities.

Fifthly, the humanitarian crisis is worsening and should be proactively and properly addressed. International humanitarian law is a code of conduct that must be strictly observed in conflict situations. The parties concerned should avoid attacking civilians and civilian facilities, protect the vulnerable, including women and children, ensure humanitarian access and respect the basic rights of prisoners of war. The international community should step up its humanitarian assistance, help restore civilian infrastructure and ensure basic livelihoods for refugees and displaced persons, with a view to preventing a larger-scale humanitarian crisis. At the same time, humanitarian operations should adhere in earnest to the principles of neutrality and impartiality and avoid politicization.

Lastly, every country is responsible for the important task of promoting its people's livelihoods and development. Efforts should be made to manage the spillover effects of the crisis. The Ukraine crisis has far-reaching ramifications, but developing countries are not parties to the conflict and should not have to pay an excessively high price for it. Some of the parties concerned have resorted to unilateral sanctions and exerting maximum pressure, which will not solve any problems and will only undermine the stability of the global industrial supply chain and exacerbate the global food, energy and financial crises. We hope that the parties concerned will act responsibly and stop abusing unilateral sanctions and long-arm jurisdiction. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, and the memorandum of understanding signed by the United Nations and Russia on food and fertilizer exports, are very important in terms of ensuring global food security and should be fully, effectively and equitably implemented.

The road to peace will not be smooth, but no matter how complicated the situation is, we must never give up hope for peace or abandon efforts for peace. With regard to the Ukraine issue, China has always stood and will continue to stand on the side of peace and dialogue. We are ready to work with all parties to promote a political solution to the Ukraine crisis and bring about peace as soon as possible.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Borrell Fontelles.

Mr. Borrell Fontelles: On this day, exactly one year ago, Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, starting a massive invasion of a peaceful neighbour. For a year, we have all seen the Ukrainian people fighting to defend their country. They deserve the solidarity of every person and country around the world. I will make just two essential points. The first is why Russia's war of choice matters to all of us. The second is how we get to peace.

We need to be clear. I say "war of choice", because President Putin chose war. And for a year we have seen its horrors — 13 million people homeless; 21 million in need of humanitarian assistance; and tens of thousands of Ukrainians forced to leave their country and seek refuge across Europe. Families have been torn apart. In a catalogue of crimes, the forced deportation of tens of thousands of Ukrainian children stands out for its depravity. The abduction of innocent children and alteration of their personal status, including nationality, so that they can be adopted by Russian families, is a clear violation of human rights and international law, as well as a violation of the Geneva Convention. Those Ukrainian children need to be returned to Ukraine immediately.

With regard to crimes against humanity, I have been to Bucha and have seen for myself the civilians killed, with some having their hands tied behind their backs before being executed. And who can forget Mariupol? I would once again like to pay tribute to the United Nations for its efforts in securing the safe passage of civilians trapped inside the Azovstal steel plant. Russian forces have been shelling Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure for months. Air-raid sirens have become a disturbingly regular feature of Ukrainian lives, as many of those here have witnessed, and as I did myself when I was in Kyiv 10 days ago.

(spoke in French)

One year later, the toll that the war has taken on the Ukrainian people has been catastrophic. But the war has also had effects on a global scale, with food and energy insecurity leading to price increases that have had a terrible impact on the most vulnerable populations. The increase in the prices of food and essential goods has added to the burdens on many countries throughout the world, already struggling with the difficulties of daily life. That is why this war is affecting everyone. The

European Union and its member States have contributed to alleviating the burden of war-related consequences over the past year. In Africa, for example, more than €1.6 billion has been earmarked for activities related to food security in the most affected countries of the Sahel, the Lake Chad basin and the Horn of Africa.

(spoke in English)

This war matters a lot both because of the principles at stake and the shock waves that it is creating. It needs to stop, and it needs to stop now. That brings me to my second, and maybe most important, point. How do we get to peace? Everyone is asking for peace. But how do we get there? Here at the United Nations and around the world, there is a growing clamour for peace. That was the clear message that the General Assembly sent yesterday (see ES-11/PV.19). While the Security Council has been blocked, the General Assembly made it clear in General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, adopted by an overwhelming majority of 141 to 7 votes, that the world condemns the aggression; that Russia must withdraw its troops; and that the world wants and needs peace, but not just any peace. No, we want a just peace, based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is urgent for the Kremlin to heed that message and act on it. Looking to the future, we need to build on that resolution and make it happen.

We support the 10-point peace plan that President Zelenskyy has presented. We the European Union will remain ready to work with all genuine partners and ideas that support Ukraine's effort to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with the resolution adopted by the General Assembly, based on the Charter and international law. Meanwhile, we will continue to support Ukraine in defending itself and protecting its people. The quest for peace and our support for Ukraine go hand in hand. They go together. It is not either/or. It is the quest for peace and support for Ukraine.

With that, I want to make a final point. Our principled support for Ukraine does not come at the expense of our engagement elsewhere in the world. On the contrary, the European Union remains fully mobilized to promote sustainable peace elsewhere because we know that there are many more wars, tragedies and problems around the world that need our support and require our concern. It is not "instead of"; it is "on top of". We will continue doing the same thing that we have been doing. And we have a strong track

record of engagement around the world, financially and politically, with more than 5,000 women and men deployed in 21 crisis-management operations. Just this week, we launched two more — one in Armenia and another in the Niger. Yes, there are many other problems, many other wars, many other causes of suffering around the world. We will take care of them. We will work for peace in Ukraine and be a reliable partner for peace around the world, wherever peace is in danger and people are suffering.

The President: I now call on the Minister for European and Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Káčer (Slovakia): One year ago, the Security Council met in this very Chamber (see S/PV.8974), around this very table, with the main purpose of the meeting to discuss an unprecedented military build-up of Russian forces, which posed a threat to international peace and security. The last hopes for persuading Russia to de-escalate the situation and engage constructively in negotiations were shattered by the words of the then Ambassador of Ukraine, warning members of the Security Council that it was already too late to speak about de-escalation, as the Russian President had declared war. And as we all know, that happened despite Russia's numerous assurances claiming that it had no intention of invading its neighbour. That was the night when the whole international community learned of Russia's decision to begin an unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine in violation of all the fundamental values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Yes, it was the Russian Federation, which holds a permanent seat in this Chamber and is one of those primarily responsible for maintaining peace and security. Needless to say, at that moment, our faith in multilateralism was shaken to its foundations.

Despite the pain and suffering that have ensued since this senseless war started, the Russian Federation has ignored the international community's calls for ending the agony. And I do not really understand in which parallel universe depriving millions of innocent people of electricity, heat and water and plunging a country into darkness can be justified on the pretext of a so-called special military operation. Russia's systematic and thorough spreading of propaganda and distortion of the facts is quite cynical. It seems to be promoting some kind of alternative reality — a behaviour that we continue to condemn.

We reiterate our call for an immediate cessation of Russia's military activities in Ukraine and the unconditional withdrawal of all Russian troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. That also concerns temporarily occupied Crimea, as well as other parts of Ukraine, including those where the Russian Federation, together with local puppet authorities, orchestrated so-called referendums in a blatant breach of international rules. We are extremely concerned about the numbers of civilian casualties that have resulted since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, more than 8,000 people have been killed and more than 13,000 injured. Needless to say, we all know that the real numbers are much higher than that.

Slovakia has stood by Ukraine since the very beginning of its defence against Russia's aggression. And we will continue our steadfast support, including for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, until this shameless war is over. And there is also one fact that is undeniable. The war will be over one day, and those responsible for all the crimes committed will be held accountable and brought to justice.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania.

Mr. Aurescu (Romania): I commend the Maltese presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's debate.

For a year now, Romania, a direct neighbour of Ukraine, has been at the forefront in helping Ukraine and countering the multifaceted consequences of the atrocious, illegal and unprovoked war waged by the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, against Ukraine, a sovereign, independent country. The impact of that irrational war of aggression has reached far and wide. Violations of international humanitarian law and attacks on critical civilian infrastructure have made millions of Ukrainians flee. Grain and energy chains have been disrupted, leading to a sharp increase in energy prices and the threat of famine all over the globe and especially for the most vulnerable in the South. Fear of a nuclear catastrophe daunts us once again. Hybrid tactics test or try to intimidate us, putting pressure on Ukraine and its neighbours such as the Republic of Moldova, as well as others in the Black Sea region and the wider European continent and the Euro-Atlantic security area as a whole. The war represents a direct

attack on the integrity of the rules-based international system, on our security, prosperity and core values. But in the face of that threat, nothing is clearer than this. We will stand united and strong for as long as it takes, Ukraine will win, and the Russian Federation will bear the responsibility for what it has done. Our call is also clear. Russia must abide by the rules of international law. It must unconditionally cease its use of force and withdraw completely and immediately from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders.

We are here today in the Chamber of the Security Council, the guarantor of international peace and security, to stand in support of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to reiterate that there is only one way to end this aggression.

I welcome General Assembly resolution ES-11/6, which the Assembly adopted yesterday by a very large majority, putting the principles of the Charter of the United Nations above all, including national or regional interests.

It is in our power to mitigate the effects of the war on the future. From day one of the war, Romania has acted in full solidarity with the brave Ukrainian people. We have made considerable investments in food, energy and transportation infrastructure and have welcomed the more than 3.6 million Ukrainian refugees who have transited our territory. So far, we have facilitated the delivery of more than 13 million tons of Ukrainian grain, contributing to global food security efforts. We hope for a positive outcome in the long run and the continuation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Romania has also been a strong supporter of the efforts to seek accountability for all serious crimes committed in Ukraine, including the crime of aggression. We have joined the core group of States that is working alongside Ukraine to identify the most appropriate legal basis to establish a tribunal for that purpose.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has a major impact on the region. We have extended a helping hand to our neighbour, the Republic of Moldova, the country most affected by the war besides Ukraine itself. And I want to inform the Council that we are concerned about Russia's most recent plans to destabilize that country, which we have condemned. In that respect, it is absolutely unacceptable to see threatening rhetoric such as that in the statement of the Russian Foreign Ministry

today, by which it announced that the Russian Army would "adequately respond" to so-called provocations or attacks on its Russian compatriots or on military personnel and people in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova. Such provocative behaviour, which is based on nothing, on ungrounded allegations, is completely unacceptable, and we fully support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders.

As we have approached the one-year milestone since the war began, all of us, including Romania, have witnessed Russian propaganda intensifying and spreading fake narratives in an attempt to undermine the unity of our societies and our efforts to support Ukraine. We must combat those malign influences and continue to stand united to defend our values. The Romanian people must be mindful about the Russian-inspired stories they read and hear, but they should not question our support for Ukraine. Support for Ukraine means support for Romania.

As was said before, this is the test of our generation. We have to work together at all the different layers of this conflict to bring peace back to the place where it belongs. Our message is straightforward: peace in full respect of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, peace in full respect of the United Nations Charter and of its fundamental principles of international law. And one political and moral principle is clear: negotiations can start only when Ukraine is ready, and what victory looks like must be defined by Ukraine. Romania's support for Ukraine remains solid, for as long as it takes.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Rau (Poland): Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to Malta for convening today's important meeting and to the Secretary-General for his valuable insights.

I believe that we should focus today on three main things: an accurate diagnosis of the situation, a search for an adequate response, and the steps that need to be implemented.

Let us therefore start by contrasting the truth with disinformation and misleading propaganda. The truth is that exactly a year ago Russia decided to start its illegal aggression against Ukraine — period. Since then, Russia's war has been putting international

institutions to the test. It is testing our commitment to the principles that protect us all.

The humanitarian costs of this war are horrifying. The aggression has caused the greatest crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Russia's campaign of terror and its deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure are utterly unacceptable. The Kremlin's actions are driven by the will to destroy the Ukrainian nation, its heritage and its future. That is why I am convinced that Russia's barbaric aggression against Ukraine is not a bilateral or regional issue. It is the concern of all States. We all have a duty to bring these atrocities to an end.

Secondly, the prohibition of aggression, of genocide, and of crimes against humanity are *jus cogens* norms. This means that no derogation from them is permitted. Poland advocates the full accountability for all the violations and compensation for the inflicted damage. That being said, what should be the guiding principle for this approach?

Nobody has any doubt whatsoever that when we look at the domestic laws of our countries, they stand on the premise that justice means the protection of the vulnerable against the more powerful. The assertion is that in a well-ordered society, the vulnerable need to feel as secure as the powerful, and the powerful, when they trespass the law, need to be brought fully to account, so that others are not encouraged to commit similar crimes in future.

If the international community is to draw any right conclusions for future generations from this horrific war, Poland believes that we are required to search for analogous solutions in the international law system. I therefore call on applying the same rule — that of protecting the vulnerable against powerful villains — in our international relations, in both the legal dimension and in political practice. Let us build a well-ordered international community.

In order to achieve that, international institutions, with all their resources, must stand on the side of the harmed and exact accountability and compensation from the aggressors, no matter how strong and powerful they are. I cannot envision the world without adhering to this rule. Can you, Mr. President?

Thirdly, with respect to this golden rule, Poland's support to Ukraine is and will remain unwavering. Millions of Ukrainians have found safe refuge in

our country. In 2022, Poland spent over \$9 billion, which is 1.5 per cent of our gross domestic product, on humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees, according to a recent estimate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. We provide support and host over a dozen United Nations agencies and international organizations helping Ukraine from our territory.

We will remain steadfast in our support for as long as it takes because we are motivated by the will to protect the Ukrainians and every other nation in need. Our actions are about safeguarding collective peace and security. If we do not act in solidarity now and shrug off defending the fundamental values of international law, tomorrow it could be too late.

Poland stands firmly behind the values and principles of the United Nations Charter. We refuse to go back to power politics and spheres of influence. The international community has the strength and will to stand by Ukraine and defend the United Nations Charter, so that the power of argument — not the argument of power — prevails.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary.

Mr. Szijjártó (Hungary): I thank the President for organizing this meeting of the Security Council today, the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. I represent a country, Hungary, which is a direct neighbour of Ukraine. The impacts of the war are therefore severe and immediate for us. We are faced with the tragic consequences, basically on a daily basis, as we are witnessing people's suffering caused by this war.

We have received a bit more than a million refugees from Ukraine so far — unfortunately, mostly torn-apart families. I have to tell you, Mr. President, that it is heartbreaking to see mothers arriving in Hungary with children, sometimes with grandparents, most often with a single backpack.

We do want to help them. We are doing our best to help them. We give equal access to refugees from Ukraine when it comes to our education and health-care systems. Some 1,300 schools and kindergartens in Hungary have already enrolled refugee children and students from Ukraine. We give incentives to companies in Hungary to employ refugees. All of that, together with many other measures, adds up to

the largest humanitarian operation carried out in the history of Hungary, and I want the Council to know that we will continue humanitarian action on that large scale for as long as it is needed.

From the perspective of a country in the neighbourhood, we see very clearly that the war brings great suffering. The war does not have winners. It has only losers, and the longer it lasts, the more losers there will be. More damage will be caused, and more people will be killed. I should point out that I represent a nation that has also had a number of casualties in the war, given the fact that there is a Hungarian community living in the western part of Ukraine, some of whose members are Ukrainian citizens and many of whom have been conscripted into the Ukrainian army. They are fighting on the front lines, and many of them have died. Let me emphasize that we do not want more people to die in the war. In that regard, I would like to underline Hungary's position, which is that in these circumstances, we would consider the international community's number-one duty to be that of saving people's lives and preventing more casualties. How could that be possible? The answer is that we can save lives with peace. With deliveries of weapons and further sanctions packages, I do not see how we can save people's lives, but with peace we definitely could.

I am well aware that we are usually very heavily criticized for our position on this. Not only are we heavily criticized, but on many occasions totally insane accusations are being directed at Hungary and its Government. But unlike us Hungarians, those who criticize, educate and judge us have not lost any lives in the war. That is why we are calling for an immediate ceasefire and for peace talks to be launched and hopefully the outcome of sustainable peace reached. It is obvious that peace cannot be made if there are no open channels of communication. From our perspective, if the channels of communication are being cut, jammed or closed, it means that even the hope of peace is being abandoned. Once again, as a representative of a neighbouring country witnessing the suffering on a daily basis, I humbly ask Council members to concentrate on how to stop the war, prevent more people from dying and make peace.

Together with many others, we represent a generation that, thank God, did not have to experience life during the world wars. A world war is a global war. We hope that neither we, our children or our future grandchildren will have to experience such a life. So

far, as we know, the war has had global impacts, but that is not the question. The question is whether we can prevent the war from becoming a global war — a world war. The question is whether we can avoid measures, decisions and sometimes statements that bring with them the risk of the escalation and prolongation of the war. All of us should refrain from measures, decisions and statements of that kind, which prolong and escalate the war. A third world war would be a real tragedy. A third world war would bring us to where we hope none of us would like to go. In that regard, it is key to ensure that there is no direct confrontation between NATO and the Russian Federation. Within NATO, we have a clear decision that NATO is not party to the conflict, and we hope that that decision of ours will be respected by all.

The Hungarian people are not responsible for the war, but Hungary and the Hungarian people have already paid a high price. That is why we all know that we are in the twenty-fifth hour. We are in the twenty-fifth hour. Let us therefore try to concentrate on how to stop the war, end the war, establish an immediate ceasefire and launch peace talks, which we hope will bring us to a sustainable and fair peace.

The President: I now call on the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

Ms. Baerbock (Germany): In Bucha, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Bahkmut, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is causing nothing but destruction, suffering and death. Yesterday, the General Assembly sent a powerful message about this ruthless war (see A/ES-11/PV.19). An overwhelming majority of 141 States stood united for peace in Ukraine — a peace that is just, comprehensive and lasting. And the Assembly presented a peace plan that is based on the principles of our Charter of the United Nations.

Today the eyes of the world are on the Security Council — the body that bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security in the world. From my point of view, every effort to move towards peace by a member of the Council is valuable. But peace must mean peace. Peace must not mean that we ignore which the aggressor is and which the victim, because subjugation is not peace. Not naming the aggressor would mean accepting a world in which the mighty rule. It would mean accepting a world in which bombing schools, kidnapping children and shooting people off their bicycles is part of foreign policy. Not standing on the side of the victim would mean a world

in which none of us would be able to sleep peacefully because we would all have to fear an attack by a stronger neighbour. The United Nations was founded to prevent such a world. That is why we cannot stand idly by. The Charter obliges us, the nations of the world, to act. Some members now claim that by imposing sanctions on the aggressor, standing by Ukraine's side and supporting Ukraine's right to self-defence, we are adding fuel to the fire.

I would like to ask the Council where Ukraine — which voluntarily gave up its nuclear weapons because it believed in peace — would be today if we had not supported its right to defend itself and its people — the elderly, mothers, fathers and children — together with so many international partners? Can we imagine what it would mean to have more events such as those in Bucha, Kharkiv, Mariupol and Bakhmut, more atrocities against civilians or more children drawing pictures of a house where their loved ones once lived? Can we imagine what it would mean to have more war crimes and crimes against humanity while we stood idly by?

I do not want to imagine such a world. I do not want to be responsible for such a world. I believe that most of us do not want to be responsible for such a world. I would therefore like to underline what Secretary Blinken said. He said that if Ukraine stopped defending itself, Ukraine would end. If we stopped standing beside Ukraine, Ukraine would end. Just a few minutes ago, here in the Council, the Russian representative asked why we think that Ukraine would end. We think that because one year ago, his President told us that he would like to demilitarize Ukraine, and because over 365 nights and days since we have seen what that meant. Russia's tanks did not bring water. Russia's planes did not drop nutrition for babies. Rather, its tanks and planes have brought nothing but death and destruction, night and day, for thousands of mothers, fathers and children. And they have also brought death and destruction around the world — not directly, by missiles and bombs, but through a food crisis. Russia's representatives, and anyone else, may be able to deceive themselves, but they cannot deceive the whole world.

All of us who sincerely and honestly believe in a peace that means peace — a peace based on our Charter of the United Nations — must show our true colours now and stand by the General Assembly's peace plan in its resolution ES-11/6. President Putin is gambling on the possibility that at some point our clear stance

against the war will weaken. He is speculating that if he stays the course, his war of aggression will be rewarded. That war is also causing great suffering to his own people. Some 200,000 Russians have already been killed or wounded. Hundreds of thousands of Russians have left their country because they do not want to be part of the war. Russian children are going to schools in Germany, and I am very happy about that. More than 1,000 international companies have pulled out of Russia, taking with them a crucial part of Russia's prosperity and intelligence. This war is not the world's war, nor is it the war of the Russian people. It is Putin's war. The Russian President is risking the future of his own country, his own soldiers and his own children. That is why a just peace, as contained in the peace plan presented yesterday by 141 States to the General Assembly, is also in the interests of the people of Russia.

When I look around this table, I am under no illusions. We will not convince the Russian representative today — he is not even listening. But what we can do is ensure that the Council does not turn a blind eye to Bucha, Kharkiv, Mariupol and Bakhmut, or to the people and the children of Ukraine. What we can do is stand up for a world where peace means peace.

The President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

Mr. Rinkēvičs (Latvia): I am speaking on behalf of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Latvia.

I thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and Malta's presidency for the opportunity to address the Security Council.

A year has passed since Russia started its brutal, unjustified, unprovoked, full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, aided by Belarus. It is a clear violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We admire the bravery and persistence of the Ukrainians in the fight for their freedom and independence. We want to pay our respects to all Ukrainians who have died defending their homeland.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol and its full-scale invasion of Ukraine have trampled on international norms and the rules-based order. Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, is seeking to change the borders of a neighbouring sovereign country by military force. That constitutes

a serious threat to international peace and security. We will never accept Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya oblasts. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by the provisional measures order of the International Court of Justice of 16 March 2022 to immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in Ukraine. Russia is cynically disregarding its obligations as a permanent member and hampering the Security Council's ability to implement its mandate. Russia started the war and Russia can and must end it immediately by withdrawing its troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. To make that happen, we must provide Ukraine with all necessary means. Under the Charter, Ukraine has an inherent right to self-defence. The Nordic and Baltic States are determined to enhance Ukraine's military capabilities and to provide all necessary support.

Unable to defeat Ukraine on the battlefield, Russia is terrorizing Ukraine's civilian population. The mass killings, rape and torture in Bucha and Izyum, and the illegal deportation of children, are only some of the most horrifying atrocity crimes of the Russian armed forces. We condemn in the strongest terms Russia's deliberate attacks on civilians, critical infrastructure and civilian objects in Ukraine. To alleviate the suffering and to facilitate reconstruction, we are providing economic, political, humanitarian, financial and legal assistance to Ukraine and its people.

Russia must and will be held accountable for its crimes. We support the work of the International Criminal Court in investigating atrocity crimes. In addition, the crime of aggression must be addressed to bring to justice the Russian political and military leadership who have masterminded and unleashed the war of aggression against Ukraine. We believe that the United Nations should play a meaningful role in securing broad international support for the establishment of a tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression.

Russia uses disinformation and propaganda to mobilize domestic and international support for its aggression against Ukraine. It is extremely worrisome that Russia is using food and energy as instruments in its warfare, resulting in suffering for the most vulnerable nations and people all over the world. Russia is cynically covering that up with false narratives and disinformation, including by dishonestly blaming sanctions. It is Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine that has aggravated an already existing food-

security crisis and helped to increase energy prices. We support the Black Sea Grain Initiative and urge Russia to extend it, as well as to stop delaying the work of inspection teams.

Yesterday the General Assembly once again reaffirmed the international support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We urge the Security Council to uphold the Charter, which forms the basis for just and lasting peace in Ukraine. We welcome President Zelenskyy's 10-point peace formula, and we strongly support his vision for peace, which rests on international law and the principles of the Charter. We will stand by Ukraine for as long as necessary.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Moldova.

Mr. Bolbocean (Republic of Moldova): The Republic of Moldova strongly condemns Russia's illegal and unfounded aggression against Ukraine. We also categorically reject its attempts to annex Ukrainian territories. As we commemorate a year of that brutal war, we mourn the enormous human losses, the significant destruction of civilian infrastructure and the displacement of the countless Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes to escape the horrors of war. Moldova is one of the countries that have sheltered hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian people, and we will continue to provide support to Ukraine for as long as it takes.

Ukraine is defending its land and its freedom, and, by doing so, it defends our freedom and democracy too. We appreciate Ukraine's incredible resistance. We stand in solidarity with our neighbours and friends. We stand with Ukraine.

Moldova, Ukraine's most fragile neighbour, has been greatly impacted by Russia's unprovoked aggression. And while Ukraine is resisting a military invasion, Moldova is on the front line of a hybrid war that includes gas blackmail, cyberattacks, propaganda and disinformation. On several occasions our airspace has been violated by Russia's missiles, and its missile debris has landed on our territory, which is absolutely unacceptable.

Let me also stress that the breakaway Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova has been in the spotlight regularly, including in recent days. Our country is firmly committed to maintaining stability and peace in the region in this complicated context

and to promoting a political settlement of the conflict based on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova within its internationally recognized borders. We reiterate our call for the complete withdrawal of Russian military forces and munitions storage sites illegally present in the region.

All of these challenges are real, but so is our resolve to stay strong. The Republic of Moldova expresses its deep gratitude to all partners that have supported us in this time of crisis. Despite those risks, Moldova remains committed to its path towards European Union integration, which represents the best way to ensure peace, stability and prosperity for the country.

Over the past year, Ukraine has faced an unprecedented attack against its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Throughout that time, the international community has stood firmly with Ukraine in condemning the aggression and supporting Ukraine's efforts to defend its people and territory.

We have seen remarkable displays of solidarity — from the provision of humanitarian assistance to the diplomatic efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The large support extended yesterday by the General Assembly (see A/ES-11/PV.19) to resolution ES-11/6, outlining the principles for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, is another remarkable sign of strong support in that regard. Moldova supports Ukraine's efforts to achieve a just peace and accountability.

We join the calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Russian military troops and ammunition from the territory of Ukraine.

In conclusion, the Republic of Moldova reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

Mr. Hoekstra (Netherlands): I am here today on behalf of the Group of Friends of Accountability, following the aggression against Ukraine — a Group of 49 Member States and the European Union that share one strong conviction: that the power of justice should always prevail over the power of force.

Today marks exactly one year since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The people of Ukraine have shown extraordinary courage and resilience in their continued fight for freedom and independence.

We have seen horrendous images and reports of indiscriminate killings of civilians — men, women, children. We have seen unlawful attacks on civilian infrastructure — houses, schools and hospitals. And we have seen horrendous reports of sexual and gender-based violence and abductions of children.

Such actions are unacceptable. They violate international law. Wherever they occur, they must be met with the same strong response: this cannot stand. Accountability and justice for Ukraine, for Ukrainians and for the international community, as a whole, is of the utmost importance to ensure a sustainable peace.

Yesterday the General Assembly resumed its emergency special session on Ukraine (see A/ES-11/PV.19). Once again the General Assembly took a strong stance in defence of the Charter of the United Nations by adopting a resolution on the Charter principles, underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6). In that resolution, the General Assembly emphasizes the need to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes under international law committed on the territory of Ukraine.

Our quest for justice, our fight against impunity, our fight against violations of international law, should not, must not and cannot be pursued without taking a firm, collective stand against the aggressor. We commend the efforts and initiatives already taken to ensure accountability. That includes the deployment of forensic missions to Ukraine, the opening of an investigation by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, the creation of an International Centre for Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression and Register of Damages Caused to Ukraine by Russian Aggression, to be located in The Hague.

We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the establishment of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Moscow Mechanism. We commend the ongoing work of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which has documented violations since 2014.

Of particular concern are the reports of conflict-related sexual violence, including rape as a tactic of war. Those crimes constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law. Conflict-related sexual violence must be countered through effective accountability measures that will contribute to the deterrence and prevention of such horrendous crimes.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine violates the United Nations Charter, which underpins peaceful coexistence and global security. We call on the Russian Federation to abide by the order on provisional measures by the International Court of Justice of 16 March 2022. The Court stated that Russia shall immediately end the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine.

That is the first step to putting an end to the all-too-long list of crimes that require accountability and justice and the first step to putting an end to human suffering in Ukraine and easing the human suffering caused by Russia's war in Ukraine, but clearly also globally.

The violation of the United Nations Charter we are witnessing today is an attack on the international community as a whole. We should not just seek accountability for what has already taken place. We must strive to prevent anyone — and I mean anyone — from committing such a violation ever again, in Ukraine or elsewhere.

The President: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy.

Mr. Tajani (Italy): On this day, exactly one year ago, a permanent member of the Security Council unilaterally violated the basic principles and norms on which the peaceful coexistence among States and this very Organization are founded.

Far from bearing a greater sense of duty and responsibility as a permanent member, with its unacceptable behaviour Russia has profoundly shaken and challenged the roots of the international order.

On this anniversary, Ukraine still stands, and, together with the great majority of the international community, Italy stands alongside Ukraine in full solidarity with its people.

(spoke in French)

But, when I hear someone talking about Europe being a slave of the United States, I must say that we

are slaves to freedom, democracy and international law. It is therefore necessary to give up the idea of Europe as someone's slave. We are the home of freedom and democracy in the world. What I heard here this morning is unacceptable.

(spoke in English)

Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified act of aggression against Ukraine is not only a gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations and a threat to international security and stability, but is also causing global systematic disruption with multiple harmful consequences that severely affects the most vulnerable countries in the global South.

We need more diplomacy, and, as the Secretary General said, the Black Sea Grain Initiative is a sign of hope to address global concerns over such harmful consequences and to show that the ground for dialogue can, and must, be found.

In the first place, Italy strongly calls for the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and the swift establishment of a nuclear safe zone around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

(spoke in Spanish)

We also call for a stronger United Nations that is more representative, democratic and transparent, because the United Nations can do more by involving more countries of the world, as the world since the Second World War until today has greatly changed. It is therefore necessary to include many countries in such a reform.

(spoke in English)

The daily attacks on Ukrainian people and critical infrastructure, with devastating humanitarian costs, are completely unacceptable and must immediately stop. We want to work for peace. We are not against Russian citizens. We are in favour of democracy and freedom. We want to respect Europe's international roots. That is our commitment. To that end, we are strongly involved in the defence of Ukraine. But we want to achieve peace with justice, freedom and the independence of Ukraine.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia.

Mr. Osmani (North Macedonia): I am grateful to the Maltese presidency for the opportunity to address the Security Council today as we mark one year since the

beginning of the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine. The unprovoked and brutal war of aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law, all principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and, above all, the values of humankind.

At the outset, let me reaffirm our support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Both in my national capacity and, later on, in my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for 2023, I had the opportunity to visit Ukraine and places that had been affected by the war and attacks carried out by the military forces of the Russian Federation. I saw first hand the human suffering, destruction and other consequences of this senseless war of aggression.

Mass indiscriminate strikes on civilian sites persist. People continue to die and suffer. Russia has continued to conduct strikes in urban areas, leaving civilians and cities without access to basic human needs.

The findings and investigations so far in the various cities attacked in Ukraine lead to the conclusion that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed. The magnitude of sexual abuse and violence committed against women and girls is also of grave concern. The perpetrators of those crimes and violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law must be held accountable and brought to justice.

In my capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE for 2023, on many occasions I already underscored, and here today I would like to once again put emphasis on, the OSCE Moscow Mechanism as an important source invoked with the aim of establishing the facts and circumstances of possible cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity in order to present them to the relevant accountability mechanisms, as well as international courts. The second report, issued recently, affirms what I just said.

We fully support the investigation launched by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court aimed at looking into war crimes and crimes against humanity committed on the territory of Ukraine. Previously, we also welcomed the International Court of Justice's provisional measures ordering Russia to immediately suspend military operations.

Making full use and ensuring the sustainable funding of the existing human rights mechanisms is also crucial in support of the accountability processes. North Macedonia believes that we should make better use of the work done and information gathered by the special procedures of the Human Rights Council in order to investigate violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes in the context of the war of aggression against Ukraine.

In conclusion, in the coming period, it will be particularly important to curtail any political process that can undermine accountability for the gross violations committed. We must do our utmost to ensure access to justice for the victims of human rights violations in this senseless aggression by the Russian Federation.

Our motto for North Macedonia's OSCE chairpersonship is that it is about the people. We owe it to them to restore peace immediately. We call on the Russian Federation to stop the war. We reiterate our demand for the immediate cessation of the military aggression against Ukraine, as well as the full and immediate withdrawal of Russia's forces and military equipment from Ukraine's territory. We have to restore peace, and accountability must prevail.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain.

Mr. Albares Bueno (Spain) (*speak in Spanish*): I thank you, Madam President, very much for having convened this meeting.

Today marks one year since the tragic beginning of the Russian Federation's illegal aggression against Ukraine, in flagrant violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Ukraine's existence, peace and the most fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter are at stake.

Such a violation is all the more unacceptable as it comes from a permanent member of the Security Council, an organ to which the United Nations Charter entrusts the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and upholding the purposes and principles of the United Nations. Every day that Russian troops remain on sovereign and independent Ukrainian territory undermines that responsibility.

Spain strongly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Like many voices here today and in the General Assembly yesterday (see A/ES-11/PV.18 and A/ES-11/PV.19), Spain demands the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all military forces of the Russian Federation from all Ukrainian territory and the return to its internationally recognized borders. No reason can justify this aggression.

Furthermore, we express our strongest condemnation of Russia's indiscriminate shelling of civilian targets and infrastructure, which constitutes an unacceptable violation of international humanitarian law. Thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been identified as having been killed in the war, and there are more than 14 million displaced persons. There is alarming evidence of massive violations of the human rights of the Ukrainian population. Those responsible for those very serious actions must be held accountable for such acts, which is something that Spain will wholeheartedly support. There must be peace and justice in Ukraine.

The use of the veto by the Russian Federation is preventing the Security Council from exercising its primary role as the guarantor of international peace and security. No country should be able to abuse that right for its own ends and use it as carte blanche to violate international law without consequences. However, that veto will not prevent the international community from reacting. Yesterday the General Assembly once again expressed itself clearly on the issue (see A/ES-11/PV.19), reiterating its demand that Russia withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine, in addition to reaffirming its commitment to Ukraine's independence, unity and territorial integrity and calling for a just and lasting peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Spain is here in the Council today to reaffirm that because those of us in Ukraine and Europe are not alone in facing this war. Russia's unilateral actions are also an attack on the most basic norms and principles governing relations among States, which are a key condition for the maintenance of international peace, the founding purpose of the Organization. We therefore demand an immediate cessation of hostilities, for Russia to withdraw its troops to its internationally recognized borders and for respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We want peace, both for Ukraine

and the Ukrainian people and for all of us who defend the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Czechia.

Mr. Lipavký (Czechia): I greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this Security Council debate. Czechia hosts the highest number of Ukrainian war refugees per capita — nearly half a million — most of them women and children. We are one of the countries most affected by the direct consequences of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

Russia's cruel full-scale aggression started one year ago, and its illegal annexation of Crimea began nine years ago. Russia sees other countries, along with their freedom, democracy and even their statehood, as nothing but spoils up for grabs in its colonialist and imperialist ambition. Yet the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders is non-negotiable. The consequences of Russia's aggression reach far beyond Europe. They are truly global. The war it wages has sent shock waves throughout the world commodity markets, threatening to drive 50 million people to the brink of famine across Africa and other continents. Russia's massive air strikes, deliberately conducted in densely populated areas, are destroying critical civilian infrastructure and innocent lives. Entire towns and villages have been wiped out. The evidence of Russia's atrocities and ferocious attacks against Ukraine's civilian population, including children, is overwhelming.

Just a few days ago, President Putin announced Russia's suspension of the New Start Treaty. For him, escalation is the order of the day. We must collectively stop Russia from dragging us into the horrors similar to those of the World Wars. Together, we have to defend the Charter of the United Nations. Accountability for all-crimes under international law must be ensured. Yesterday the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-11/6, entitled "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" with a huge majority of votes. The international community has spoken clearly about its strong wish for peace in line with the Charter. The peace formula plan presented by President Zelenskyy is the one to be built on. We have stood with Ukraine from the outset and remain committed to its wish for a just

peace, as well as its undeniable right in line with Article 51 of the Charter to defend itself against the aggression.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia.

Mr. Grlić-Radman (Croatia): Croatia aligns itself with statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

One year ago, the Russian Federation sent more than 100,000 of its soldiers, tanks and warplanes to invade Ukraine, with more following after. Russia's troops marched from the east, the north and neighbouring Belarus in an attempt to break Ukraine's resistance in one swift move. That full-scale invasion is in fact a dramatic escalation of the aggression that began in 2014 with the Russian occupation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine. The war has brought nothing but loss of life, countless injuries, suffering and destruction. It also brought with it a series of atrocities, accompanied by the targeted destruction of civilian infrastructure and mass displacement of people. Accountability for those crimes is important to provide at least some comfort and a sense of justice to the victims and their families, but it would also serve as a warning and a deterrent to other potential perpetrators.

The misery brought about by the Russian aggression has not been confined to the borders of Ukraine. Its poisonous effects have been felt around the world as food and energy insecurity become widespread globally. This deadly war aims not just to conquer Ukraine and strip it of its independence; it aims to invalidate the Charter of the United Nations and the very tenets of international law. It aims to dismantle global security and usher in an age in which brute force and land grabs are the accepted norm.

The Russian army invaded Ukraine, not the other way around. Nothing can hide that obvious fact. Although each country here at the United Nations has its own concerns and aspirations and turns to its different friends for help, in this war there is only one side we can stand on: the side protecting the right of a country to defend itself. It is our duty to support that just cause. Not so long ago, Croatia was victim to a very similar war with almost the same pretext and cynical justification. In that difficult situation, every kind of help mattered, even if it amounted to mere acknowledgment of the enduring tragedy and even if

it was just words recognizing victimization. One such resolution (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6) acknowledging the tragedy and injustice visited on Ukraine was adopted overwhelmingly yesterday by the General Assembly.

With some exceptions, the world continues to support Ukraine and its people's right to self-defence. After a year, the Ukrainians have not tired, and so shall not we in our support. However, we do not accept the normalization of this cruel war deliberately targeting civilians. Russia started this war and Russia is the only one that can stop it by removing its troops from Ukraine. Until that moment comes, Croatia will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people and for its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We admire the bravery and dignity of Ukrainians defending their country and their homes, and we owe them gratitude for standing for the crucial principles of the Charter and the rules-based international order.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia.

Mr. Reinsalu (Estonia): Estonia is a neighbour of the aggressor State, Russia, and this war has impacted my country significantly. We have received tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees. During the course of the war, we have been on the receiving end of systematic cyber attacks coming from Russia. Russia has been waging its full-scale brutal, unprovoked and genocidal war of aggression against Ukraine for 12 months now. The Kremlin's goal — to erase a sovereign and democratic Ukraine from the map — has not changed. After a year of courageous fighting, Ukraine deserves peace more than ever. However, it cannot be a peace at all costs. We need a just and lasting peace in full conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; a peace that upholds and reinforces the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core; and a peace that prevents the use of force to redraw international borders. Those are exactly the same parameters that the overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States voted in favour of in their adoption of General Assembly resolution ES-11/6 yesterday. The United Nations membership firmly supports a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine that rests on international law and the Charter. The Ukrainian peace plan is based on the same universal values and principles, and I therefore call on the United

Nations membership to support President Zelenskyy's 10-point peace plan.

Secondly, Article 51 of the Charter grants every country the right to self-defence, and we need collectively to ensure that Ukraine can defend itself against its aggressor. We have seen the heinous atrocities that Russia has committed, and unfortunately still is committing today in Ukraine. That must stop, and that is the reason that Estonia's military aid to Ukraine has reached 1 per cent of its gross domestic product. We want a sovereign Ukraine to survive the brutal aggression and win. Then peace and justice will be established. We call on all peoples of the world to rise up and support Ukraine.

Thirdly, in order to achieve lasting peace, full accountability must be ensured. It includes our obligation to discredit aggression completely as an instrument of international relations. We owe it to the thousands of Ukrainians being killed, raped and forcibly displaced to hold Russia's political and military leadership to account for the crime of aggression. Therefore, an international special tribunal for the crime of aggression in Ukraine within the United Nations system must be established. We cannot let Mr. Putin hide in a judicial

loophole. The time will come, and Mr. Putin will sit before such a tribunal. It is high time to learn from the past. The horrors of war we are witnessing today are the tragic consequences of the fact that the atrocity crimes committed by the Soviet Union during the Second World War, including against my country and people, were left unpunished. Not only would a tribunal serve justice to the victims of this horrendous crime, it would also serve as a deterrent and would help prevent future conflicts.

Lastly, today, on the 105th anniversary of my country, Estonia's, Declaration of Independence, our Independence Day, my thoughts are with our brave countrymen and women who fought for our freedom and independence. Yet I also pray for Ukraine and Ukrainians, who are the bravest people I know. Ukraine is not only defending its country, people and right to exist, but Ukraine is also defending the common values of a united humankind, the international legal order and the Charter. Peace rises from truth. The Russian Federation is a terrorist regime, which is committing genocide against the Ukrainian people. The world needs to recognize that.

The meeting rose at 1.45 p.m.