



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

**9280**<sup>th</sup> meeting

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New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Fernandes . . . . . (Mozambique)

*Members:*

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United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Mr. Abushahab
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United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Kelley

## Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Threats to international peace and security**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Kirill Vyshinsky, Executive Director, Rossiya Segodnya; Mr. Dmitry Vasilets, Deputy Head, Ukrainian Union of Law Workers; and Mr. Timothy Snyder, Trade Professor of History, Yale University.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Vyshinsky.

**Mr. Vyshinsky** (*spoke in Russian*): My name is Kirill Vyshinsky. I was born and raised in Ukraine and graduated from university in the Ukrainian city of Dnipropetrovsk as a philologist and teacher of Russian language and literature. For more than 25 years, I worked as a journalist in various Ukrainian media outlets. In 2014, I became editor-in-chief of the Ukrainian website RIA Novosti Ukraine — it was published in Russian. In 2018, I was arrested by the Security Service of Ukraine on concocted charges, including high treason. I spent almost a year and a half in jail, after which a Ukrainian court, which did not confirm any of the charges against me, released me, which allowed me to leave Ukraine for Russia in 2019. Today, I still work as a journalist and am a member of the Russian Council for Civil Society Development and Human Rights.

I am grateful to the Security Council for the opportunity to speak at this meeting. What is Russophobia? Russophobia is a demonstration and an imposition of hostility and hatred against Russians, the Russian people, the Russian State and Russian citizenship. This is done publicly, in media outlets and on the Internet. Russophobia is a rejection of the civilizational status of Russia, Russian culture and carriers of that culture. Russophobia is an ideology that was created and disseminated artificially and purposefully. It justifies dehumanization and genocide of the Russian people, Soviet and Russian citizens,

compatriots and Russian-speaking people — anyone who feels that they are Russian or feels connected to Russia, whether by fate or simply because they have sympathy for Russia. It justifies having their right to life, dignity and free movement curtailed.

Let me cite just a few of the most egregious examples of modern Ukrainian Russophobia. In 2022, there were Russophobic and misanthropic calls on Ukrainian television. In a live broadcast, a Channel 24 journalist, Fakhrudin Sharafmal, called for dealing with Russians by destroying their families and children. "If we have to slaughter all your families, I will be in the first ranks to do that. Long live our nation!"; he said, — and it was broadcast live.

Ukrainian doctor Gennadiy Druzenko, the head of the mobile hospital project, called for the castration of Russian prisoners of war because, he claimed, "they are cockroaches, not people". At the same time, a so-called "public service announcement video" appeared in Ukraine with a young girl, wearing a Ukrainian shirt and a circlet of flowers, cutting the throat of a Russian soldier with a sickle while saying: "now it's our turn to reap a bloody harvest. Every single one of you will die!". These statements are being implemented today in practice. It can be seen in the execution of Russian prisoners of war by firing squads, in their inhumane treatment, as well as in the shooting of civilians in the Russian-speaking Donbas.

Another example is from yesterday, 13 March, when the Verkhovna Rada — the parliament of Ukraine — announced a draft bill that offers to officially define the current political regime in Russia as "Rashism". Among the characteristics of this phenomenon invented in Ukraine, the deputies included "self-glorification of Russia and the Russian people with the goal of forced oppression and/or denial of existence of other nations".

These apparent lies being told about Russians is supposed to cause — not only in Ukraine, but also in other countries — open hostility and hatred towards Russia and Russians and become an instrument to awaken and to cultivate Russophobia. Incidentally, that is already happening in the European Union as well. In March 2022, the Prime Minister of Poland admitted that Russophobia is already mainstream today, and that it is already accepted as an obvious feature of Polish and European politics.

But let us turn back to Ukraine, where Russians constitute the second-largest national community, after Ukrainians. According to the recent census in Ukraine, Russians families numbered in the millions, and the Russian language was spoken natively by nearly a third of the population, or more than 14 million citizens. According to the only census conducted in Ukraine in 2001, at the time, Russians accounted for over 17 per cent of the population, or more than 8 million people. According to the same census, those who called Russian their native language accounted for nearly a third of the population, or more than 14 million Ukrainian citizens. The truth of the linguistic situation is that there are far more who speak Russian in their everyday lives and consider it to be their native language. According to sociological studies undertaken in 2020, more than a half — 53 per cent — of the population speak Russian either constantly or often. Russian is the second working language of the country, after Ukrainian.

However, over the past 20 years, the sphere for the use of the Russian language has been deliberately reduced. It began with the 2006 banning of voice-overs and foreign movies in Russian and discriminatory quotas against the Russian language introduced in the media throughout the country, including the Russian-speaking regions of the east.

That process has logically moved into the sphere of education. Higher education in Ukraine has been taught in Ukrainian only since it became mandatory in 2014. In September 2020, all Russian-language schools in Ukraine changed to Ukrainian as the language of instruction. That happened after the entry into force of a law on education.

Starting in 2022, Ukrainian authorities locally decided on a complete ban on the study of the Russian language. In November of last year, Kyiv eliminated Russian from the curriculums of kindergartens and schools. The same ban took place in Mykolayiv, which is a major regional centre of the east, and in the Odesa oblast. The Ministry of Culture of Ukraine is planning to remove approximately 100 million Russian books from libraries — of those, 20 million had already been destroyed by the beginning of 2023. The books are not being burned defiantly, as the Nazis did in the 1930s in Germany. Instead, they are being thrown in the garbage or recycled as commercial packaging.

In October, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, Oleksiy Danilov, who heads the body that imposes sanctions against its own

citizens without court decisions, said that the Russian language should disappear altogether from the territory of Ukraine. That has already begun in a number of educational facilities, where everyone, including students, the faculty and even technical specialists, are not allowed to speak Russian during recess periods or after working hours. That Russophobic decision was also taken in January 2023 by the largest institution of higher education in Kyiv, namely the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. It is being supported by the Language Ombudsman of Ukraine — this position was created in the country after 2014 — who promised to broaden and introduce that practice into other universities of Ukraine.

I will return to the issue of Russophobia among Ukrainian authorities, but I would like to first talk about other inhuman manifestations of Russophobia in Ukraine. In 2014, after the majority of Russians and Russian-speakers held a referendum in Crimea and decided to reunify with Russia, the Ukrainian authorities completely cut off the supply of fresh water through the North Crimean Canal. In fact, the actions of the Kyiv authorities triggered a humanitarian catastrophe.

Now I will return to systematic Russophobia in Ukraine in the sphere of culture. Starting in 2014, Ukraine began the process of the mass renaming of street names and cities and the destruction of monuments related to the Russian and Soviet period of Ukraine's history. Last June, the Ministry of Culture announced that a De-Russification Council would be created, charged with considering the destruction of monuments to prominent figures from Russian culture, any major national historical events connected to Russia and the Russian people, and Soviet soldiers who died during the Second World War. During that campaign in November in Mykolayiv, unknown persons blew up a monument to those who had died in Ukraine during the Second World War — an obelisk called "The Motherland". At the same time, in Uzhhorod, a Second World War monument, "Ukraine to the Liberators", which is one of the world heritage sites of Ukraine and is dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who freed the city during that same war, was also destroyed.

In February of this year, a monument to General Vatutin, who liberated the Ukrainian capital from the Nazis during the Second World War, was demolished in Kyiv. People would bring flowers to that monument every year on the anniversary of the city's liberation. Its demolition was an obscene and barbaric act, as the

monument had been erected on the site of the grave containing the general's remains, and their current location is unknown.

Another manifestation of massive Russophobia in Ukraine is that monuments to Alexander Pushkin, a great writer, known to the whole world for his literary classics, were also destroyed. Pushkin visited many cities in the east of Ukraine, and a monument was erected to him in the late nineteenth century. It was Russian-speaking residents of those cities who had gathered money for those monuments commemorating the writer, and now, 100 years later, those monuments were demolished in Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr and Kharkiv. In total, monuments to Pushkin were dismantled in more than 20 cities in various regions of the country.

Another area with human rights implications in which the Ukrainian authorities are introducing Russophobic practices in a very ingenious way is religion. The largest religious denomination in the country is the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which has the largest number of monasteries and churches and clergymen, thereby uniting millions of parishioners all over Ukraine. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is a self-governed part of the Russian Orthodox Church and has great autonomy, but their ties have become the pretext for systematic attacks on the former.

Since the 1990s the churches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been regularly seized. Local authorities in different regions of Ukraine condone such seizures and ban those churches' activities at their level. In addition, monks and clergy belonging to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been forced to leave the most important holy site of the Russian and global Orthodox faith, a monastery dating back almost a thousand years, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra. On March 10, a State organization, the National Preserve "Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra", governed by the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, asked them in writing to leave the premises, giving them until the end of March to do so. It was allegedly due to violations of the agreement for the donated right to use the monastery, but no specific violations were mentioned by the National Preserve in any official documents sent to the monastery.

The monastery in question is one of the oldest in Orthodox Christianity and was founded in the tenth century. It is where the relics of over a hundred Russian saints repose, including those of Ilya Muromets, a

hero of Russian epic literature, and a monk, Nestor the Chronicler, the author of the first written source of Russian history. Today, there are attempts to take those relics and the monastery itself away from the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is a part of the Russian Orthodox Church.

I could provide many more facts related to the Russophobic policies of the Ukrainian authorities, which have become widespread and reached their peak in 2022 and 2023, but their underlying message is evident. Ukraine has recently seen systematic attempts in various areas — in education, culture, religion and everyday life in general — to promote an ideology of hatred for everything Russian: hatred of Russians, of Russian-speaking people, as well as hatred of anyone who is somehow linked with Russia. This ideology has become the basis for broad practical measures in various spheres and should, as envisioned by its authors, not only provoke hatred, but also destroy all Russians and Russian-speaking people, including their families and their children. A clear call for this outcome is being made on Ukrainian television, in Ukrainian online spaces and across social networks.

I sincerely thank the Council for its attention and for the opportunity to address such a high-level forum.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Vyshinsky for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Vasilets.

**Mr. Vasilets** (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the Security Council for giving me the opportunity to take the floor and speak on behalf of the tens of millions of Russian-speaking citizens in Ukraine. I also thank the Russian Lawyers' Association that works with our team to help refugees who have come to Russia.

My briefing is dedicated to the issue of discrimination against Russian-speaking Ukrainians. The Ukrainian Constitution enshrines the right to develop the Russian language, but the criminal Zelenskyy regime has placed itself above the law. Following the coup d'état organized by the United States Embassy in Ukraine in 2014, the 2012 Languages Law, which regulated the use of the Russian language in all spheres of public life in accordance with article 10, part 3, of the Ukrainian Constitution, was abrogated without repealing any of guarantees for Ukrainian as the State language.

After the coup d'état, the Poroshenko regime immediately adopted a new law on language. It was called "On the functioning of the Ukrainian language

as a State language”. This law affected the Russian language and national minority languages, all of which were simply repressed. The entry into force of various provisions of the law was extended to 2024 with the clear aim of stifling civil protests against the discrimination against the Russian language.

Therefore, under the Zelenskyy dictatorship regime, starting on 1 September 2020, the Russian language was banned in schools; on 16 January 2021, it was banned in the sphere of public services; on 16 July 2021, it was banned in theatres and movie theatres; on 16 January 2022, it was banned in the media and publishing; and starting on 16 July 2022, the use of Russian language is now subject to fines. To implement these fines, a special State structure, the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Ukrainian Language, was established. All of this is happening in the twenty-first century.

Just imagine the Swiss Government fining someone for using the French language. Or imagine Spain fining someone for using the Catalan language. Imagine Russia fining someone for using the Ukrainian language. It is impossible to imagine, yet, as we can see, thanks to the law that was signed by Poroshenko and that, in fact, has already been implemented by Zelenskyy, such barbarism is happening in Ukraine right now.

In 2021 alone, some 300 schools and more than 600 classes with instruction in Russian were dissolved, despite the fact that, in public surveys, more than 30 per cent of Ukraine citizens said that they were in favour of studying the Russian language and over 70 per cent wanted to see Russian language study in schools. But the local budgets for 2022–2023 were not funded with the money to finance Russian classes.

The right to speak in one’s native language is an inalienable human right. But in Ukraine, as we have seen, human rights are simply banned. The Russian language is the native language of millions of Ukrainians, but it is banned from all aspects of social life in Ukraine. It is also illegal to teach children and raise them in the Russian language. It is not permitted to teach Russian in school. In addition, Russian-speaking people are subject to persecution, and the language itself is being discredited by the Zelenskyy regime. These are facts.

In Ukraine, millions of Ukrainians who speak and think in Russian cannot write correctly in Russian. I myself was born and raised in Kyiv. In school there

simply was no Russian language. I grew up during the first wave of Ukrainization, so after completing school and university, I could not, in fact, write properly in Russian and had to learn to do it later in life.

I ask everybody who is listening to my statement just to imagine not being able to write in their own language — in English, French, or Spanish, whatever it is. This is exactly the situation millions of Ukrainians are facing today.

Furthermore, I have personally encountered discrimination against my native Russian language, when I was defending myself in court. The judges and the prosecutors told me I had to use the Ukrainian language, which is not my native language. In this way, my right to protection was violated.

In Ukraine, in the territory of Ukraine under the control of NATO and the Zelenskyy regime, in many instances, we see that even humanitarian assistance is denied to Ukrainian citizens in need if they do not speak to those providing humanitarian aid in the Ukrainian language. Many videos illustrating this situation are available on the Internet.

Considering all the foregoing, I, as a citizen of Ukraine, often have to listen to absurd lies — pure and simple — promoted by the Zelenskyy dictatorship, namely, that the Russian language is not being subject to persecution. However, notwithstanding Zelenskyy’s claim that he himself belongs to the Russian-speaking population and that there is no discrimination against the use of the Russian language, in actual fact and under the law, we are seeing a situation that is diametrically opposed to that claim.

This is precisely why, in the situation in Ukraine, it is appropriate to use the term “linguicide”. Linguicide comprises prohibitive measures or other actions designed to destroy another language. When drafting the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, approved by the General Assembly in 1948 (resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948), the United Nations recognized linguicide as a special case. In 1967, the report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, issued in Ottawa, Canada, defined linguicide as any act aimed at the full or partial destruction of a language or of the establishment of barriers to the natural development of a language or dialect, such as the physical destruction of members of a community who speak a certain language or dialect, the adoption of repressive measures aimed at impeding

the natural development of a language or a dialect, the intentional creation of conditions in which a bilingual society is compelled to switch to monolingualism, bans on the use of a language in schools and the media against the will of a specific ethnolinguistic group, or the failure to provide moral or material assistance to an ethnolinguistic group in which the members are attempting to preserve their language and culture.

All of that is happening in Ukraine, not as some sort of excess, but as the deliberate State policy supported by the NATO-backed regime of Zelenskyy, who has betrayed the Ukrainian people. As a result, since 2014, a civil war has erupted across our territory, with the language issue playing a central role. Indeed, the discrimination against the Russian language is one of the main triggers of armed confrontation, which, after many years, eventually became a new cold war between the United States and Russia. Now the hot phase of that conflict is under way in Ukraine.

As of today, based on the legislation in force, at least 30 per cent of Ukraine's citizens are deprived of the opportunity to use their own language in practically all areas of daily life. This is a gross violation of the Constitution of Ukraine. Since 1992, the scope for the use of the Russian language has been gradually shrinking. The Russian language has been displaced from the State authorities and local government, even in places where Russians and Russian-speaking citizens were an absolute majority. I am talking about the Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv regions, the Crimea and other places. Despite parental protests, Russian-speaking schools were switched to Ukrainian as the language of instruction. At the same time, the quality of Russian-language teaching dropped, as the State discriminated against teachers using the Russian language by paying them lower salaries. The Russian language was also displaced from higher education in the same way.

The logical continuation of that policy was the adoption of the law on ensuring the use of the Ukrainian language as the State language. That law has angered Hungarian, Bulgarian, Romanian, Greek, Czech and many other ethnic communities in Ukraine. But the Russian and Russian-speaking communities suffered the brunt of the law.

The law completely excludes the Russian language from labour relations, education, science, culture, television and radio broadcasting, the print media,

book publishing, the use of computer programmes and websites, public events, sport, services, telecommunications and office work. In other words, Russian is excluded from all areas of life, leaving citizens only with the possibility to use Russian in private communication. At the same time, the law allows for the use of English and languages of States members of the European Union in such areas. There is a deliberate policy of discrimination against the Russian language. That policy is also fully supported by NATO countries and, of course, put into effect by President Poroshenko and now President Zelenskyy.

The use of the Russian language is prohibited by law. Those who violate the law are subject to administrative proceedings. They are fined. Fines of up to \$230 are levied for the first offence and up to \$460 for a second violation. Just to give an idea of what such money means to Ukrainians, I remind Council members that an average monthly pension in Ukraine amounts to \$60.

The fines are imposed not only on State and local officials, but also on ordinary citizens. Here is an example of the latter. A protocol on imposing fines was made public recently, on 31 January. It was decided to fine a saleswoman in a perfume shop, who, at the request of a customer, had the audacity to translate the Ukrainian inscription on a box into Russian. She was then insulted by a female customer for having used Russian. The same customer filed a complaint with a specifically established repressive body — the Office of the Ukrainian State Language Protection Commissioner. The saleswoman was fined \$260.

In early February, blogger Ruslana Bortnikova, who worked as a make-up artist in Odesa, was fined for Russian-language content on her Instagram. The woman had been recording her posts for her friends on social media in Russian, but that did prevent these "language inspectors" from finding them and fining her.

All that is a sign and manifestation of linguicide. The Russian language is being systematically destroyed, creating conditions in which people are forced to give up communicating in their native language. The identity of millions of people is being erased. That is not acceptable in the twenty-first century.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Vasilets for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Snyder.

**Mr. Snyder:** I am very glad to address the Security Council. I will try to keep my remarks brief. I speak to Council members as a historian of the region, a historian of Eastern Europe and, specifically, as a historian of mass killing and political atrocity.

I believe that the discussion that we are having today about the word Russophobia can clarify something very important about the character of Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and about the character of Russia's illegal occupation of Ukrainian territory. I will limit myself to two main points.

My first point is that harm to Russians and the Russian culture is primarily a matter of Russian policy. If we are concerned about harm to Russians and Russian culture, we should therefore be concerned about the policies of the Russian State.

My second point is that, during this war, the term Russophobia, which we are discussing today, has been a form of imperial propaganda and imperial justification for Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

Beginning with the first point, the premise when we discuss Russophobia is that we are concerned about harm to Russians. That is a premise that I certainly share. I share the concern for Russians. I share the concern for the Russian culture. Let us then think about the actions of this past year that have caused the most harm to Russians and the Russian culture. I will briefly name 10 such actions.

First is forcing the most creative and productive Russians to emigrate. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused approximately 750,000 Russians to leave Russia, including some of the most creative and productive people. That is irreparable harm to the Russian culture.

Second is the destruction of independent Russian journalism so that Russians cannot know the world around them. That, too, is Russian policy and causes irreparable harm to Russian culture.

Third is general censorship and the repression of the freedom of speech in Russia in the Russian language. That is an irony that bears noting. In Ukraine, one can say what one likes, either in Russian or in Ukrainian. In Russia, one cannot. If one stands in Russia with a sign saying "No to war", one will be arrested and very likely imprisoned. If one stands in Ukraine with a sign that says "No to war", regardless of what language it is in, nothing will happen. Russia is a country in which there

is one language, and one can say very little. Ukraine is a country in which there are two languages, and one can say what one likes. When I visit Ukraine, people report to me about Russian war crimes using both languages — Ukrainian or Russian, as they prefer.

Fourth is the attack on Russian culture by way of censoring school books, weakening Russian culture at home and the destruction of museums and non-governmental organizations devoted to the memory of Russian history. All those things are Russian policy.

Fifth is the perversion of the memory of the Great Fatherland War by fighting a war of aggression in 2014 and 2022, thereby depriving all future generations of Russians of that heritage. That is Russian policy and causes great harm to the Russian culture.

Sixth is the downgrading of the Russian culture around the world and the end of what used to be called the *ruskiy mir* — the Russian world abroad. It used to be the case that there were many people who felt friendly towards Russia and the Russian culture in Ukraine. That has been brought to an end by the Russian invasion, and that is Russian policy.

Seventh is the mass killing of Russian speakers in Ukraine. The Russian war of aggression in Ukraine has killed more speakers of Russian than any other action by far. There is no comparison.

Eighth is, of course, the fact that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to the mass killing of Russian citizens. Some 200,000 people are dead or maimed, and that is of course simply Russian policy. It is Russian policy to send young Russians to die in a war of aggression.

Ninth, this war also means that a generation of young Russians — those who survive — will be involved in war crimes and will be wrapped up in trauma and guilt for the rest of their lives. That is great harm to Russian culture, and, like all these policies, that has been achieved by the Russian Government itself, mostly in the course of the past year. If we were sincerely concerned about harm to Russians, those are the things that we would think about.

But perhaps the worst Russian policy with respect to Russians is the last one — number 10 — which is the sustained training or education of Russians to believe that genocide is normal. We see it in the President of Russia's repeated claims that Ukraine does not exist. We see it in genocidal fantasies on Russian State media. We have seen it in a year of State television reaching

tens of millions of Russians every day. We see it when Russian State television presents Ukrainians as pigs, parasites, worms, satanists or ghouls. We see it when Russian State television proclaims that Ukrainian children should be drowned. We see it when Russian State television proclaims that Ukrainian houses should be burned with the people inside. We see it when people appear on Russian State television and say, "They should not exist at all. We should execute them by firing squad." We see it when someone appears on Russian State television and says "We will kill 1 million. We will kill 5 million. We can exterminate all of you" — meaning all of the Ukrainians.

If we were sincerely concerned about harm to Russians, we would be concerned about what Russian policy is doing to Russians. The claim that Ukrainians are quote-unquote Russophobes is one more element of Russian hate speech. In Russian State television, those other claims about Ukrainians are intermixed with the claim that Ukrainians are Russophobes. For example, in the statement in which the speaker claimed that all Ukrainians should be exterminated, the reason he gave is that they should all be exterminated because they are Russophobes.

That brings me to my second point — the claim that Ukrainians have to be killed because they have a mental illness known as Russophobia is bad for Russians because it educates them in genocide. But of course, such a claim is much worse for Ukrainians. And this is my second point. The term "Russophobia" is a rhetorical strategy that we know from the history of imperialism. When an empire attacks, the empire claims that it is the victim. The rhetoric that Ukrainians are somehow Russophobes is used by the Russian State to justify a war of aggression. But of course, it is the war of aggression — the setting itself — that matters. It is the invasion itself, the destruction of whole Ukrainian cities, the execution of Ukrainian local leaders, the forced deportation of Ukrainian children, the displacement of about half of Ukraine's population, the destruction of hundreds of hospitals and thousands of schools and the deliberate targeting of water and heating supplies during the winter. That is the setting — that is what is actually happening.

The term "Russophobia" is a claim by the imperial Power that it is the victim, even as it is carrying out a war of atrocity. That is historically typical behaviour. The imperial Power dehumanizes the actual victim and claims to be the victim. When the victim opposes

being attacked, murdered and colonized, the empire says that is unreasonable, an illness — a phobia. That claim that the victims are irrational — that they are phobic and have a phobia — is meant to distract from the actual experience of the victims in the real world, which of course is an experience of aggression, war and atrocity. The term "Russophobia" is an imperial strategy designed to change the subject from that of an actual war of aggression and shift it to the feelings of the aggressors, thereby suppressing the existence and experience of the people who are most harmed. The imperialist says, "We are the only people here. We are the real victims. And our hurt feelings count more than other people's lives."

Russia's crimes can and will be evaluated under Ukrainian law, because they are taking place on Ukrainian territory, as well as by international law. To the naked eye, we can see that there is a war of aggression, crimes of humanity and genocide. The use of the word Russophobia — the claim that Ukrainians are ill rather than experiencing an atrocity — is colonial rhetoric and part of a larger practice of hate speech. That is why today's meeting is important. In Russia's genocidal hate speech, the idea that Ukrainians have a disease called Russophobia is used as an argument to destroy them, along with the arguments that they are vermin, parasites, satanists and so on. Claiming to be the victim when you are in fact the aggressor is not part of the defence — it is actually part of the crime. Hate speech directed against Ukrainians is not part of the defence of the Russian Federation. It is part of the crimes that Russian citizens are committing on Ukrainian territory. In that sense, in calling today's meeting, the Russian State has found a new way to confess to war crimes.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Snyder for his briefing.

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Kirill Vyshinsky and Dmitry Vasilets for their briefings. Each of them has a bitter personal experience of encountering Russophobia in Ukraine. They have seen with their own eyes and from the inside how that State was transformed into a Russophobic anti-Russia.

I would like to hear Mr. Snyder provide examples of what he lied about so shamelessly today. Where did he hear those vile epithets on Russian television — whether

State or non-State — with regard to Ukrainian and Ukrainians that he referenced in the hope that nobody would verify his claim? They simply do not exist and are nowhere to be found. Mr. Snyder has long been known for his historical hoaxes aimed at proving that Russians supposedly never lived in Ukraine and that it has an independent, centuries-long if not thousand-year history. One can only feel for him, because those fables and attempts to rewrite history crumble easily in the face of historical facts. Ukrainians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not a people but rather adherents of a particular ideology — that of opposition to Russia and Tsarism — and of course, for want of anyone else, ethnic Russians living outside the Russian empire lorded it over the political Ukrainians at that time. One such was Mykhailo Hrushevsky, whose pseudo-historical works have become canonical in Ukraine and today are actively promoted in the West for political reasons, particularly by Mr. Snyder, as well as Mykola Mikhnovsky and Dmytro Dontsov, who formulated the principles of integral Ukrainian nationalism. Incidentally, those principles are quite uncomplicated and based, like German Nazi doctrine, on the superiority of the Ukrainian nation over others. The main principle that they formulated was the notion that “Russkies, Hungarians, Polacks and Yids are the enemies of the Ukrainian people”. That is precisely the reason why Russophobia so easily became the core ideology for an independent Ukraine, a process that has accelerated noticeably since the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004, and especially since the anti-constitutional coup d’état of 2014.

This has already been mentioned here, but I will repeat it without delving into the historical details. According to the 2001 census, 17.3 per cent of the population — mostly living in the east and south of the country — considered themselves to be Russians. Almost 30 per cent of the population considered Russian to be their native language. But as the briefer mentioned, many more people spoke Russian at home and in other social situations. The fact that in 2004, 95 per cent of all books published in Ukraine were written in Russian shows how widespread the language was in Ukraine at the time of the events mentioned earlier. The then new nationalist Government immediately launched a brutal attack on the Russian language and everything else Russian. Through schools, education, movies and television, they planted the idea that everything Russian was foreign. As a result, an entire generation of Ukrainians were steeped in the doctrine of Mikhnovsky

and Dontsov, learning that Russians were the enemy and that Ukrainians were a superior nation, from whom the *Moskals* stole everything, including their religion, language, literature and culture.

History was rewritten as well, and those who served the fascists and committed terrible atrocities became heroes who had promoted an independent Ukraine. As a result of the 2014 anti-constitutional coup d’état, Ukraine definitively became anti-Russian, and Russophobia was elevated to the status of State policy. The Maidan activists did not hide their misanthropic Russophobic views, and their foreign sponsors were well aware of that. Just a few days after the bloody regime change, the leader of the extremist Right Sector, Dmitry Yarosh, declared that de-Russification was a completely just and necessary development. Russophobe and Verkhovna Rada deputy Iryna Fariion called all Russian speakers mentally disabled. The Mayor of Dnepropetrovsk Boris Filatov said that,

“We have to give those scum whatever promises and guarantees are necessary. We can hang them later”.

I am quoting those words so that members of the Security Council can understand the rabid Russophobia of the new Government that Russian-speaking Ukrainians have faced since the 2014 coup d’état. The authorities were prepared to kill and burn them, as was clearly demonstrated when more than 40 Russian-speaking activists were burned alive in the trade union headquarters in Odesa in May 2014. One of the first decisions of the new regime was an attempt to repeal the law on the principles of the State language policy, under which the Russian language enjoyed the status of a regional language in 13 of Ukraine’s 24 oblasts. It was that decision that triggered the separation from Ukraine of the Crimea, the vast majority of whose population considers itself to be Russian. The menace of eradicating the native language and portraying Nazi collaborators and criminals as heroes was the key reason for the righteous protest of the residents of Donbas, where Russian was used in everyday communication by more than 80 per cent of the inhabitants. It is worth noting that even the Maidan authorities realized that the language issue was culturally sensitive and could lead to the collapse of the country. That is why the repeal of the law was temporarily delayed. When the Minsk agreements were signed, Kyiv even agreed to include the option of linguistic self-determination for Donbas. However, as we now know, the Kyiv regime never intended to honour those agreements.

For nine years, the Ukrainian authorities systematically destroyed anything that might even be remotely related to Russia. In doing so, they undermined the foundations of a society whose culture and civilizational identity had been joined with our country for centuries. As the result of six legislative acts adopted under Petro Poroshenko, the Russian language was removed from every sphere of public life and strict language quotas were introduced in the media. Attempts to discourage the use of Russian through discrimination in everyday life also increased. Those measures were enacted in direct violation of not only documented international norms but also the principles enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, which seek to protect the linguistic, educational and other rights of citizens and national minorities.

I will not go into detail about the discriminatory processes currently under way in Ukraine in relation to the Russian language and Russian-speaking inhabitants. Both of the briefers whom we invited informed us about that in detail. I will focus only on the role of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who promised during his presidential campaign to review the language laws that had further divided an already-polarized Ukrainian society. I would like to cite his words on Ukrainian television before he became President,

“People in eastern Ukraine and Crimea want to speak Russian. Leave them alone. You should legally give them the possibility to speak Russian. Language will never divide our native country. I have Jewish blood. I speak Russian, but I am a citizen of Ukraine... Russia and Ukraine are truly brotherly peoples... We all understand one another very well”.

Largely thanks to that position and his promises to bring an end to the civil war in Donbas, 75 per cent of Ukrainians voted for him in the 2019 presidential election. However, the new Head of the Ukrainian State very quickly showed that all such issues, which are of extreme importance for Ukrainians, were actually nothing more than empty sound bites. He quickly fell in line with Kyiv’s patrons, who did not intend to preserve peace in Ukraine and its good-neighbourly relations with Russia. In arming his country with Western help and preparing for war with Russia under the cover of the Minsk agreements — about which there is today no doubt thanks to the revelations by former French, German and United Kingdom leaders — he took a number of steps to eradicate the Russian language and everything Russian from the country.

In 2020 and 2021, discriminatory laws on secondary education, the indigenous peoples of Ukraine and national-patriotic education were adopted. In September 2021, Zelenskyy called on all residents of Ukraine who considered themselves Russian to leave the country. He called that their personal choice. If you want to live in Ukraine and see a future for your children and grandchildren there, he said, you must become a Ukrainian and give up your Russian identity. Those who did not want to do so, in particular the residents of Donbas, were intimidated by bombings and shelling or simply killed. I would also like to emphasize that those measures were not a response to Russia’s actions, but a proactive and deliberate attempt to destroy the Russian language and culture in Ukraine.

The rights of the Russian-speaking population were therefore flagrantly violated. After February 2022, the fight against the Russian language in Ukraine took on grotesque proportions in the form of appalling evocations of Nazism. Ukrainian officials made no secret of their hatred for everything Russian and their intention to get rid of the Russian people and the Russian language. The country’s language ombudsman, Taras Kremin stated, “Ukraine for the Ukrainians”.

The Secretary of the of the National Security and Defence Council, Oleksiy Danilov, expressed the view that the Russian language should disappear from Ukraine, and he called Russian people “rats” who should be “poisoned” and “exterminated by any means possible”. What is currently happening in Ukraine is essentially a total ban on the Russian language. Since last fall, a total ban on studying Russian in schools, even as a foreign language, was added to the laws that I mentioned earlier. Our former Western partners, who promote the principles of diversity and the protection of national and cultural identity only at home, have not reacted at all to any of that. International mechanisms that are pro-Western or comprised mostly of Western representatives have also failed to react. One clear example of that attitude was the refusal of Ms. Brands Kehris to brief the Council today. It is clear that it is not at all convenient for her and her colleagues to criticize Ukraine against the background of the West’s anti-Russian frenzy.

The Russophobia that is raging in Ukraine has many manifestations. Besides those that I have already mentioned, they include the war on Russian books, which are now being destroyed just as books were destroyed in Nazi Germany. There is also the shameful war being

waged on monuments and geographical names related to Russia, and which our briefers discussed in detail. Repression in Ukraine can happen today for speaking a word of Russian, singing a Russian song, reading Russian news or getting a text message in Russian on a mobile phone. It is a true linguistic inquisition and obscurantism because of which completely innocent people are suffering and dying. And all of that is happening before the eyes of our Western colleagues, who incidentally have also not taken such a big step as they start to ban everything Russian. We can see that perfectly well and can ascribe it to their carefully concealed hatred for our country, language, religion and culture, because no condemnation of our special military operation can explain the rampant Russophobia in their countries.

One more issue that I want to draw the Council's attention to today is the Kyiv regime's ongoing war on the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, which has no formal relationship to Russia itself. Mr. Vyshinsky spoke about it today, and we had a recent Security Council meeting on the topic that I believe many members will recall (see S/PV.9245). The situation has only deteriorated since then. On top of the raids and seizures of Orthodox churches and parishes all over Ukraine, the Zelenskyy regime is now planning to seize the country's most important shrine, the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery, on 28 March. That step brings with it the threat of an unprecedented intra-Ukrainian fratricidal confrontation, and I wanted our Western colleagues to hear about it from us today. It is still not too late to reprimand the Kyiv regime, and they have it in their power to do so.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that we did not convene today's meeting to talk about Ukraine's domestic problems. The rampant Russophobic campaign there unleashed by Zelenskyy and his clique is a direct threat to international peace and security, because in the circumstances peace and good-neighbourly relations with Ukraine are impossible in principle. What we have always wanted and continue to want from our Ukrainian neighbours is no more than the respect for elementary rights and freedoms that our Western colleagues so zealously pursue at home. But for some reason they apply different standards for Ukraine. I have a question for our Swiss neighbours. In order to be Swiss, do people have to renounce their Italian, French or German identity? Does that threaten the integrity of the Swiss nation? And if not, where is their criticism

of what the Kyiv authorities are doing to Russians? I hope that today the members of the Council can make an honest assessment of their actions. They will never be able to build long-term, sustainable peace in Europe on Russophobia, and I want them to realize that.

I also hope that today they will spare us their arguments claiming that it is we ourselves who are to blame. As we were all able to understand today, the Russophobia in Ukraine began evolving long before 24 February 2022. In defending their Kyiv protégés' despicable acts and presenting them as a response to ours, they are not only stooping low themselves but devaluing their own vaunted high standards and values and risking dragging their societies down to Kyiv's level. We would very much like to believe that they can still avoid that scenario.

**Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil):** We listened attentively to our briefers.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, the Council has met almost weekly to discuss various aspects of the crisis, emphasizing the impact on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine in particular. Last week, missiles once again struck civilian areas in various regions, bringing more fatalities and more destruction of civilian infrastructure. Brazil deplores the violence and renews its appeal for dialogue and the cessation of hostilities. So far, however, the Council's attention has not produced concrete advances on the ground. There is no justification under international law for violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Charter of the United Nations proscribes war as an instrument for resolving conflicts. But the belief in a military solution still prevails. It is a belief that will continue to take innocent civilians' lives and make the prospects for lasting peace ever more distant. We urge members to reflect on the current dynamics of our meetings and on the role of the Security Council. The mere repetition of national positions in a format that shows clear signs of exhaustion will contribute nothing to helping to end the conflict.

At the same time, we continue to oppose efforts to isolate Russia in diplomatic forums and through unilateral sanctions that are not approved by the Council. At this point, it would be more productive to discuss pragmatic ways to achieve peace, a concept that has been largely absent from our debates. In order not only to achieve peace but to sustain it, we believe that a solution must involve tackling the causes of the conflict.

The grievances and security concerns on both sides will have to be addressed when a pragmatic view takes hold and peace talks begin to be considered. Fortunately, we see an increasing number of Member States calling for a peaceful solution. We remain ready to contribute to a mediation process with a view to achieving lasting peace.

In the next few days, the Black Sea Grain Initiative will expire. It is a result of successful mediation efforts and one of the few good developments since the beginning of the hostilities. We urge the parties to seek a swift renewal of the agreements in order to prevent any worsening of the collateral effects of the crisis on the developing countries that depend on a regular supply of grain and fertilizer. We encourage all Member States to avoid actions that could compromise the implementation of the agreements, including the elimination of barriers to Russian exports. Sanctions on exports of food and fertilizer, regardless of their origin, are unacceptable and contradict the letter and spirit of the Istanbul Initiative, while disproportionately affecting vulnerable countries, often in regions far from the conflict.

**Mr. Magosaki** (Japan): I thank the briefers for their briefings, in which we heard about various forms of discrimination, including harmful rhetoric and incitement related to the war in Ukraine.

We should not tolerate any form of discrimination against any people, because it harms their dignity as human beings and could create or exacerbate divisions in a society. At the same time, no allegations of discrimination can ever justify any use of force. If anything, the unlawful Russian invasion of Ukraine may actually have provoked harmful rhetoric and incitement towards those aligning themselves with the unjustifiable aggression.

As articulated in resolution ES-11/6, we reiterate our demand for Russia's immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and call for a cessation of hostilities.

**Mr. Nanga** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank the briefers for their respective briefings.

Eighteen days ago, the Security Council met (see S/PV.9269) to mark the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine. Around this table we deplored the human suffering on the ground, marked by the colossal loss of human life, attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure and the mass displacement of people.

The eruption of the war in Ukraine went hand in hand with the unleashing of hate speech and a verbal escalation on both sides that appears to have no limits. Since the beginning of hostilities, combat on the ground is playing out on social media in a worrisome fashion, affecting all areas of life, including the sacred. Beyond the horror of war and beyond the suffering and the destruction of all types, people in the grips of conflict are being subjected daily to discrimination, stigmatization or marginalization. The lack of prospects for an end to the war in the short or medium terms does not bode well for the severity of the scars that will taint every individual, family and community. There is no doubt that the invisible wounds caused by this bloody war will persist for years, perhaps even for several generations.

Recent history has shown us in a stark and horrifying way the weight of hatred and rejection, as well as their insidious ability to fuel and exacerbate generational violence and plunge humankind into the depths of horror. I wish to call on the parties to show restraint and to refrain from all provocative behaviours or incitements to hatred. Any action likely to exacerbate hatred between peoples contributes to driving parties away from a political solution because it dangerously imperils the construction of lasting peace based on the principle of peaceful coexistence.

In that regard, I wish to underscore the Secretary-General's ongoing commitment to combat hate speech, as reflected in his *Our Common Agenda* (A/75/982) report, as well as in the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, launched in 2019.

I urge the parties to the conflict to take ownership of and implement these noble goals and to abide by the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibit pejorative or discriminatory language targeting religion, ethnic origin, nationality, race, colour, ancestry, sex or any other forms of identity. Building lasting peace is hard to envisage in the absence of those fundamental values of respect for the human person.

I also recall that in June we held the first International Day for Countering Hate Speech, and I also recall the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and of tolerance (General Assembly resolution 75/309). That resolution seeks

to fight against discrimination, xenophobia and hate speech, in accordance with international human rights law.

In conclusion, I reiterate my country's constant and unwavering appeal to the parties to the conflict to come to the table in order to agree upon a political resolution to this war. Tomorrow's peace begins today.

**Mr. Abushahab** (United Arab Emirates): The irrational hatred of any group is an exercise in closing the mind. It strips away our empathy away at a time when understanding is most needed. I want to make three points in that regard.

First, the United Arab Emirates has consistently taken a strong stance against intolerance in all its forms. Today is no exception. In a country where more than 200 nationalities coexist, we understand the importance of promoting tolerance for the benefit of all. No person should face discrimination or prejudice based upon their nationality, race or religion. This month, in Abu Dhabi, we inaugurated the Abrahamic Family House, an interfaith complex housing a mosque, a church, my country's first purpose-built synagogue and an educational facility. It is a physical expression of peaceful coexistence and a statement of the high regard in which we hold interfaith harmony. Actions guided by the irrational fear and hatred of any group are at odds with the creation of cohesive, prosperous societies. And so we believe it is important to address intolerance and hate speech, whenever and wherever they manifest.

Secondly, we all have a collective responsibility to ensure that respect for others becomes the global norm. As has been repeated here today, we continue to see a rise in the incitement of hate speech globally. Too many times, the Council has seen intolerance in areas of conflict taken to the extreme and played out in lives lost, communities destroyed and histories erased. When the guns are eventually silenced, intolerance and bigotry can hamper post-conflict reconciliation and sustainable peace. To that end, we believe that the Council must redouble its efforts to address the proliferation of hate speech and intolerance, including through modern technology. In conflict zones, the malicious use of technology to spread hate speech, misinformation and disinformation poses a particularly difficult challenge.

Thirdly, today's topic is a reminder that the Council must prioritize conflict resolution and, ultimately, a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine. Arriving at a just and lasting peace must be our objective.

We welcome the efforts of all parties towards the extension of the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Beyond the positive impact that the Initiative has had on global food security, its very existence shows the promise of constructive dialogue even in the midst of conflict.

A worldview that supports xenophobia serves no one. At times of conflict, it perpetuates the cycle of violence, demonizing entire cultures, inciting against civilians and penalizing individuals. We must remain vigilant against all of its manifestations, in the interest of building and sustaining peace.

**Mr. Eckersley** (United Kingdom): Russophobia is one of an ever-growing list of excuses that Russia has come up with to justify its war in Ukraine. The fact that they are inventing so many of them is itself a good indication that they know none of them stands up to full scrutiny.

But let me be clear anyway, on behalf of the United Kingdom, and let me say it in Russian:

*(spoke in Russian)*

We are not Russophobes. There are historical ties between our countries. We fought together in two world wars. Our country deeply respects Russia's rich cultural heritage. I myself studied the Russian language, its history and excellent literature for seven years.

*(spoke in English)*

We do not want Russia to fail as a State, as the Russian delegation sometimes claims. Quite the opposite, in fact. We want Russia to be a prosperous and stable nation — just one that does not try to annex and illegally invade its neighbours.

What Ukraine wants — what we all want — is peace in line with the Charter of the United Nations. The problem in Ukraine today is not caused by Russophobia. It is caused by President Putin's desire to annex a sovereign nation, in breach of the most fundamental principles of the Charter.

When the Russian State complains about Russophobia, what they actually object to, very simply, is Ukraine's determination to remain an independent nation and its refusal to bend to Russia's will and to give Russia its land. And, in pursuit of Ukraine's land, the Russian military has killed and injured many tens of thousands of Ukrainians and displaced millions. There have been widespread reports of atrocities, with the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine recording more than 70,000 potential war crimes so far.

Hundreds of Ukrainian apartment buildings, train stations, hospitals and schools have been hit. Ukrainian cultural property has been looted, and cultural heritage sites destroyed. And more than that: to build domestic support for his war, Putin's Government is pushing out propaganda about Ukraine to dehumanize the people it is killing and delegitimize the country it is invading — all while falsely claiming that Russia is somehow the victim.

In the run up to the invasion, President Putin called Ukraine an intolerable “anti-Russia” and declared that it was an “inalienable part of Russia's own history, culture and spiritual space”. We have since heard relentless false claims, including from President Putin, that the Ukrainian Government are “neo-Nazis”, and from former President Medvedev that Ukrainians are “scum and freaks”, “cockroaches” and “grunting pigs”. The Russian Government may believe that this propaganda will help justify at home the sacrifice of the lives of the tens of thousands of Russian soldiers.

But the consequences for innocent civilians, for Ukraine as a nation State, and for the rest of the world, are catastrophic.

Russia is not under attack. There is only one aggressor in this context. Therefore, we must all tell the Russian Government very clearly to turn off its war machine, stop the invasion, stop the killing and stop the propaganda.

**Mrs. Dime Labille** (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the briefers for their briefings.

By convening today's meeting and by alleging discrimination, Russia is once again trying to distract us from the atrocities and abuses it continues to commit in Ukraine. This strategy is not new. Since the beginning of its war of aggression, Russia has constantly sought to distort reality. This propaganda strategy simply does not work. Russia will not succeed in justifying its unjustifiable war by cultivating its myth of alleged Russophobia. These allegations are baseless and as such are unworthy of further consideration.

The reality is that Russia is waging an illegal and unjustified war against a sovereign State, Ukraine, in flagrant violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. The reality is that there is an aggressor, Russia, which denies its responsibilities, and an aggressee, Ukraine, which is defending itself and seeking to trace a path towards a just and lasting peace

and which has proposed a peace plan that we support. This aggression is accompanied by massive abuses that constitute war crimes and even crimes against humanity: indiscriminate bombings, summary executions, acts of torture, sexual violence used as a weapon of war, abductions and deportations of Ukrainian children.

Our message today is that our resolve is stronger than ever and that we will stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes. There will be no impunity for the crimes committed by Russian forces and their Wagner Group supporters in Ukraine. We will continue to make sure that justice for the victims is done and support the efforts of the Ukrainian courts and the International Criminal Court to that end — and because it is an international security imperative to ensure that these crimes are not repeated.

Russia must simply withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

**Mrs. Sanchez Izquierdo** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have listened carefully to the briefers.

My delegation wishes to reiterate its unwavering rejection of all forms of racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in any context, whether it be in situations of peace or conflict, and regardless of their origin.

I must also reject corrosive narratives that exacerbate conflict. Such rhetoric is even more deplorable when it seeks to justify armed violence.

What greater act of xenophobia, contempt or dehumanization is there than war? In addition to taking human lives and destroying civilian infrastructure and means of subsistence, war affects the full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms and is a loophole for violations and abuses of those rights.

Finally, so that not one more Ukrainian or Russian life is lost, Ecuador calls on the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders and cease hostilities as required by General Assembly resolution ES-11/6 on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, adopted by the General Assembly on 23 February 2023 (see A/ES-11/PV.19).

**Mr. Spasse** (Albania): I thank the briefers for attending today's meeting.

In June last year, Albania convened a meeting of the Security Council on incitement to violence leading to atrocity crimes (see S/PV.9069). We referred to historical examples, how language and rhetoric could lead to massacres, war crimes, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and genocide. The Holocaust perpetrated against the Jews before and during the Second World War, the massacres in Rwanda, the genocide in Srebrenica and the massive crimes and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo did not come out of nowhere. They were planned through well-elaborated programmes based on a common element: words deliberately chosen to dehumanize the other, which would then be followed by bloodshed.

Unfortunately, we are still witnessing the same situation today. Russia's unprovoked military aggression in Ukraine is being conducted after years of aggressive rhetoric from all levels of the Russian State that has basically asserted that there is no Ukrainian language, culture or church, that Ukraine has no history and that it should have no future.

Article II of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide clearly refers to the

“intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”.

The calls for de-Ukrainization are an incitement to that intent, to “destroy, in whole or in part” the Ukrainian nation. This rhetoric has been followed by atrocities, crimes against civilians, massive deportations and the destruction of strategic infrastructure, cultural sites and heritage.

While wrongful and intentional incitement to violence has caused irreparable damage and is being used to justify an unjust war, haters have not succeeded in their goals. In reality, Ukrainians today are more united than ever. They have joined in an exemplary national communion, are heroically defending their country and have earned worldwide respect and strong solidarity.

The world has been clear in distinguishing the wrong from the right, the perpetrators from the victims. Once more, a few weeks ago, 141 States Members of the United Nations voted in the General Assembly to condemn the Russian aggression and called for peace in accordance with the United Nations Charter (General Assembly resolution ES-11/6).

This massive and outright condemnation is not easy to sell to Russian public opinion, which is fed with propaganda on steroids with all kinds of conspiracy theories; the Russian public has been transported into a parallel reality, where anything that helps it to play the victim is good. The self-imposed isolation due to wrong and erratic policies is not the result of any Russophobia. The world is not ready to accept aggression, annexation of territory by force, crimes or disrespect for the United Nations Charter and international law. Anything else, as we hear, is good for Russian domestic consumption.

Russian propaganda has not managed to convince anyone of the Russian claimed causes of its war of choice. Russia is increasingly failing to fool its own citizens that it is winning. It has only managed to misuse the Council, its time and resources, in repeated ways, with empty shells that sound hollow.

**Mrs. Hackman** (Ghana): I would like to thank the three briefers for obliging the Security Council with their views on the agenda item under consideration today. We particularly thank them for the manner in which their unique perspectives have demonstrated that, given the same set of facts, different people may interpret those same facts in different ways. We therefore urge all Council members to remain focused on the effort to resolve the aggression against Ukraine and address the concerns of the people of Ukraine, who today continue to suffer a war that they did not seek and a war that they cannot cease to fight.

While we do not underrate the potential for the perceived concerns over Russophobia to be an underlying driver for the actions of some parties in the war, our assessments do not lead us to conclude that there is systematic and widespread State action against ethnic Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine or that there are a set of issues that could collectively be characterized as Russophobia and which constitute a threat to international peace and security.

Indeed, in reviewing the chronology of events since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the conflict in the Donbas region of the same year and the launch of a full-scale aggression against Ukraine in February last year, we have struggled to identify a consistent *raison d'être* that could be a basis for justifying all the actions that have violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and sought to undermine the Charter of the United Nations.

Rather, when we peeled off the veneer of the rolling arguments that were made to justify such actions, we came to the reasonable conclusion that what truly lay beneath was an attempt by a larger neighbour to assert dominance over its smaller neighbour through force. As we said in the past, that course of action cannot be acceptable in pursuing international relations, and our condemnation of such actions is the same whether it occurs in the East or in the West.

Indeed, for Ghana, we stand strongly against the violations of the rights and freedoms of all people and are firmly of the view that international mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Council, the Council of Europe, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, provide appropriate channels for redressing violations of the rights of any group of people. The recourse to such mandated bodies is important because it helps to stabilize our international system and ensures accountability on the part of perpetrators and justice for affected individuals.

As we all know, and pledged to observe, the operation of the principles of sovereignty and non-interference under international law restrain any State from arrogating to itself the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another State.

We believe that the Russian Federation's choice of force against Ukraine excessively outweighs any threats that it perceives as arising from ethnic-related attacks against Russian-speaking people, who, incidentally, are citizens of Ukraine. Indeed, if that argument were to be stretched, we can reasonably conceive that, across most parts of the world, there could be the potential for further wars. In our view, that cannot be the world that we desire, or the world that would be helpful to the people whose interests we seek to protect. As we asserted in previous Council meetings, there is no justification for the aggression against the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

We continue to be concerned by the ongoing war, which is taking place in the context of widespread human rights violations committed against civilians and military personnel. Increasing evidence suggests gross violations, which, in some instances, may constitute war crimes. The targeted missile strikes against civilian-populated areas, trafficking of persons, torture, enforced disappearances and conflict-related sexual violence, among other forms of violations that have occurred over the past 13 months, are grave and

stand in sharp contrast to our common purpose to promote and protect human rights and the freedoms of people everywhere.

We remain gravely concerned about the course of the war and the heightened hostilities, which further distance us from the shared aspiration for peace in Ukraine. While reiterating our call for the immediate cessation of hostilities and the unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops, we underscore the principles of human rights law and international law and the obligations of the warring parties to fully adhere to them.

We reaffirm our support for the ongoing investigations and processes that would eventually lead to the identification of the perpetrators of all violations in order to hold them to account for their actions, or inactions. The world cannot afford impunity in the face of such egregious violations in Ukraine.

We continue to urge the Security Council and the international community to redouble efforts in helping the parties to resolve the conflict through the channels of diplomacy and dialogue. We also reaffirm our support for the position that a just, peaceful and comprehensive peace in Ukraine must be founded on the principles of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

More than any other factor, it is the continuing aggression and hostilities that complicate and obliterate the prospects for a timely solution to the war in Ukraine. We therefore urge the Russian Federation to reconsider its military approach to the conflict and remain open to finding a solution through dialogue and negotiations.

**Mr. Camilleri (Malta):** I thank today's briefers.

Today's meeting is yet another attempt by the Russian Federation to divert the focus from the appalling events occurring in Ukraine and cynically try to justify the unjustifiable. Malta reiterates its condemnation, in the strongest possible terms, of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. That brutal, unprovoked and unjustified war is a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It has brought immense suffering, destruction and misery on Ukraine and its population for more than a year. Even more disturbing is the fact that the aggression was initiated with complete disdain and disregard for international law and the rules-based order, not to mention the principles that a permanent member of the Council should uphold.

Today we heard more narratives aimed at portraying the victim as the aggressor and the aggressor as the victim. However, the facts are clear for all to see. On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation invaded its neighbour, violating its sovereignty and territorial integrity and reigniting war in Europe.

Malta deplores the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation by Russian media and Russian leaders in an attempt to justify the war against Ukraine. Let us be clear: any ideologies that encourage racism, discrimination, xenophobia and all other forms of intolerance all received our sternest condemnation on several occasions. We stress that our position stems solely from our strong and principled belief that there is no alternative to multilateralism and the rules-based international order in the contemporary world.

Furthermore, we urge the full implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other pertinent human rights treaties. We also call on Russia to respect the order of the International Court of Justice on provisional measures, dated April 2017, in the case concerning the application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

Returning to the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, we are deeply concerned about the persistent violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. We must redouble our efforts to ensure accountability for all violations. That must include justice for the victims of atrocity crimes and sexual violence, as well as the abductions and forceable deportation of children. Perpetrators must be brought to justice and be held to account without delay.

The aggressor must bear the legal consequences of its internationally wrongful acts, including making reparation for the injury and damage caused. As a first step, Malta supports the idea of establishing a register of damages as a record of evidence and information regarding claims for damages, losses or injury caused by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Malta's full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its recognized international borders, its lawful right to determine its own foreign and security policy and its diplomatic efforts in international forums, as well as its right to self-defence. We call on the Russian Federation

to stop the war, withdraw its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and turn to dialogue and diplomacy as the only tools that can restore peace in the region.

**Mrs. Baumann-Bresolin** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We take note of the remarks delivered by the various briefers today. I would like to start by discussing the recent developments in Ukraine. Last week, Ukraine was hit by one of the heaviest missile and drone attacks since the beginning of the war. Those strikes claimed additional lives and damaged energy infrastructure and other facilities in Kyiv and elsewhere in the country. Switzerland condemns those attacks. We recall that attacks against civilians and civilian objects, as well as indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, are prohibited under international humanitarian law.

An old saying states that the first casualty of war is the truth. Switzerland stresses the importance of refraining from propaganda, hate speech and deliberately divisive language that creates distrust between people and Governments in all circumstances. The disinformation and propaganda in the war against Ukraine reinforce mistrust, deepen divisions and increase hostility. We oppose all attempts to justify Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, as they fuel tensions and are used for political purposes. We recall the General Assembly's firm position against the war, as well as the decision of the International Court of Justice ordering the immediate withdrawal of Russia's troops from Ukrainian territory. Our clear condemnation of the military aggression is based on the principles of the Charter of United Nations and the international legal order in force and is not directed against the Russian people. Switzerland condemns that serious violation of international law and fully supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

With regard to the prospects for finding a peaceful, just and lasting solution — and restoring confidence in such a solution — we urge Russia to cease all its combat operations and withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory without delay. Respect for international law, the pursuit of diplomatic solutions and the obligation to ensure accountability for all violations of international law are essential to achieve that goal. Information that is fabricated and disseminated to cause harm can never form the basis for frank and constructive dialogue. As members of the Security Council, we have a special responsibility to refrain from and oppose any harmful rhetoric in order to promote peace and cooperation.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The briefers have just shared their views about the phenomenon of Russophobia and its relationship to the Ukraine crisis. The Ukraine crisis has been dragging on for more than a year since its outbreak. The increasingly protracted and expanding nature of the conflict is deeply worrying. Since day one, China has emphasized that dialogue and negotiations are the only feasible way to resolve the crisis. The international community should stay on the correct course by promoting peace talks and supporting Russia and Ukraine in resuming dialogue as soon as possible and without any preconditions in order to ease and de-escalate the situation, and help the parties to the conflict to swiftly open the door to a political settlement of the crisis and jointly maintain peace in Europe.

China recently issued a paper containing its position on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, which includes 12 proposals, including proposals on respecting sovereignty, ceasing hostilities, resuming peace talks and stopping unilateral sanctions, among other things. On that basis, we are ready to continue to play a constructive role in pushing for a political solution to the Ukraine crisis.

Engraved on the stone wall in front of the UNESCO Headquarters is a statement in several languages that reads “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed”. To stop wars, we must eliminate estrangement, prejudice and hatred, and sow the seeds of peace, solidarity and friendship in people’s hearts. Regrettably, however, there are many phobias against a number of countries, religions and races in the world today. Some of them stem from a sense of civilizational superiority and a narrow historical outlook, while others are the products of geopolitical clashes and ideological confrontations. Such phobias often become the logical premise and policy pretext through which certain countries create imaginary enemies, concoct threat theories, pursue containment and suppression, and provoke divisions and confrontation. Driven by such phobias, which are in any case misguided, differences are magnified artificially, and disagreements are exaggerated to the extent that common interests are neglected and tensions are reinforced and perpetuated. As a result, the world is dragged into the quagmire of conflicts and disputes.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that for some time now, politicians in a certain country seem to have contracted the condition of Sinophobia. They

are full of prejudice and paranoia about China, peddling anxieties and instigating tensions. Such Sinophobia constitutes a misunderstanding of China, as well as a strategic misjudgment and political manipulation. Any policy towards China that is dominated by such a phobia of China will only harden the zero-sum game mentality, perpetuate the policy of containment and suppression, and lead to conflicts and confrontations. The world has already been thrown into chaos by the Ukraine crisis. Does it want to create another crisis to change the world beyond recognition?

With human society having developed to the point at which it is today, we should be mature enough to be able to listen to different voices and embrace different ideas and civilizations. The world is big enough for all countries to grow and achieve progress together. We believe that humans are wise and capable enough to overcome many such phobias, find a way to get along with one another through dialogue instead of confrontations and embrace inclusiveness instead of exclusion. Together, we can build a new paradigm for international relations based on mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation. China is ready to spare no effort in cooperation with all other countries to achieve that goal.

**Mr. Kelley** (United States of America): We listened carefully to the briefers, and we would like to thank Mr. Snyder for his thoughtful presentation today.

The United States welcomes serious discussions on the detrimental impacts of hate speech and harmful rhetoric — and we regret that today’s meeting is a missed opportunity to do so. The Russian delegation called this meeting today by claiming that Russophobia is “one of the most gruesome and repulsing aspects of the Ukrainian crisis”. Are we to take that statement seriously, as Russian missiles rain down on Ukrainian cities and kill civilians, and as Russian forces have committed crimes against humanity, including the systematic rape, murder and torture of civilians? In English, there is a better word to describe such a statement — and it also includes the claim made by Russia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, at a Group of 20 meeting earlier this month, when he said that this war was somehow launched against Russia, and not the other way around — and that word is “gaslighting”.

Over the past year, the world has endured a parade of Russia’s excuses and absurd justifications for its war of choice against Ukraine. We have heard claims by Russia that it is not the aggressor, that it is trying

to stop the genocide in eastern Ukraine, that it must de-Nazify the Government of Ukraine and that it must fight against drug addicts and Satanists.

No matter what today's obfuscating excuses are, they cannot hide the fact that Russia is not the victim it pretends to be. The evidence is plain to see in Bahkmut, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Bucha and many other Ukrainian cities. If the Russian delegation were serious about highlighting the most gruesome and repulsive aspects of its brutal invasion of a sovereign United Nations Member State, it should call a meeting to discuss the many war crimes, crimes against humanity and other abuses committed by its forces. It should explain to the Council why its forces have deported hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, including children, to Russia. It should explain why its forces have tortured civilians in detention through beatings, electric shocks and mock executions. And it should explain why its forces have raped civilians and committed execution-style killings of Ukrainian men, women and children.

Russia has created a string of propaganda to try to justify its war to the Council over the past year, including some truly ridiculous conspiracy theories. Each excuse is intended to mask its true goal: to erase the sovereign independent State of Ukraine from the map and violently subjugate its people. Putin has said as much, denying that Ukraine is a State and calling for the return of so-called lost territories. Ukraine's self-defence is an appropriate and necessary reaction to Russia's malign, destabilizing and dangerous invasion. It is a needed response to an illegal war of aggression that violates the Charter of the United Nations and has caused the unspeakable suffering of, and abuses against, the people of Ukraine. This is not the first and will not be the last time Russia seeks to abuse its Council seat to spout disinformation and vitriol. Much like what happened at the meeting of the Group of 20 earlier this month, it convinces no one. Each excuse will not hide the fact that Russia seeks to destroy its neighbour and fulfil its imperialist expansionist ambitions. The people of Ukraine, a sovereign, independent State that is part of the United Nations community, will continue its brave defence of their country. And the United States will stand with them for as long as it takes.

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

I begin by thanking Mr. Vyshinsky, Mr. Vasilets and Mr. Snyder for their briefings.

Once again we find ourselves in this Chamber discussing the root causes of the conflict in Ukraine and its ramifications, as the conflict rumbles into its second year. Mozambique once again expresses its concern about the continued escalation of the conflict. Given its global visibility and impact, the all-too-common charged rhetoric risks normalizing hatred and incitement in other parts of the globe. The toxic rhetoric justifying violence and disregard of the other not only creates an atmosphere of fear and distrust but also adds fuel to an already acrimonious and destructive conflict. That makes it difficult to achieve a negotiated solution, and renders the prospects for peaceful coexistence even more remote. The world simply cannot allow the situation to escalate further.

Mozambique would like to remind all parties that harmful rhetoric and incitement not only violate international law but also breach various related United Nations and Security Council resolutions. Mozambique calls on all parties to refrain from using language that incites violence, discrimination or hostility against individuals or groups, and urges them to promote a culture of tolerance, respect and understanding. The Secretary-General, who just returned from Ukraine, said, "we must reject hate speech, incitement and the manipulation of truth that underpin so many divisions in our world".

All of us in this Chamber agree that war cannot be the solution. We therefore urge the respective leaders to fully commit to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, in line with the tenets of the Charter of the United Nations. Mozambique reiterates its call on all parties involved in the conflict and the international community at large to work together to find a peaceful and negotiated solution to the Ukrainian conflict. It is imperative that we support all diplomatic efforts to end the war in Ukraine.

In conclusion, Mozambique calls on the Security Council to stand united in the search for peace and stability in the world and to commit itself to be a guardian against the politics of division and hate, whenever and wherever they manifest themselves.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to make a few brief comments with regard to what we heard today.

Some of our colleagues made an energetic but unconvincing attempt to cite examples of hate speech about Ukraine and Ukrainians in the Russian media. The emotional statements of some of our political scientists are, first, their personal position, and secondly, they do not apply to Ukrainians in general but to nationalists and neo-Nazis and are a response to their Russophobic views. The references and citations do not apply because they do not refer to Ukrainians but to the Kyiv authorities. I would like to ask: when has there been a single call by Russia or by Russian officials for the de-Ukrainianization of Ukraine or its disappearance from the map? No one has heard such a call today. We are not defending ourselves or diverting attention, as was said earlier. We are not worried about ourselves, but about the Ukrainians, and are trying to explain what the current criminal Kyiv regime has brought about for them. That happened long before February 2022.

I hope that the members of the Security Council will not equate the opinions of political analysts with the statements of Ukraine's top leadership and its official representatives — the President, the Secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, the leaders of foreign policy organizations, the diplomats and the governors. If we were to look closely at the statements made by Ukrainian political scientists and experts, what we could cite would hardly be permissible in this Chamber owing to their vile and hateful nature.

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

**Mr. Dvornyk** (Ukraine): I would like to thank Professor Snyder for a perfect explanation of the imperfect purpose of the initiator of today's meeting. I also recognize the representative of Russia in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

On Sunday, following a very careful identification process, the Ukrainian authorities finally confirmed the identity of a captured Ukrainian soldier, whose brutal execution by Russians immediately after he said the words "Glory to Ukraine" had been found and circulated on the Internet last week. I would like his name to be pronounced in the Chamber loud and clear — Oleksandr Matsievskyi of the Chernihiv region. He was a symbol of devotion to his country and dignity

in the face of death. Dignity, which is the very essence of the Ukrainian spirit now, is also a term whose Russian equivalent should definitely be marked as archaic in the current editions of Russian diplomatic vocabularies. Horrific footage of the execution-style killing has again reminded us of how hatred kills. It is real hatred that has been deliberately fuelled for decades — not the fabricated stories to which we have been obliged to listen at today's meeting. That hatred towards the entire nation of Ukraine has served as a trigger for invading a sovereign country and committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We will discuss the recent developments on the ground at a meeting to be held on Friday, which was requested well in advance to ensure proper preparation and substantive discussion. It is a matter of regret, although it is not a surprise, that Russia has again responded with spamming and a denial-of-service attack on the Security Council. In the cyber domain, that is malicious activity aimed at overloading and thereby immobilizing a system by flooding it with superfluous requests. It is a very precise description of what the Russian delegation does. Russia's spamming manifests its weakness and lack of credible arguments. It is also prompted by the fear of accountability for the crimes that it has committed and the realization that accountability is imminent. Bucha, Irpin, Izyum, Mariupol and dozens of other places with mass graves of innocent people are the proof of the power of the Russian propaganda of war in dehumanizing Ukrainians and removing any moral safeguards from the mindset of Russian soldiers.

Ukraine reiterates that war propaganda and national hatred, which constitute incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, are profoundly harmful and are prohibited under article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The history of the past contains powerful reminders of what happened when one nation, poisoned with propaganda inciting hatred, waged a war of elimination against other nations and peoples. In 1945, the Second World War ended with the military defeat of the Nazi regime and the process of ensuring accountability. Nazi high officials, military commanders and diplomats were not the only ones prosecuted at the Nuremberg tribunal — so, too, were propagandists. As the tribunal established in its judgment against Julius Streicher, the top Nazi propagandist,

“In his speeches and articles, week after week, month after month, he infected the German mind with a virus of anti-Semitism and incited the German people to acts of persecution”.

The Nazis made allegations of oppression against Germans abroad one of the centrepieces of their propaganda. False claims about the discrimination against Germans were used as a justification for aggressive expansionism, annexation and atrocities. The many similarities with the Russian course of action, including in the Security Council, make it clear that the Kremlin criminal regime should also find itself in the docks after its military defeat in Ukraine. It will be up to a future tribunal to establish the accountability of all those responsible for issuing criminal orders, for implementing those orders and for whitewashing them for internal and international audiences. That tribunal should also facilitate in Russia a process of moral penance and deep reflection on the role of that country and its army in the atrocities committed in Ukraine. If underpinned with trials, remembrance, education and reparations, that reflection would result in Russia's return to the family of civilized nations and its commitment to never repeat the horrors of the war against Ukraine. For that to happen, we should ensure that those responsible for the crime of aggression, war crimes and crimes against humanity do not escape justice.

In that regard, Ukraine calls upon all Member States to engage actively in the process of ensuring justice for all victims of Russia's aggression and to hold perpetrators accountable.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Snyder to respond to comments.

**Mr. Snyder:** It has been a pleasure to be with you, Mr. President, and among diplomats.

The Russian representative saw fit to ask me about sources, and I am very happy to oblige. If we are concerned about the sources of statements of high officials of the Russian Federation, I refer the Russian representative to the website of the President of the Russian Federation, on which he will find speeches by the President of the Russian Federation, denying that Ukraine exists on the grounds that Ukraine was invented by Nazis and communists and that a Viking baptized himself 1,000 years ago. I do not comment on the historical validity of those arguments. I simply point out that they are a matter of public record and are the

statements of the President of the Russian Federation. Similarly, Dmitry Medvedev, a member of the Russian Security Council, repeatedly makes on his Telegram channel the kinds of directly genocidal remarks that have been discussed today.

With respect to Russian State television, it is very important to note that I simply quoted Russian State television, which is an organ of the Russian State. As the President of the Russian Federation has himself said, it represents Russian national interests. The statements made on Russian State television are therefore significant not only as expressions of Russian policy but also, as has been said, as a mark of genocidal motivation for the Russian population. That is true to such an extent that the presenters on Russian television have themselves expressed their concerns about the possibility that they could be prosecuted for war crimes. I refer the representative of the Russian Federation to the video archives of Russia's State television channels. For those who do not speak Russian, I refer them to the excellent work of Julia Davis, who has assembled an archive of relevant Russian video material.

With respect to the sources concerning actual Russian atrocities in Ukraine, the simplest thing to do would be to allow Russian journalists to report freely from Ukraine. For everyone else, the simplest thing to do would be to visit Ukraine, a land that has a democratically elected bilingual President, who represents a national minority, and ask the people of Ukraine about the war in either Ukrainian or Russian. Ukrainians speak both languages and can answer in both languages.

The representative of the Russian Federation saw fit to attack my qualifications. I take that as a badge of pride and as a very small element in a larger attack on Russian culture. My work has been devoted, among other things, to chronicling the mass murder of Russians, including at the siege of Leningrad. I have been proud over the course of my career to learn from historians of Ukraine, Poland and Europe in general, as well as from historians of Russia. It is unfortunate that the best historians of Russia — and the best scholars of Russia in general — are not allowed to practice their own disciplines now. It is unfortunate that organizations such as Memorial, which has done heroic work in Russian history, are now criminalized in Russia. It is unfortunate that memory laws in Russia prevent the open discussion of Russian history. It is unfortunate that the word “Ukraine” has been banned from Russian

school books. As a historian of Russia, I look forward to the day when there can be free discussion of Russia's fascinating history.

Speaking of history, the Russian representative denied that there was such a thing. I would refer him to excellent works by historians who know both languages, such as my colleague, Serhii Plokhy, at Harvard. I would refer people, in general, to my open class at Yale, which makes the point about Ukrainian history more eloquently than I can here.

But more fundamentally, I would like to thank the Russian representative for helping me to make the point that I was trying to make in my earlier presentation. It is not for the representative of a larger country to say that the representative of a smaller country has no history. What the Russian representative said is that whenever Ukrainians — in history or at present — claim that they exist, that is Russophobia. As I have been trying to say, that is a colonial attitude. The big Power does not have the right to say that the small Power has no history. The claim that a country has no history is genocidal hate speech. In that sense, I think, and in that sense only, this meeting has been useful.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Snyder for his clarifications.

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

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am not going to engage in a dispute with Professor Snyder.

That is because, first, he did not respond to the questions that I asked. He simply gave another briefing. By the way, I want to let Professor Snyder know that I have read Serhii Plokhy's books. But once the record of our meeting is ready, I will note the questions that he refused to answer and his remarks that not only puzzled me but also revolted me when I first heard them. Let us not turn this into a dispute between me and Professor Snyder. We will find a different way to answer Professor Snyder.

**The President:** I now give the floor to Mr. Vasilets to respond to comments.

**Mr. Vasilets** (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. Snyder asked for a comment from a representative of Ukraine.

I am representative of the Ukrainian people, I am a Ukrainian citizen. I am the head of a political party that consists of tens of thousands of Ukrainians — a party that was banned by Zelenskyy's regime because it is an opposition party that stands for peace and unity with Slavic peoples.

Apparently, Mr. Snyder represents the countries of NATO, which, regrettably, are also a party to the conflict in Ukraine.

He spoke a lot about Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka. I simply wish to remind Mr. Snyder that Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka are the cities that suffered as a result of shelling by the artillery provided by NATO countries while the Russian forces were there. Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka were regularly shelled using NATO projectiles and weapons. Of course, as a result of this, people suffered, and there was mass destruction. Very often, the many Western politicians who came to Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka for photo opportunities talked about how they were going to rebuild those cities. Somehow a year has passed, but not a single cent has been allocated. Of course, people in Bucha, Irpin and Borodyanka are now erecting barriers on the roads so that those European, American and British politicians remember them — but, for some reason, nobody is listening to them. And for some reason, everyone is saying that it was not NATO artillery that was used to shell those cities. This is, certainly, a pure lie. That is just a comment from a Ukrainian citizen.

**The President:** I thank Mr. Vasilets for his clarifications.

*The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.*