



General Assembly

Eleventh Emergency Special session

7th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 23 March 2022, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Shahid (Maldives)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

Resumption of the eleventh emergency special session

The Acting President: I declare the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly resumed.

Members will recall that in paragraph 16 of its resolution ES-11/1, the General Assembly decided

“to adjourn the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.”

I should like to draw the attention of delegations to document A/ES-11/4, which contains a letter dated 21 March 2022 from the Permanent Representatives of Antigua and Barbuda, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Panama, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly, requesting the resumption of the eleventh emergency special session.

I intend to conduct the proceedings of this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the past practices of its emergency special sessions.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

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

Draft resolutions (A/ES-11/L.2 and A/ES-11/L.3)

The Acting President: Rule 91 of the General Assembly's rules of procedure provides that

“If two or more proposals relate to the same question, the General Assembly shall, unless it decides otherwise, vote on the proposals in the order in which they have been submitted. The General Assembly may, after each vote on a proposal, decide whether to vote on the next proposal.”

The Assembly will therefore consider the draft resolutions in the order in which they have been submitted. That means that the draft resolution that was submitted first, contained in document A/ES-11/L.2, will be considered first.

I will now deliver the following statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

“The security situation in Ukraine has deteriorated rapidly since Russia launched its military offensive on 24 February. Armed violence has escalated in various regions of Ukraine, including in the capital city of Kyiv. The intense military escalation and rapid expansion of the conflict across the country has led to significant loss of life, injuries and misery, as well as mass movement and displacement of the civilian population throughout the country

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and into its neighbours. It has also inflicted severe destruction and damage on civilian infrastructure and residential housing.

“According to United Nations data, around 3.56 million people have fled Ukraine and 6.5 million have been displaced within the country since February 24. In other words, about one in four of the 44 million people in Ukraine have either fled the country or become internally displaced since the war began. Essential services such as water, electricity, heating and emergency health and social services are under severe strain. The growing insecurity and shrinking humanitarian space continue to limit people’s access to health care. It is projected that these problems will worsen and increase humanitarian needs among millions of Ukrainians and other members of the community.

“People on the move are extremely vulnerable to numerous potential health and protection risks, while the local capacities of host communities, which are receiving growing numbers of displaced people, are already stretched to their limit. The need of the hour is to ensure safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance for those in need in Ukraine, including women, children, the elderly and disabled, and to facilitate that access for humanitarian personnel. I again reiterate my call to all parties to respect international law and international humanitarian law.”

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): A month ago, on 23 February, the General Assembly convened a debate on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine (see A/76/PV.58 and A/76/PV.59), just a few hours before Russia began its unprovoked and unjustified war on my country. As Mr. Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine’s Foreign Minister, said from this rostrum at that meeting,

“We need swift, concrete and resolute action — a new type of action by the United Nations and the international community that is commensurate with the level of threat facing not only Ukraine but all of us because of Russia’s aggressive course... We are at a critical juncture in world history, and our actions today will define it for decades to come.” (A/76/PV.58)

Tomorrow is another symbolic date. It will mark a month since the lives of millions of Ukrainians were split into two parts. One is the past — peaceful, full of joy and positive plans — and the other is the present, with war, suffering, death and destruction. Thousands of Ukrainians have lost their lives over the past month — young and old, women and men, civilians and military. They died because Russia decided to attack Ukraine, to attack peace, to attack all of us. Each day of Russia’s war against Ukraine further aggravates the humanitarian situation, which, to sum up, already meets the humanitarian disaster threshold. People are starving to death in the occupied and besieged areas. People attempting to flee conflict-affected areas are being killed. Shelling and air strikes have razed cities to the ground. Our neighbours, in accommodating millions of Ukrainian refugees, are stretched to their limits.

Those developments prompted a cross-regional group of two dozen States, representing every region, to work together on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, entitled “Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine”. I want to repeat that the group is made up of two dozen States, representing every region. The text of the draft resolution is the result of a collective and informed effort. I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thanks to France and Mexico for their dedicated leadership during the long days of consultations.

While it points clearly to the root cause of the humanitarian catastrophe, draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2 is an action-oriented text whose main focus is the urgent need to alleviate the humanitarian suffering on the ground. It demands an immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation, in particular any attacks against civilians and civilian objects; the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, journalists, people in vulnerable situations and foreign nationals, especially students; safe and unhindered passage for all civilians fleeing armed conflict and violence; an end to the sieges of cities in Ukraine, in particular Mariupol; and respect for international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. The intention of the initiators and other sponsors of the draft resolution is to ensure that its words translate into prompt actions on the ground, which will be critical to preventing a spillover effect on the entire world. That is why the text also mentions the impact of the conflict on food security globally,

particularly in least-developed countries, as well as on energy security.

We ask all who stand against the war to vote with us in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, “Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine”. It will send a powerful message aimed at contributing to a breakthrough in humanitarian action on the ground and making the aggressor stop its unprovoked war. We are encouraged by the growing number of countries that have become its sponsors and are thereby resolutely supporting this truly cross-regional text that gives the Assembly the opportunity to speak with the powerful voice that is so needed for peace to be given a chance.

Let me ask all of us here how many times in this Hall we have felt a sense of apathy in the air — that at best our action was not essential, that staying on the so-called safe side was the best option, and that there were others who would act and deal with a matter. That is, basically, the diffusion of responsibility — the more onlookers there are, the less personal responsibility individuals will feel to take action. It is the bystander effect, or bystander apathy, which is part of a sociopsychological theory that asserts that individuals are less likely to offer to help a victim when there are other people present, such as on a busy street of a metropolis.

But let me remind everyone that the General Assembly should not be ruled by street-violence psychology. We are here, after all, as nations united. And that is why as of this morning nearly 100 countries have already sponsored the draft resolution. We are not bystander nations that diffuse responsibility. We do not trivialize murder. We do not make a murderer’s identity taboo by keeping it anonymous. We do not fall victim to Stockholm syndrome and sip coffee with a serial killer in the Delegates Lounge or the Vienna Café — or do we? I ask members to think about that when voting during this emergency special session. I call on all responsible Member States to support draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer.

Mr. Skoog (European Union): I would like to express my thanks to the President for agreeing to resume this emergency special session, and to you, Sir, for the message that you conveyed on his behalf this morning.

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Monaco, San Marino and Andorra, align themselves with this statement.

As we speak, the inhabitants of Mariupol have been under siege for 24 consecutive days. They are bombed day and night. Almost 90 per cent of the city’s residential areas have been razed to the ground. The humanitarian situation is catastrophic. Russia is blocking the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the evacuation of the civilian population to other parts of Ukraine. It is heartbreaking to see yet another humanitarian catastrophe unfolding before our eyes, adding to the dire humanitarian situations identified by the United Nations in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia and the Sudan, not to mention other parts of the world. Instead of joining international efforts to heal existing wounds, Russia is opening new ones.

Nearly every day we are witnessing Russian attacks on Ukraine’s civilian population and infrastructure. We have heard about attacks on evacuees escaping besieged cities and the shelling of innocent people queuing to buy bread. We have seen the shelling of more than 500 schools, at least 52 hospitals, more than 1,500 residential buildings and a theatre in Mariupol that was sheltering civilians, including many children. We have received reports of cluster munitions being used in populated areas. In less than a month, 10 million people have fled their homes. More than 12 million are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance. Deliberate attacks on civilians are shameful, reprehensible and constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law. The EU continues to advocate ensuring full compliance with international humanitarian law and making every effort to prevent the suffering of civilians.

On 2 March, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-11/1 by an overwhelming majority, deploring Russia’s aggression against Ukraine in the strongest terms, condemning all violations of international humanitarian law and demanding Russia’s immediate withdrawal of its troops from Ukrainian territory (see A/ES-11/PV.5). Russia has done nothing to implement the resolution.

On the contrary, it has intensified its hostilities, causing further devastation and suffering.

These are dark days, not only for Ukraine and its people, but for the world in its entirety. We are witnessing the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. More than 3.6 million people have fled Ukraine for neighbouring countries. At least another 6.5 million are internally displaced within Ukraine. Caught in the conflict are not only millions of Ukrainian citizens but also thousands of people from other parts of the world, including students, workers and migrants. Many of them have been used as instruments by Russia in its disinformation campaign. Destruction and displacement are occurring on such a huge scale that in the space of four weeks the conflict has displaced more people than the terrible conflict in Syria did in four years. The EU member States have kept their borders open for everyone fleeing the war. We are committed to providing safety and shelter for all people fleeing Ukraine, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, religion or race.

Beyond Europe, this conflict is putting millions of people at risk of food insecurity, in particular in least-developed countries, in many cases adding to existing humanitarian hardships. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance to identify concrete measures for addressing those risks. The EU and its member States are also responding to the food insecurity caused by the conflict. Today the European Commission announced new measures to address global food insecurity, not least in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance, the EU is actively mobilizing the international community to urgently scale up multilateral action. That includes ensuring that United Nations bodies with mandates relevant to food security are able to take the necessary action. Food security is central to the mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, for example, and it has a key role to play in analysing and addressing the impact that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is having on international food systems and preventing them from deteriorating further, with a particular focus on protecting the most vulnerable. We are working to ensure that addressing the issue of food security is integrated into the efforts of the whole United Nations system, including the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Additionally, the EU and its member States are providing urgent humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian population. We have committed significant funding to the United Nations humanitarian flash appeal and the Ukraine regional refugee response plan. We have also activated the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. To date, the European Commission has announced €500 million in emergency aid, more than €93 million of which has been in humanitarian aid to Ukraine and Moldova this year. And the EU has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine in recent years. Since 2014, the EU and its member States have provided €2.4 billion in humanitarian, emergency and early recovery assistance to Ukraine. Over the past eight years, the EU has also addressed and supported the needs of vulnerable people in eastern Ukraine, including women, children and the elderly. Our principled humanitarian assistance benefits vulnerable people living on both sides of the line of contact. And I want to make it clear that this will continue. I also want to stress here that in parallel with our assistance to Ukraine, we will continue to provide assistance to people who are fleeing other conflicts around the world or are affected by other crises, as we already do in Yemen, Ethiopia and the Sahel. Russia's aggression against Ukraine will not deflect our attention from other pressing crises.

In the light of the tragedy that is unfolding, the General Assembly needs to assume its responsibility to address this humanitarian catastrophe and urgently call on Russia to respect the basic principles of international humanitarian law that apply to everyone. First, civilians and civilian infrastructure must never be targets. That includes hospitals, schools and water and electricity infrastructure, regardless of where they are located. Secondly, sustained, unimpeded humanitarian access must be granted in both directions. Civilians fleeing violence must be allowed to exit areas of conflict and humanitarian convoys must be granted access to enter them. Corridors for safe passage are urgently needed, especially from besieged cities such as Mariupol, in order to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. Humanitarian and medical workers should be able to work safely.

As the Ambassador of Ukraine has just said, we need the General Assembly to act. We need a resolution that accurately reflects the situation and its causes and that urges respect for the most basic humanitarian principles that all States have signed up to. We also need

the Assembly to come together in unity and solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and in defence of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, presented by Ukraine and a large cross-regional group of countries, not only addresses the acute situation in Ukraine but calls for the protection of all fleeing the war, without discrimination. It also addresses the serious global consequences of Russia's attack on a major agricultural producer such as Ukraine, creating food security risks in many places, including developing countries.

Russia must stop its war and end this unnecessary suffering. The European Union reiterates the demand made by the General Assembly in its adoption on 2 March of resolution ES-11/1 (see A/ES-11/PV.5), and in line with the 16 March order of the International Court of Justice ("Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (*Ukraine v. Russian Federation*), General List No. 182). We stand in solidarity with the millions of people affected by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Ms. Brandt (Netherlands): I am delivering this statement on behalf of Belgium, Luxembourg and my own country, the Netherlands. The Benelux countries align themselves with the statement just made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to thank the President for reconvening this emergency special session and for his statement.

At the outset, let me repeat once again that the Benelux countries are unwavering in their support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, and for its democratic freedom. We condemn in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Today, as we discuss the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, let us be clear that Russia alone is responsible for this war and the humanitarian catastrophe it has caused. It should stop immediately. As ordered by the International Court of Justice on 16 March, with binding effect,

"The Russian Federation shall immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine." ("Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (*Ukraine v. Russian Federation*), General List No. 182, paragraph 5 (a))

There is no doubt about what needs to be done — and immediately — because Russia's war on Ukraine has resulted in untold suffering for the Ukrainian people. That is where our focus is today, to put an end to that. The United Nations has verified that civilians are being attacked. We see images of women and children fleeing their homes and thousands of people sheltering in metro stations. The World Health Organization has reported 43 attacks on hospitals, and even a maternity ward was not safe.

As we speak, 100,000 people remain trapped in Mariupol. They fear for their lives every day, every hour and every minute. They are prevented from moving to safer places and denied access to the assistance that they so badly need. Humanitarian corridors are being negotiated, but the agreements are violated time and time again. At least 12 million people in Ukraine are directly affected by the war, and some are unable to leave. Millions are being deprived of food, electricity, water and health care. People are traumatized and need mental health care and psychosocial support. Millions more have fled the violence, including 600,000 in the past four days alone, and continue to do so every single day, creating the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. We commend Ukraine's neighbours, including Poland, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Moldova, for welcoming the millions of refugees and stretching their reception capacities to their limits.

My second point is to remind everyone that another consequence of Russia's war in the world's breadbasket, with specific attacks on agricultural assets, is rising food insecurity, in other parts of the world as well as Ukraine. People in already extremely vulnerable situations in Yemen and the Horn of Africa fear that they may not be able to feed their families. There is also a real danger of rising food and energy prices causing more economic and social instability around the globe, putting more people at risk. Importantly, in 2018 the Security Council adopted resolution 2417 (2018), with the specific aim of highlighting the link between armed conflict and conflict-induced food insecurity. Among other things it calls on all parties to refrain from attacking objects that are indispensable to the survival of civilian populations. That resolution, adopted unanimously by the Council, is now more relevant than ever.

My third point is about international humanitarian law. We are now witnessing grave violations of

international humanitarian law, such as obstructions of aid and attacks on civilian infrastructure, on a daily basis. We are therefore faced with another crisis, one of disrespect for the important gains in international law that we have fought so hard to achieve since the end of the First World War. From the Geneva Conventions and their first Additional Protocol to the Charter of the United Nations, all of those norms are being disregarded and trampled on. We cannot afford to continue going down this road and see the principles of humanitarian law rapidly become meaningless for the people they are supposed to protect and worthless for all of us who signed on to them. That is why the aggressor should be named and held accountable. Let us be clear. The perpetrators of these crimes should understand that they are being watched and that evidence is being compiled with a view to prosecuting them for the crimes they are committing.

The Benelux countries stand ready to support the victims of the war in Ukraine, and we therefore call on all Member States to support the cross-regional draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, entitled “Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine”, that has just been presented. We also urge all donors to immediately pledge unmarked, flexible and additional funds, because we cannot turn away from the other crises that require our assistance — crises that are already at risk of being exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. There is a solution to ending this humanitarian crisis. There is only one party that chose to start this war, and that same party can also decide to stop it now.

Mr. Paulauskas (Lithuania): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the eight Nordic and Baltic countries — Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Lithuania. All of our countries align themselves with the statement just made on behalf of the European Union.

On 2 March, 141 countries voted in favour of resolution ES-11/1 (see A/ES-11/PV.5), entitled “Aggression against Ukraine.” We deplored in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in violation of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, and demanded that the Russian Federation immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and that it refrain from any further unlawful use or threat of use of force against any Member State. We also demanded that the Russian Federation immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces

from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Instead, Russia has continued its war against Ukraine, causing extensive human suffering and many civilian casualties, including children. The devastating humanitarian consequences and rapidly deteriorating situation are obvious.

At a time when there are millions of people around the world on the brink of famine, we are deeply worried about the impact of the invasion and the risk of increased food insecurity. Russia is committing an unprovoked act of aggression and together with its accomplice, Belarus, it is responsible for the tremendous suffering being inflicted on the Ukrainian people. Its unprovoked aggression against Ukraine is a gross violation of international law and the principles of the Charter and undermines European and global peace and security. All the parties to an armed conflict must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law, and ensure the protection of civilians on that basis. Russia’s disregard for international humanitarian law and its attacks on civilian populations and infrastructure are appalling. Civilians must not be targeted. The Russian forces’ attacks on health-care facilities and schools are serious violations of international humanitarian law and must cease immediately.

Since the General Assembly’s adoption of resolution ES-11/1, the list of alleged war crimes and reported atrocities has mounted. Russia has bombed civilian infrastructure and objects, including hospitals, medical facilities, schools, residential buildings and churches. It continues to shell peaceful, densely populated cities. Several of them, such as Volnovakha and Mariupol, have been almost completely destroyed. According to reliable sources, Russia is using not only cluster munitions but also thermobaric and phosphorus bombs in populated areas. Those are not stand-alone cases but an illustration of the systematic manner in which Russia is waging its war on Ukraine. Its inhumane and immoral actions embody Russia’s disregard for international law, including international humanitarian law, and the principles on which the United Nations is based.

More than 10 million people — nearly a quarter of the population of Ukraine — have been forced to flee their homes. As many as 3.6 million, mostly women and children, have left Ukraine. We commend those of its neighbours that have kept their borders open to people seeking protection outside Ukraine, without discrimination. The current obstructions

to humanitarian access, and the rapidly changing front lines, are hindering the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian assistance. Russia also has an obligation to allow rapid, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian actors to reach all in need of life-saving assistance, including food, water, health care, protection and shelter, wherever they are. Safe and voluntary passage for civilians and humanitarian actors must be guaranteed and respected, including by opening humanitarian corridors.

Last week, the International Court of Justice explicitly ordered Russia to stop its so-called military operation. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has also opened an investigation. There will be no impunity for violations of international law, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. All the perpetrators must be brought to justice. That is necessary not only for affording justice to the victims but also for preventing and deterring future violations. Ensuring accountability is an integral part of our obligation to respect and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law.

We encourage all Member States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine. In doing so, we are sending a clear message to Russia. We demand respect for international law, including international humanitarian law. We demand that every effort be taken to protect civilians at all times, wherever they may be. We demand safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance, and we demand that the safety and security of humanitarian personnel be assured. We demand safe passage for those who decide to leave voluntarily and protection for those who decide to stay. Agreements on safe humanitarian passage must be fully respected. But first and foremost, we demand that Russia end this war now. Russia, with Belarus as an accomplice, bears sole responsibility for the war and the humanitarian crisis.

I want to conclude by expressing our admiration for and deep solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who are fighting not only for their country but for universal, democratic values. Their courage is truly an inspiration to us all. We stand with them.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): A few days ago we learned that our Western partners had requested a resumption of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly, on

the situation in Ukraine. It is no secret that they did so in order to put their own allegedly humanitarian draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.2) to a vote. They claim that the reason for that is that the Security Council could not adopt a humanitarian resolution. I have to say in all responsibility that this is trickery on the part of our Western colleagues.

The Security Council has every opportunity to adopt a much-needed resolution for humanitarian workers. Draft resolution S/2022/231 will be put to a vote in the Council, and it contains all the key elements that are needed for such a text. It calls for establishing a ceasefire and humanitarian pauses for the purposes of evacuating civilians safely and without discrimination on any grounds, for refraining from attacks on critical infrastructure objects and placing heavy military equipment in residential and densely populated areas, and for ensuring the protection of humanitarian medical personnel, appropriate protection for the sick and injured, humane treatment of detainees and the protection of civilians, particularly women and children. Moreover, it is no secret that we took all or nearly all of those elements from the humanitarian draft text that France and Mexico proposed to the Council previously.

In principle, that draft text also worked for us, and we were ready to develop it, until our Western colleagues insisted on including openly anti-Russian elements, without which it was no use to them. However, they do not seem bothered by the fact that there are no political considerations in the Council's humanitarian resolutions, which have no place for such things. And now the Franco-Mexican draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.2), newly loaded up with anti-Russian language, has appeared in the General Assembly.

That is how we have ended up here today at what is simply another political, anti-Russian show, this time scripted in an allegedly humanitarian context. The statements that we have heard so far today leave no doubt as to that. If our Western colleagues on the Security Council are truly concerned about the humanitarian situation on the ground, they will have the opportunity to prove it later today by voting in favour of the humanitarian draft resolution submitted by Russia to the Council. That way the Council would fulfil its purpose.

The sponsors of the Franco-Mexican draft resolution have a different aim. They want to supplement resolution ES-11/1, adopted by the General Assembly

on 2 March, with another anti-Russian document. Let me be clear. That scenario will make it harder to reach a settlement of the situation in Ukraine, as it will most likely embolden the Ukrainian negotiators and encourage them to maintain their current unrealistic position, which corresponds neither to the situation on the ground nor to the need to eliminate the root causes that compelled Russia to launch its special military operation in Ukraine a month ago.

Let me remind the Assembly that we started our operation in order to end the Kyiv regime's eight-year war against the civilian population of Donbas, which has already claimed the lives of more than 10,000 people, including women and children — a war that our Western colleagues tried to ignore or blamed on Russia, or even the people of Donbas themselves. We arrived at that extremely difficult step after exhausting every peaceful and diplomatic means for resolving the conflict in Donbas, and only after Kyiv unambiguously and repeatedly confirmed that it was not going to implement the Minsk agreements endorsed by Security Council resolutions; after Kyiv's Western sponsors, who were behind the 2014 Maidan coup, confirmed that they were not going to rein in the Ukrainian authorities; after President Zelenskyy not only confirmed Ukraine's desire to join NATO, which is a direct threat to Russia's vital interests, but also threatened to abandon Ukraine's nuclear-free status; and after Ukraine significantly ramped up its shelling of residential areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics, which is still going on now, sending streams of refugees into Russia.

If Ukraine is no longer to pose a threat to us, it has to be de-Nazified and demilitarized, and those have become the main goals of our military operation. We also stated from the outset that we would not attack civilian targets. When they understood that and realized that sooner or later they would have to answer for the crimes they had committed over the past eight years, the Ukrainian nationalists and radicals began using civilians as human shields, deploying heavy weapons in residential areas and preventing people from leaving cities through humanitarian corridors. That is what has provoked the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. And in order to alleviate the situation, we expressed our readiness to support a humanitarian resolution of the Security Council. Then, when the French and Mexican authors moved their draft resolution to the Assembly, we put forward one of our own in the Council.

I have gone into such detail about this to show everyone the real substance of the draft that Ukraine's Western sponsors are putting to a vote in the Assembly. It is also flawed because it paints a false, one-dimensional picture of what is happening, ignores the causes of the crisis in Ukraine and is silent on the Western countries' role in fomenting it, which they are doing because they view the country and its people merely as pawns in a geopolitical game against Russia. And I think that we will still be coming back to that issue after the special military operation is over.

In view of all of this, I would like to call on all sensible countries — those that are not paralysed by bloc discipline — to refrain from supporting the draft resolution submitted by the Western countries. Against the backdrop of the anti-Russian efforts of our Western colleagues, we note the initiative of our partners from South Africa, who have submitted an alternative draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.3) that very closely resembles the humanitarian draft resolution that we submitted to the Security Council and whose humanitarian focus we understand. Support for South Africa's draft resolution does more than just send a signal to Ukraine's civilians that the United Nations is aware of their difficult situation and is trying to help them. It would be an opportunity to express an attitude towards the unprecedented economic and political pressure that most Member States have been recently subjected to by the Western countries. I would hope that a majority of our colleagues will make the right choice and, most importantly, the independent choice.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): The situation in Ukraine will leave its mark on our generation and those to come. It is a war without victors, a war that should never have been started and that should cease immediately. Let us be clear. The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine is not the result of a natural disaster — it is man-made. It is the result of the Russian Federation's blatant and unacceptable violation of international humanitarian law. What we are seeing in the besieged city of Mariupol is heartbreaking. The victims of that violence are innocent people, first and foremost women and children. And there are three humanitarian crises unfolding as we speak.

The first crisis, of course, concerns the fate of the 40 million Ukrainians suffering inside their own country. They need our help. For our part, we will not give up on our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. As we speak, we are working in close coordination with the Office

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Committee of the Red Cross on the issue of civilian evacuations in order to address the rapidly deteriorating situation in Mariupol. We also continue to support and facilitate the United Nations aid operations launched from Turkey. Moreover, a Turkish team is stationed at the Siret gate on the Ukraine-Romania border to assess the humanitarian needs in Ukraine and coordinate the ongoing aid operations.

The second crisis concerns the 10 million Ukrainians who have managed against all odds to escape the horrors of war in order to seek refuge. As host country to the largest refugee population in the world, we know what it means to flee the horrors of war. We can never make up for the pain that those refugees have endured. But as the international community, we must do everything we can to make their future better than their past. Representatives of Turkey's Government, non-governmental organizations and the Turkish Red Crescent are currently stationed along the border to assist the refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Finally, there is an even larger humanitarian crisis unravelling around the world. This year 291 million people are already in need of humanitarian assistance and protection across 69 countries. Food and energy prices are increasing all over the world. There could be a serious food crisis soon. Developing nations around the world may end up facing even more serious consequences as a result of this war.

Respect for territorial integrity and upholding the basic principles of international law must be at the core of all our efforts. Ukraine is a sovereign, independent and proud member of the international community, and it will remain so. Turkey is mobilizing all of its resources to implement an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. To that end, we have made a concerted effort to facilitate diplomacy. We held a trilateral ministerial meeting on 10 March in Antalya, after which Turkey's Foreign Minister visited Russia and Ukraine. However, the action that is needed exceeds the capacity of one country alone. Resolution ES-11/1, adopted by the General Assembly on 2 March (see A/ES-11/PV.5), mandates that the international community address Russia's aggression and its consequences. The United Nations cannot absolve itself of its peacebuilding duties and focus solely on humanitarian intervention.

One of the draft resolutions before the General Assembly today echoes the Preamble to the Charter of the

United Nations, reaffirming that we, the international community, have a duty to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. The peoples of the world have entrusted us with that responsibility, and we cannot fail them. We therefore ask for everyone's support in adopting draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, entitled "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine", in the spirit of the founders of the United Nations, in our common quest for peace and respect for human rights and in our shared duty to humankind. We must act now because this is, in the truest sense of the words, a matter of life and death.

Mr. Ishikane (Japan): Several hours ago, President Zelenskyy vividly described the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine in his online address to the Diet of Japan. Our hearts go out to all the victims and survivors, including children, women, journalists and medical and humanitarian personnel. They must be protected. Japan is closely following the ongoing investigation by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in that regard.

Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2 is critically important. First, it calls on Member States to take action to alleviate the severe humanitarian consequences of the war in and around Ukraine. Secondly, it addresses the causes of those consequences. It also reiterates the demand for the full implementation of resolution ES-11/1 of 2 March, which deplored Russia's aggression and demanded that it immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from Ukraine. The humanitarian crisis will persist unless we address both its cause and consequences.

The Security Council's efforts to stop Russia's unprovoked aggression since it began have been vetoed. Resolution ES-11/1, adopted during the first convening of this emergency special session of the General Assembly (see A/ES-11/PV.5), demanded that Russia cease its use of force. The International Court of Justice has ordered Russia to suspend its military operations immediately, as the resolution demanded. The Secretary-General has also called for it to withdraw its troops to Russia.

We have been witnessing a permanent member of the Security Council violating its obligations to maintain international peace and security and repeatedly ignoring the calls of the main organs of the United Nations. We are at a critical juncture in our duty to uphold the rule of law and the Charter of the

United Nations, and we must act by supporting draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, not the one recommended by the aggressor (A/ES-11/L.3).

Mr. Prasad (Fiji): The member States of the Pacific Islands Forum represented at the United Nations in New York, namely, Australia, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, Fiji, are deeply concerned about the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine.

In a spirit of constructive engagement, we call on the Russian Federation to take every available measure to de-escalate the situation and return to a path of diplomacy in good faith. We welcome the dialogue between the Ukrainian and Russian Governments and call for an immediate ceasefire, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to affected areas and the urgent withdrawal of military forces in accordance with Ukraine's internationally recognized borders.

The actions of the Russian Federation are violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are collectively shocked by the scale of the humanitarian crisis, which has already displaced more than 10 million people. We call on all parties to fully respect international law, international humanitarian law and international refugee law, and to uphold human rights. In particular, we call for the protection of civilians, civilian infrastructure, medical facilities and personnel and nuclear sites.

We applaud the hospitality of Ukraine's neighbours, who have welcomed more than 3 million refugees. We urge for civilians fleeing conflict to be treated with dignity and without discrimination. We call attention to the particular and disproportionate risks faced by women, girls, people with disabilities and those requiring essential medical and social services during the conflict and displacement. We are equally concerned about the spillover effects of this conflict, especially heightened food insecurity and higher fuel prices, which are already affecting lives, livelihoods and security across the world, including in the Pacific and other regions.

Our blue Pacific relies on the rules-based international order that has promoted peace among our global family for more than half a century. The challenges we are facing collectively today are numerous

and will not be overcome without peaceful dialogue. Combating climate change and the coronavirus disease pandemic must remain at the forefront of our global efforts, and our actions must be guided by established rules and norms. We reaffirm the importance of the rules-based international order and recall the Preamble to the Charter, which calls on us to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to reaffirm our faith in fundamental human rights, the dignity and worth of the human person and the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Georgia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

We have gathered today for yet another meeting of the emergency session on Ukraine, this time to address the devastating humanitarian consequences that are unfolding in Ukraine as a result of Russia's aggression. Following a month of unprovoked and unjustified war on Ukraine, hundreds of innocent civilians have been killed, including more than 100 children. Massive indiscriminate and targeted shelling of Ukrainian cities and towns has reduced schools, kindergartens, medical facilities and residential buildings, among others, to rubble. More than 3.5 million Ukrainians have been forced to flee in order to seek shelter in neighbouring countries and 6.5 million have become internally displaced. Those numbers already signal the looming and unprecedented humanitarian disaster in Europe and beyond.

Georgia strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and premeditated aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of international law, the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act. We call on Russia to comply with the provisional measures of the International Court of Justice of 16 March that bind Russia to "immediately suspend the military operations that it commenced on 24 February 2022 in the territory of Ukraine".

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide-impact area, including air strikes, shelling from heavy artillery, multiple-launch rocket systems and missiles. Ukraine has also reported the use of phosphorus munitions, which are banned. We are appalled by the Russian forces' attacks on journalists

and medical staff and the reports of rape, abductions and executions, as well as lootings and robberies, with acts of violence against local residents and the seizure of civilian housing. All of those acts are grave violations of international humanitarian law and amount to war crimes. Such attacks must stop immediately. Humanitarian corridors and the delivery of aid must be guaranteed for all civilians, both those who decide to stay and those who choose to leave.

This aggression has served as a major wake-up call for the international community. The fact is that Russia's actions and scenarios of aggression against its neighbours are part of a pattern. In 2008, Russia launched a full-scale military aggression against Georgia, in blatant violation of all international rules and norms. That pattern of behaviour, which we are now seeing in Ukraine, brazenly undermines the entire international rules-based order, poses a grave threat to regional and global peace and security and is inconsistent with how responsible States should act in the twenty-first century.

Russia is preparing to hold a fake referendum on the creation of a so-called people's republic in Kherson, in a bitter echo of the sham referendum that it organized eight years ago on the Crimean peninsula, which at the time served as a pretext for Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. In a similar vein, on 12 March, another so-called parliamentary election took place in Abkhazia, one of the Russian-occupied regions of Georgia. Next month, on 10 April, similar illegal elections are scheduled in another occupied region of Georgia, Tskhinvali. All of those are in blatant violation of the principles of international law. Such so-called referendums and elections are null and void and represent yet more futile attempts to legitimize Russia's illegal acts of occupation. The pattern of behaviour, however, is clear and evident here.

We urge Russia to cease its aggression immediately, completely and without preconditions, withdraw all its forces and armaments from the entire territory of Ukraine within its international recognized borders and allow immediate, safe and unfettered access to all international humanitarian and human rights actors and mechanisms. We also urge Russia to do the same with regard to the occupied regions of Georgia and fulfil its obligations under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008.

Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, which is before us today, is a humanitarian plea on behalf of the millions of Ukrainians who are bearing the brunt of the devastation caused by this needless war. At its core is the resolve of the international community to uphold the very principles of the Charter and international law, with the primary objective of alleviating the suffering of innocent civilians. It is in that spirit that Georgia, as one of the draft resolution's initiators and sponsors, calls on everyone to vote in favour of it, and in favour of the principles of the Charter.

Ms. Stoeva (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

This is the second time in less than a month that we find ourselves compelled to gather to address as a matter of urgency the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine, only this time the picture is even bleaker. Since the early morning of 24 February, when the Russian Federation initiated its senseless, unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, in complete violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the lives of millions of Ukrainians have effectively been destroyed.

In less than a month, more than 3.5 million people, mostly women and children, have been forced to flee their homes in Ukraine and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. An additional 6.5 million have been internally displaced, and according to the International Organization for Migration, this was not the first experience of displacement for some 13 per cent of them. More than 100,000 Ukrainians have passed through Bulgaria since 24 February, and more than 50,000 are currently seeking refuge. The tragedy is that those figures pale in comparison to the overall picture. To put things in perspective, for some countries in this Hall 50,000 people represents their entire population — or more than their entire population — and yet those numbers still seem negligible.

Yesterday, Bulgaria, Luxembourg and Jamaica, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends on Children and Sustainable Development Goals, together with 90 other countries, issued a statement in support of the children affected by the war in Ukraine. This unspeakable war has caused the deaths of at least 75 children and injured at least 99. The war's immediate and long-term effects

on the psychosocial health, welfare and development of children are enormous and difficult to reverse. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported 2,510 civilian casualties, with 953 people killed and 1,557 injured. That statistic is already out of date, as the actual numbers are considerably higher and continue to increase as we speak. Those casualties have been caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide-impact area, including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, as well as missiles and air strikes.

The images of the destruction are haunting. Less than a month ago, vibrant cities that buzzed with life are now flattened. The Russian forces are destroying critical civilian infrastructure deliberately and indiscriminately and causing even greater suffering by shelling hospitals. And all of that is being done in blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Even wars have rules, and the Russian Federation has been systematically violating them all. The humanitarian situation is described as dire and continuing to deteriorate, but those words do not do it justice. The reality is even worse. We cannot be indifferent to this and we should all show unity by standing up for the principles of the Charter and for international law and international humanitarian law.

Bulgaria condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and demands that it immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine unconditionally and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. The use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the twenty-first century. Tensions and conflict should be resolved exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy. This senseless war must stop now.

International humanitarian law must be fully respected. Civilians, including humanitarian personnel and journalists, must be fully protected. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access for humanitarian personnel must be fully ensured and safe passage for civilians allowed. I urge everyone to support draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine. We owe it to the courageous people of Ukraine and most of all, we owe it to ourselves.

Mr. Massari (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in our national capacity.

A month has passed since the Russian Federation, with the complicity of Belarus, initiated its unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, its sovereignty and the integrity of its borders, triggering a humanitarian catastrophe on a level not seen in Europe since the Second World War. Over the past four weeks, we have seen a growing number of civilian casualties, including women and children. Millions of people are fleeing their homes, have been internally displaced or are seeking refuge with Ukraine's neighbours, and those countries are showing incredible and commendable solidarity. The war has extended to densely populated cities, where the use of explosive weapons is causing unbearable human suffering. We have also been witnessing the destruction of essential infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, bridges, highways and water systems, which will worsen conditions for the civilian population for years to come.

Notwithstanding this dramatic situation, and in total disregard of the Secretary-General's repeated appeals for it to end, as well as the General Assembly's adoption on 2 March of resolution ES-11/1 (see A/ES-11/PV.5), Russia's aggression continues, further challenging the basic principles of international humanitarian law. At the same time, the Security Council continues to be unable to address the situation in Ukraine, including its huge humanitarian consequences, owing to the behaviour of one of its permanent members, which also happens to be the initiator of the war and the sole bearer of responsibility for it. That is why a cross-regional group of Member States, including Italy, requested a resumption of this emergency special session. If the Council cannot act on such a fundamental question, the Assembly has the right and the obligation to take the initiative.

In order to protect the civilian population in Ukraine, it is essential that Russia immediately cease its aggression, guarantee the safe passage of civilians and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance and urgently and genuinely engage in negotiations for a peaceful resolution. That is the main thrust of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, which was submitted to this meeting of the emergency special session by a cross-regional group of Member States and already enjoys the support of a large number of sponsors. We trust that in

face of this intolerable humanitarian tragedy occurring in the heart of Europe, the General Assembly will respond as it did on 2 March (see A/ES-11/PV.5), with a great display of cohesion and a sense of responsibility and determination.

It also should be kept in mind that this war of aggression is seriously affecting food security in various parts of the world. Now is the time to act, without hesitation, in reaffirmation of the imperative and *erga omnes* character of international humanitarian law, while at the same time maintaining a clear and unequivocal distinction between the aggressor and the victim. Let me conclude by reaffirming our full solidarity with the millions of people suffering in this war of aggression. Together with its European partners and allies, Italy will continue to do its part in providing humanitarian assistance and standing with Ukraine and its people.

Mr. De Souza Monteiro (Brazil): As the conflict in Ukraine drags on, the dire humanitarian situation in the region is deteriorating even further. Brazil is deeply concerned about the growing reports of civilian casualties, including children, and the increasing flows of refugees and internally displaced people. In joining the efforts to alleviate the refugee crisis in Europe, Brazil quickly implemented a humanitarian visa policy for people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. In the past few weeks our embassies in the region have been granting special visas for Ukrainians and stateless persons, many of whom have already arrived in Brazil.

Moreover, in response to the dire need for humanitarian assistance, last week the Brazilian Government sent Ukraine a donation totalling approximately 20,000 items, including water purifiers, about nine tons of food and half a ton of medical supplies. With the assistance of the Brazilian Embassy in Warsaw, the supplies were unloaded there and delivered to their destination in coordination with the Ukraine authorities. The international community must come to the assistance of the people most in need, not only those directly affected by the hostilities on Ukrainian territory but also refugees in neighbouring countries.

There is no question as to the immense human suffering and devastation that armed conflicts cause, and ending the hostilities is still the best way to minimize their humanitarian consequences. The conflict in Ukraine may also have a devastating impact on food security by disrupting food systems

and increasing the risk of hunger all over the world, particularly in developing countries. Brazil once again reiterates its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Ukraine. Brazil is also concerned about the indiscriminate imposition of broad economic sanctions, which will have negative effects for every country, adding to the hardships of economies that are already strained as they recover from the pandemic. The most vulnerable will end up suffering the consequences of measures that will prove mostly ineffective.

While the conflict continues, all parties must fully abide by international humanitarian law and uphold the principles of distinction, proportionality, precaution and humanity. Brazil encourages Ukraine and Russia to increase their dialogue aimed at agreeing on clear and concrete parameters for implementing their obligations under international humanitarian law in order to improve the safety of civilians and humanitarian personnel. Civilians who want to flee the hostilities must be able to do so safely, and those who decide to stay should not be targeted by attacks. In the same vein, the parties must grant the safe passage of relief consignments for those in need.

Brazil is deeply concerned about the conflict's impact on the most vulnerable and especially about the reports of the difficulties that have been encountered in evacuating people with disabilities. One of the aims of international humanitarian law is to safeguard human dignity, even in the worst of conflicts. That is the bare minimum, and it should unite us rather than divide us. The reasoning behind that is clear. When a conflict erupts, whatever its causes, civilians must be spared, the wounded must receive medical care, humanitarian assistance must reach those in need and detainees must be treated humanely in all circumstances. The rules of war are not optional.

When the lines between combatants and civilians become blurred, there is a risk of increased civilian casualties, especially in armed conflicts fought in urban areas and where explosive weapons are used. Civilians are being called to join the fighting, possibly with no proper training. The parties should strive to ensure the protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, no matter where the hostilities are occurring. The reports of attacks on health-care facilities in Ukraine, resulting in dozens of deaths and injuries, are particularly worrisome. Health workers and medical facilities should have special protection and should not be military targets.

The General Assembly has once again been convened to address a pressing situation involving a threat to international peace and security with dire humanitarian consequences. The United Nations must act responsibly and in a meaningful way. We should strive to work together to develop measures that will have a meaningful impact on the ground and that can lead to a lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Nasir (Indonesia): It is disheartening that today, one month after the General Assembly last met in this emergency special session (see A/ES-11/PV.6), we are meeting here again to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine. As we speak, millions of innocent civilians are caught in the crossfire, trapped between the bleak options of leaving their homes or trying to survive in increasingly dangerous and dire conditions. Many civilians have already paid the ultimate price. In many parts of the country, basic public services are no longer available. Key infrastructure is being destroyed at an alarming rate. It will take years and a tremendous amount of resources to rebuild. The world is looking to the United Nations to take action to help alleviate the suffering of innocents and to save lives. We have a responsibility to send a clear and united message to all the parties.

First, they must spare no effort to stop the war. They must take immediate steps to de-escalate, end the hostilities and establish a sustainable ceasefire.

Secondly, international humanitarian law must be respected, including its provisions regarding the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure. Access to humanitarian assistance must be granted for all people in need, in all areas, without exceptions. Safe passage must be guaranteed, and evacuations must be facilitated for civilians who wish to leave Ukraine.

Thirdly, the parties must intensify dialogue and negotiations. Lasting peace will come only at the negotiating table. We have to collectively push for dialogue and a peaceful solution. Anything short of that objective will only worsen the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Many have pointed out that the situation in Ukraine is on a scale not seen in Europe in decades. Its humanitarian ramifications have been devastating. While war is divisive by its nature, the question for us today is whether we can unite within this body to address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, or if we will let ourselves be divided, allow our differences get

the better of us and stand idle while many are suffering. For Indonesia, the answer is crystal clear. We want the General Assembly to maintain its unity and take united action to help address the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. After all, the United Nations is the global body with a comparative advantage for addressing humanitarian crises. To do anything less would only further diminish global trust in the United Nations and respect for it. It is time for us to place humanitarian considerations above political differences and work for the ultimate goal of ending the war and the suffering and achieving lasting peace in Ukraine.

Mr. Prongthura (Thailand): Thailand is gravely concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and deeply saddened by the loss of innocent life and the destruction of property and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine, as well as the plight of the civilians affected, including those who have fled to neighbouring countries. We call for respect for civilian lives and infrastructure and for their protection, and for facilitating access to humanitarian assistance for those affected within and around Ukraine, without politicization or discrimination on any basis. In that regard, Thailand calls on all the parties to fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and underscores the need for all actors providing humanitarian assistance to promote and fully respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Thailand reaffirms its commitment to supporting the international community in alleviating the consequences of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, which has already proved challenging thanks to the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic. For its part, Thailand has provided humanitarian assistance, including food, medical and other essential supplies, to civilians through the Red Cross Society of Ukraine. Additionally, the Red Cross Society of Thailand has provided a financial contribution to the Red Cross Society of Ukraine in support of its ongoing humanitarian operations and is supporting its relief activities through a public fundraising initiative.

An escalation would only worsen the impact of the situation, including its humanitarian consequences, both in Ukraine and around the world. Thailand therefore welcomes and encourages the continued efforts in the bilateral talks between the parties concerned and hopes for productive outcomes from them, especially where

ameliorating the pressing humanitarian situation is concerned, and for a peaceful settlement of the situation.

Mr. Blanco Conde (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We, the States Members of the United Nations, are here today to address the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine. Millions of men, women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities are caught in this conflict, and they are the ones paying the highest price in this deplorable situation through their suffering, their lives, their futures and their psychological stability. They are paying because we have not been able to prevent them from suffering and having their lives and dignity upended.

The Dominican Republic is deeply disturbed by the fact that there are two draft resolutions (A/ES-11/L.2 and A/ES-11/L.3) before us today. Despite our frustration, today we will take a principled decision bearing in the mind the millions of civilians whose protection must be ensured by the parties to the conflict. In that regard, I would like to make the following points.

First, the parties need to respect all the rules of international humanitarian law regarding the conduct of hostilities, without further delay and without conditions, and seek a negotiated settlement to restore peace to Ukraine. Even if a cessation of hostilities is not feasible, all necessary measures should be taken to prevent human suffering, including by facilitating humanitarian access for people, regardless of where they are, and preventing attacks on civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, electrical infrastructure and water works.

Anyone caught in armed conflict is vulnerable and will suffer. Some, however, are more vulnerable than others. Women, children, the elderly and internally displaced people are at particular risk. But people with disabilities also deserve and require our immediate attention. We need all actors on the ground to work together to protect them, facilitate their movement and evacuation to safe areas and ensure that all their medical and care needs are met.

In conclusion, we note with heavy hearts that if this conflict continues, its humanitarian consequences will extend far beyond Ukraine's borders. The Russian Federation and Ukraine together produce approximately 25 per cent of the world's wheat. Given that many countries depend on that supply, the conflict could have a devastating effect on the food security of

their populations. We need to make sure that does not happen. We have to stop the suffering from spreading. We need to prevent a further escalation of the situation and stop the conflict from sending millions of people who already suffer various levels of food insecurity into the abyss of famine.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Today is 23 March. It is already a month since the Russian aggression in Ukraine began on 24 February, and the devastating situation needs no description. The statistics are staggering. Some 12 million people are stranded in the affected areas, directly exposed to insecurity, many of them completely cut off from basic supplies, including food, water and medicine. That represents more than 25 per cent of the entire population of Ukraine. Some 10 million people have been displaced from their homes. More than 3.5 million, or 100,000 per day, have fled the country, 90 per cent of them women and children. There have been 2,500 civilian casualties, and we know that in conflict situations, the real numbers are much higher. Massive and indiscriminate bombing campaigns have reduced entire cities to ruins. Residential areas, homes, schools, hospitals, theatres, commercial areas — everything is a target. Mariupol, the new Aleppo, has become the true face of Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council that has awarded itself a licence to kill civilians and destroy cities.

We know that Moscow's initial blitzkrieg plans have been derailed by the Ukrainian resistance. Ukrainians, with their resolve and conviction, know what they are fighting for. Russian soldiers, in their disbelief, do not know what they are dying for. Let us not forget that this is not a war of Russians against Ukrainians. This is the war of one man, in his seclusion, who by his reckless actions has managed to generate in a few weeks the greatest possible loneliness and isolation from the world for his own country. History has more than once seen strong men fail in their efforts to rewrite history. Their crimes end up being only their epitaph.

This war, fueled by hubris, narcissism and paranoia, is systematically, methodically and cold-bloodedly devastating Ukraine. The massive refugee crisis is a serious and profound challenge to Europe. But this cynical blackmail is doomed to fail, just as the blackmail of West Berlin failed in 1948. However, the crisis is affecting the entire world, especially developing countries. The very sharp rise in the price of basic commodities because of the war is making the

poor poorer and the vulnerable more vulnerable. No one can call this an unintended consequence, because it was known. That is what Russia is inflicting on Ukraine and the world.

Albania has sponsored draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, on the aggression against Ukraine. We hope it can be implemented to help protect civilians, but if it is adopted — and I hope that we will adopt it — we doubt that Russia will respect it. It is hard to believe that a country that has blatantly broken every rule in the book of international law would support a text that it has undermined in the Council and is trying to undermine here. That is why we once again need to show what we stand for and support a text that clearly spells out why this situation exists and what needs to be done and by whom. It is a text that has only one definition for aggression, and that is “aggression”.

We know that no future can ever be successfully built by living in the past. We must therefore make no mistake. If Russia succeeds in this illegal war, we have all been warned. The line will not be drawn at Ukraine.

Ms. Skoczek (Poland): Poland fully supports the text of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, submitted by Ukraine, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to complement it with some remarks from our national perspective.

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is deteriorating at an alarming rate. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 12 million people will be in need of humanitarian assistance, which means that almost 30 per cent of the entire population of the country will require aid. People trapped in Ukrainian cities are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, and the actor solely responsible for this disaster is Russia.

One week ago, Russian forces dropped a bomb on a theatre clearly marked as a civilian object sheltering children, where hundreds of civilians had sought safety in the besieged city of Mariupol. That is a clear manifestation that Russia is deliberately creating a humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine in blatant disregard for the principles of international humanitarian law. Over the past few days, we have witnessed brutal and inhumane tactics by the Russian

army aimed at terrorizing the civilian population through indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, thereby depriving them of even access to potable water and electricity. Poland condemns in the strongest terms attacks on civilians and civilian objects, such as schools, hospitals, orphanages and critical civilian infrastructure. Such acts constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, to which 196 countries, including Russia, are party, as well as a serious violation of laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict. Those acts are war crimes under international law.

We must not remain silent. Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported almost 2,500 civilian casualties in Ukraine, including 925 people killed. The real numbers are likely to be much higher. That must stop. By voting in favour of the draft resolution presented by Ukraine, we voice our support for the immediate cessation of hostilities and for ensuring humanitarian access. That is what the people in Ukraine desperately need. It is what we, as the international community, are obliged to deliver.

The humanitarian consequences of the ongoing war inflicted by Russia on Ukraine are not limited to Ukrainians in their home country. As a neighbour and close friend of Ukraine, we in Poland are seeing at first-hand the tragic humanitarian consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Every day, at the Polish-Ukrainian border, we see a constant influx of people entering Poland severely traumatized. Since 24 February, more than 2.5 million have been forced to leave Ukraine as a result of Russia's military aggression, of whom 2.2 million have fled to Poland. Most have found shelter and stayed in our country. In a spirit of solidarity, Poland will continue to admit and provide shelter, food, health care and safety to every person in need, regardless of their nationality, race or religious creed. We have already registered 170 nationalities at our border. The consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine are being felt in almost every country around the globe. It affects Ukraine. It affects Europe. It affects us all.

The draft resolution submitted by Ukraine focuses on urgent humanitarian needs and expresses support for the efforts of the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to provide help to the Ukrainian people. It demands a cessation of hostilities and urges humanitarian access. It also reflects on the broader

consequences of the war, including for food security around the world, particularly in least-developed countries. Moreover, it includes strong language on the importance of protecting all civilians fleeing the war, including foreign nationals, especially students, without discrimination.

We call on every Member State to stand firmly behind the draft resolution on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine and to vote in favour of it. The text was drafted in collaboration with Ukraine and with its agreement, and therefore respects the particular needs of the country most concerned. As a member of the cross-regional group of the countries that worked on the draft resolution, Poland would like to emphasize that we have ensured an inclusive and transparent process. We firmly believe that by supporting the draft resolution we are demonstrating our support for the people of Ukraine, who are facing the tragic humanitarian consequences of a war brought upon them by Russia.

Seventy-six years ago, the Assembly decided that we were determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. At the moment, we are failing. Every day more people are being killed, including children. Hundreds of thousands remain trapped in besieged cities, very often without access to water or medicines, with food supplies close to running out. It is our obligation to act now by voting for the draft resolution presented by Ukraine.

Mr. Ruidíaz Pérez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile once again reiterates its total condemnation of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. Since the historic special session of the General Assembly began, on 28 February (see A/ES-11/PV.1), the situation on the ground has dramatically worsened, in part due to the use of new missiles with a staggering capacity for destruction. Likewise, the bombardment of hospitals, schools and residential neighbourhoods where civilians were still being held has increased.

Chile supports and is a sponsor of the draft resolution entitled "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine" (A/ES-11/L.2), which focuses on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences we have witnessed there, because that is what the civilian victims of the bloody ground and air attacks by the Russian Federation are crying out for. International law, international humanitarian law and human rights

doctrine point us to the instruments to be used in situations such as this one.

The draft resolution we will vote on indicates the measures that would be appropriate to the current situation, which include a cessation of all attacks on the civilian population and the fullest possible protection for civilians, as well as humanitarian personnel, journalists and people in vulnerable situations, including women and children, and medical personnel, their equipment and means of transport and hospitals. At the same time, the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all who are fleeing conflict and violence — whether on Ukrainian territory or in the countries where they seek refuge — must be guaranteed without discrimination of any kind, regardless of their status. We should condemn any act, manifestation or expression of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia or other form of intolerance against people on the move, including refugees. Likewise, the security of humanitarian corridors must be guaranteed.

As an international community and as human beings, it is our responsibility today to ensure that protection and humanitarian aid are afforded to the civilians affected by a conflict that is the result of an act of aggression. In that regard, we thank all the States that are currently serving as hosts to the more than 4 million people who have had to leave Ukraine due to the conflict.

Before I conclude, my country would like to reiterate its appeal to all the parties to continue the peace talks. We once again call for a peaceful and immediate resolution of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine through political dialogue, negotiations, mediation and other peaceful means in accordance with international law.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): We welcome the reconvening of the emergency special session on the situation in Ukraine.

Three weeks ago, by an overwhelming majority, the Assembly issued a clear call with respect to the aggression against Ukraine (resolution ES-11/1). It asked for an immediate cessation of hostilities, as well as a complete and immediate withdrawal of all troops from Ukraine, with a view to creating the necessary space for genuine diplomacy and a credible and fully inclusive peace process. The reaction of the Russian Federation has shown complete disregard for the multilateralism embodied in the Assembly's

decision and the order of the International Court of Justice of 16 March (“Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” (*Ukraine v. Russian Federation*), General List No. 182). Not only has it failed to heed the Assembly’s unequivocal call, it has also engaged in further military escalation.

In Ukraine we are seeing evidence, in the starkest possible terms, of the axiom that whenever war begins, war crimes follow. The aggression against Ukraine must therefore remain at the front and centre of our discussions as we address its consequences, as well as the individual criminal responsibility it entails for people in leadership positions. Incalculable suffering has been visited on Ukraine since the Assembly last met in the emergency session (see A/ES-11/PV.6). Not only has the civilian population borne the brunt of its impact, but civilians have increasingly been targeted by the Russian armed forces in blatant violation of the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, which are military necessity, distinction and proportionality. A large part of the civilian population has been forcibly displaced as a result. The onslaught in Mariupol is particularly appalling and eerily reminiscent of the notorious assault on Aleppo in its indiscriminate attack on civilian infrastructure and infliction of mass civilian casualties as a method of warfare.

All of that reaches far beyond the discussion we are engaged in today. It is a frontal rejection of the multilateralism that the Assembly embodies and that is so urgently needed to address the other challenges of our time, from fighting climate change to overcoming the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the inequalities exacerbated by it and addressing humanitarian and other emergencies all over the world. The people of Ukraine are the primary victims of the war, but its impact is already being felt around the globe. The attack on a major agricultural producer will be devastating for global food security. The forthcoming growth in military expenditure will make for a more dangerous world. There will be massive fallout for agendas that were already in a fragile state before the aggression against Ukraine, from the abolition of nuclear weapons to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. None of that can be undone in its entirety, but the effects can be mitigated by one measure, an immediate end to the invasion, as the Assembly has requested.

In response to the aggression, Governments and the private sector have come together in an unprecedented way to stand up for the fundamentals of the post-Second World War order. That is a positive takeaway if we can apply it to other challenges in the future. Resolution ES-11/1, which the Assembly adopted on 2 March, has resonated powerfully around the globe. The Assembly has proven its ability to act decisively when the Charter of the United Nations is under threat. The present crisis can be a defining moment for the Assembly and its ability to show the leadership that other challenges will require.

The Organization has extensive experience in the area of humanitarian assistance, including in the most difficult of circumstances. The Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies have set the ground rules for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The relevant rules defined in international humanitarian law are universally accepted. Nevertheless, we are called on today to ask for those rules to be respected. Among other things, that means the granting of safe passage in both directions for those fleeing and those delivering humanitarian aid, the protection of civilians at all times and in all circumstances, a prohibition of attacks on critical civilian infrastructure at all times and an absolute prohibition of illegal weaponry.

We support the effort reflected in the draft resolution before us to uphold core humanitarian objectives in the context of its call to the Russian Federation to cease hostilities against Ukraine. We have therefore sponsored the draft resolution and hope that an overwhelming majority of the Assembly will vote in support of it.

Mr. Malovrh (Slovenia): Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

This is not the time to turn a blind eye to the humanitarian tragedy of millions of Ukrainians. We, the international community, must act now in unity and mobilize all our resources and efforts to stop the military aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its people, which has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The indiscriminate shelling and bombing of civilian targets and infrastructure constitute a grave violation of international humanitarian law. Respect for the protection of civilians, especially the most vulnerable, as well as humanitarian and health

workers, lies at the core of all international humanitarian law. There should be no impunity for any violation of humanitarian or human rights law. Accountability must be ensured. Slovenia supports the investigation and prosecution of the crimes committed, including the crime of aggression at both the international and national levels.

The growing refugee crisis calls for our solidarity and immediate action. Genuine humanitarian corridors allowing for the safe transit of humanitarian aid into the areas under attack and moving the people affected out of harm's way must be established effectively, unconditionally and safely. Ukraine's neighbours and their citizens are doing remarkable work in helping those who are fleeing, and we thank them for that. Slovenia has already accepted refugees and stands ready to assist further. The borders must be open for everyone fleeing the war.

In terms of humanitarian aid, Slovenia will continue to provide assistance to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees, as well as financial assistance to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Caritas Internationalis, the International Committee of the Red Cross and others. This is not just a humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and Europe. We are facing global consequences for millions of people at risk of food insecurity, and we have to scale up our support for United Nations bodies with mandates relevant to food security.

We call for the implementation of resolution A/ES-11/1, adopted by an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly on 2 March, which in the strongest terms deplores Russia's aggression against Ukraine and demands the immediate withdrawal of all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. It is urgent that today we support and vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, which calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation and the protection of the civilian population, including those fleeing the war, without discrimination. The draft resolution accurately reflects the situation on the ground and calls for respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. We stand ready to assist further, and we stand with Ukraine.

Mr. Espinosa Cañizares (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Diego is the name of a 20-year-old Ecuadorian student who arrived in Ecuador yesterday after fleeing the bombings, explosions and tragic events brought about by the military aggression against Ukraine. Diego, who took refuge in a bunker and had to learn to survive on a daily basis in the middle of a conflict alien to him is also living testimony to the fact that the special military operation is none other than an egregious invasion of Ukraine and its people in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Like Diego, approximately 700 Ecuadorians have been successfully evacuated by my Government on three humanitarian flights since the beginning a month ago of the war that has cast a pall over humankind. Diego had a Ukrainian friend who did not have the same luck. He was unable to cross the border, and every one of those 700 Ecuadorians knows a family, mother, father, son or daughter who is still living under the threat of destruction and death.

Although my compatriots who are safe today will never forget the ordeal and torment they went through, they are all aware that nothing compares to the suffering and pain that the military aggression is inflicting on the people of Ukraine. In its acknowledgement of all the foreign students who have been evacuated and those who still remain, as well as all the people of Ukraine, and in particular in order to provide the international community with an additional tool in this regard, Ecuador has joined the main sponsors of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, whose paragraph 6 states that the Assembly

“demands that all parties protect civilians fleeing armed conflict and violence, including foreign nationals, notably students, without discrimination, to allow voluntary, safe and unhindered passage”.

The statement I made exactly one month ago in the General Assembly (see A/76/PV.59), calling on the parties to engage in dialogue, de-escalation and a diplomatic way out, turned to dust a few hours later with the first bombings. How many times did we hear in the Security Council and in statements to the media that there would be no invasion? Subsequently, the denial that military strikes would be carried out in fact limited the possibilities for safe evacuation and thereby exacerbated the impact on the civilian population, an impact that is worsening by the minute.

I am participating at this meeting today because Ecuador believes that all is not lost. We still can and must bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities, as demanded in paragraph 2 of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2 and, above all, as is demanded by common sense and ethics. This morning the Permanent Representative of Japan clearly stated that the serious humanitarian situation in Ukraine will persist if we do not address the underlying causes of what is happening. The draft resolution, which is sponsored by a cross-regional group of countries, including Ecuador, does just that. It addresses the causes and consequences of the terrible humanitarian crisis. Accordingly, Ecuador will vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, which already enjoys the sponsorship of more than 83 delegations, and calls on all delegations to do the same. I also call on delegations to show their unity before the international community and uphold the role and authority of the Assembly, in view of the revitalization efforts that every year call for avoiding the duplication of resolutions presented here.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we speak, the streets of Ukrainian cities are being used as a battlefield. Homes, hospitals, schools, community centres and even nuclear-power facilities have become military targets. Millions of Ukrainians have fled their homes for neighbouring countries, while many more are trapped and desperate for a safe exit. They have no food, water, heat or electricity, but they have hope. We are part of their hope.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is having a devastating effect on Ukrainian civilians, and the longer the aggression continues, the worse the repercussions will be in Ukraine and beyond its borders. That is why, as members of the international community, we must reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to cease its hostilities against Ukraine. Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, which we are about to adopt, provides a welcome focus on the measures for the protection of civilians that are needed in the context of the catastrophic invasion of Ukraine. It highlights how crucial it is to protect those who have been forcibly displaced, along with other non-combatants, including journalists and humanitarian workers.

Costa Rica supports all provisions related to the protection of the civilian population and infrastructure. The protection of civilians is a fundamental obligation of the United Nations. The conduct of hostilities is the determining factor in the suffering of civilians. Cluster

munitions have devastated Ukrainian cities and towns, and their effects will be felt for decades, as unexploded bombs have been scattered everywhere. We must preserve critical infrastructure such as the water, gas and electrical systems that provide civilian homes, schools and medical facilities with vital supplies of water and electricity, including through protection against attacks from new and cyber-enabled technologies.

The humanitarian toll resulting from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas of Ukraine has made clear the need to prevent any use of such weapons, because it is civilians and civilian infrastructure that bear the brunt of their impact. The next process aimed at entrenching States' commitment to preventing the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas will be an opportunity for all States to demonstrate their support for strengthening international law and the protection of civilians.

Nor must we forget the wider humanitarian repercussions of the crisis and the conflict, such as the prospects of famine and food insecurity now confronting a number of countries that cannot afford disruptions in their food supply. Approximately 30 per cent of the world's wheat and barley exports come from Ukraine and Russia. Millions of people in conflict-affected countries such as Yemen, Ethiopia and South Sudan, which are already on the brink of starvation, will face an even more devastating reality if those exports are disrupted. By ending its aggression against Ukraine, the Russian Federation can avert a worldwide catastrophe.

With the adoption of the draft resolution, we will take a step forward, but our work is far from over. We must determine the best way to repair the latest breach in the layer of credibility that continues to shield parts of our multilateral system — a breach with grave implications for the millions of people living with violence, abuse, rights violations and food insecurity in conflict situations, both inside and outside Ukraine.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

It has been more than 30 years since the Croatian city of Vukovar looked like Mariupol does today, but the scars remain. Those scars remind us daily of the importance of preventing any repetition of such tragedies. We should all unite to prevent further

suffering in Ukraine. The first step is to support draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, submitted by Ukraine, and to sponsor and vote in favour of it.

This is not about resolutions. It is not about words. It is not about votes. It is about people — the people of Ukraine, who are under attack. They did not deserve it. They did not provoke it. They were targeted because they wanted to live freely and equally in the same way as their big neighbour. Just for wanting to be free and equal, they are now being cruelly punished. Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated. Ukrainian people are being killed, maimed, displaced and starved by the occupying Russian forces. We are showing only a minimum level of decency and compassion for the victims when we acknowledge their suffering and help the 10 million displaced persons and others in need. It is clear that the humanitarian consequences of the conflict have an impact beyond the borders of Europe, and that is recognized in the part of the draft resolution that addresses the impact of the conflict on food insecurity. In Ukraine, no one is too young or too old to become a victim. Civilians have been attacked, from newborns in a maternity hospital to the elderly in a nursing home. There is no place to hide; there is no safe haven. Schools, hospitals, theatres and shopping malls have all been targeted.

In that context, it is important that the draft resolution we are adopting today is focused on top humanitarian priorities and is action-oriented. It calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, the protection of civilians, including foreign nationals, without discrimination, the protection of civilian infrastructure, humanitarian access and respect for international humanitarian law, international human rights law and refugee law.

It is our responsibility to protect the people of Ukraine. Stopping the attacks on civilians is not only about our moral duty. It is also about our commitments under international law, human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as international criminal law. The deliberate targeting of civilians and indiscriminate attacks on them are not merely morally repugnant. They constitute war crimes and, if committed in a widespread or systematic manner, crimes against humanity.

We should therefore support every effort to establish accountability for crimes committed in Ukraine. That is important for providing justice to the

victims as well as preventing crimes from recurring in Ukraine and elsewhere. We welcome the order of the International Court of Justice to the Russian Federation to immediately suspend its military operation (“Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” (*Ukraine v. Russian Federation*), General List No. 182). Obeying this legally binding order, issued by the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, would end all humanitarian problems right away. Yet so far the Russian Federation has chosen to ignore it. We urge the Russian Federation to comply with the order, suspend its military operation and end the humanitarian tragedy in Ukraine.

Where would ignoring the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as a direct order of the International Court of Justice, lead us? Do we want our children to live in a world where there is no rule of law, where might is right and we are in constant fear of weapons of mass destruction? The time to act is now. We may not otherwise have another opportunity. The world as we know it is falling apart.

Mr. Fifield (Australia): There is one reason and one reason alone why there is a humanitarian disaster in Ukraine, and that is the Russian Federation. This humanitarian disaster is a direct result of the unprovoked, unjustified and illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia, and the greatest and the most immediate improvement to this humanitarian disaster will come not from more money, better coordination or more access for non-governmental organizations, important as all those things are, but from the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukrainian territory. That is why any meaningful resolution on the humanitarian situation must call out Russia by name. Russia has to stop its invasion. Russia has to get out of Ukraine.

The millions of suffering Ukrainians deserve plain speaking and honesty at the very least. Let us support a draft resolution that demonstrates that we stand in absolute solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Russia’s actions have caused immense human suffering. Australia is particularly distressed by the plight of the most vulnerable, including women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly. That is why the Australian Government will deliver \$65 million of life-saving assistance, through trusted partners, to address the needs of those who need it most. We will continue to work in lockstep with our

international partners to support Ukraine and its people as they continue to face abhorrent threats to their lives, families and livelihoods. Australia was proud to be part of the Pacific Islands Forum statement delivered by the representative of Fiji this morning.

We again call on Russia to immediately withdraw its forces and uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law. We are appalled by the reports of Russia's indiscriminate attacks on civilians. Russia must allow the safe passage of civilians from Ukraine and safe access for the provision of humanitarian assistance. We condemn actions by third parties that would enable and facilitate Russia's invasion, including through economic, military and political support. Australia will continue to impose travel bans and targeted financial sanctions to inflict heavy costs on those who bear responsibility or hold levers of power in Russia and Belarus. It is also very important that we acknowledge the generosity of the neighbouring countries that are hosting refugees. We are one with them as they continue their support for the people of Ukraine.

Finally, Australia pays tribute to the remarkable resilience and courage shown by the Ukrainian people. Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2 is the only one in which Ukraine has been involved in the drafting. By sponsoring and voting for it, we give meaning to the principle of "nothing about us without us" in regions beyond our own. In that way, we can all say that we stand with Ukraine. We stand with the Permanent Representative of Ukraine.

Ms. Schwalger (New Zealand): New Zealand thanks the President of the General Assembly for resuming the emergency special session to consider the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, and we associate ourselves with the statement delivered on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum earlier today.

We are saddened by the urgent and sombre circumstances in which we are meeting. We are alarmed to see the thousands of civilian casualties and the millions who have been displaced by Russia's unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine. We are deeply concerned about the disproportionate effects that this conflict is having on women and girls, children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The scale of the crisis demands a strong and effective response from the General Assembly. That is why New Zealand became a sponsor of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, introduced by

Ukraine this morning. We welcome its highlighting of the impact of the conflict on women and children. We also welcome the fact that it clearly identifies Russia's invasion as the cause of a severe spike in humanitarian needs. That is a matter of fact. Russia ignored international law when it invaded Ukraine. Russia is violating international humanitarian law every day the conflict continues. Civilians are not targets. Civilian infrastructure is not a target. Medical facilities and personnel are not legitimate targets. Cluster munitions and chemical weapons are banned. Threats to use nuclear weapons are morally reprehensible. Russia's accomplice, Belarus, shares responsibility for this humanitarian crisis.

We commend those who have stepped up to provide humanitarian support. Ukrainian and international humanitarian organizations are providing life-saving humanitarian assistance. Ukraine's neighbours have generously welcomed millions of civilians who have been forced to flee. The United Nations system has quickly scaled up its response. Aotearoa New Zealand is assisting international humanitarian efforts. We have made an initial contribution of \$6 million to the humanitarian response and expect to provide more. However, we are concerned about the fact that Russia's actions are stretching the global humanitarian system to its limit. Resources and attention are being diverted from other crises. Russia's choice — and, yes, it was a choice — to invade Ukraine is reverberating far beyond the immediate region. The production and distribution of basic foodstuffs are already being disrupted, bringing acute stress to countries already on the brink. Higher food, fuel and fertilizer prices will exacerbate already vulnerable situations. No country, big or small, with or without a veto, should be allowed to act with impunity when it violates the basic tenets of international humanitarian law. President Putin's actions represent a grave breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Russia must be held accountable.

As a long-standing proponent of peace and reconciliation, New Zealand calls on Russia to act consistently with its international obligations, swiftly de-escalate the conflict by ceasing military operations in Ukraine, take all possible steps to protect civilians, provide humanitarian actors with the access and guarantees of safety that they need and engage sincerely in diplomatic negotiations as a pathway to resolving the conflict. Ultimately, the grave humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine will be resolved only through

a full cessation of hostilities. New Zealand encourages Member States to act together and vote in support of the draft resolution on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine to show what we stand for as a community — a community of the United Nations.

Mr. Kulháněk (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

There are almost no words to describe the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine these days. It is simply beyond appalling. Russia's brutal conduct of its war, in blatant disregard for all conceivable international norms and international humanitarian law, has resulted in untold suffering for innocent civilians and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. Russian rockets and bombs regularly hit civilian sites, including residential buildings, hospitals and schools. Russia's indiscriminate shelling of cities, including Kyiv and Kharkiv, has no military logic but that of terrorizing the civilian population. On 5 and 6 March, Russia bombed humanitarian corridors in Mariupol while civilians were trying to use them. On 16 March, Russia bombed and destroyed a theatre in Mariupol that was being used as an air-raid shelter by hundreds of people, most of them women and children. In addition, earlier this month, rocket attacks on Kharkiv's city centre killed at least 10 civilians and ruined its central Freedom Square, including the Kharkiv regional administration building and the Czech honorary consulate.

The suffering of civilians in the besieged city of Mariupol is of historic proportions. Russia's siege of the city has prevented emergency supplies from reaching those in need and damaged its energy and water infrastructure. People trapped there, including the elderly and children, are unable to leave. In many cases, they are freezing and have no access to food or clean water. In the occupied areas of Ukraine, Russian soldiers are using force against unarmed local civilians who wish only to have their voices heard against the Russian occupiers.

I could go on and on giving examples of all the countless atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law committed by the Russian armed forces. But I want to draw the Assembly's attention to the single most important fact here, which is that Russia is a party to the four Geneva Conventions and their

Additional Protocol I and is also bound by customary international law. Russia must respect its international obligations and observe all the existing binding rules, including the obligations to protect civilians and civilian objects and infrastructure. It is incumbent on Russia to ensure the safety of hospitals and medical workers. There is also no excuse for intentionally blocking relief supplies. And it is imperative that Russia respect and protect humanitarian workers, allow and facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations, including the safe passage of humanitarian convoys, and enable safe humanitarian corridors for civilians.

We applaud and pay tribute to the humanitarian personnel on the ground. That is why we cannot stress enough the paramount importance of observing the rules of international humanitarian law in this conflict. Let me also point out that any violation of international law entails responsibility under international criminal law. It is most appropriate that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has launched its investigation into the situation in Ukraine. Impunity for crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction, including war crimes, is unacceptable.

Thanks to Russia's military aggression, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine is becoming increasingly critical. The humanitarian needs of civilians are urgent and our ability to deliver humanitarian assistance has been severely complicated and limited. Millions of people are fleeing Ukraine, putting neighbouring countries under enormous pressure. Given the vast humanitarian challenges, we support a more comprehensive response to the current humanitarian and refugee situation.

In all this suffering and destruction, there is a rare ray of hope. It is the surge of solidarity that Ukraine's neighbours have shown, welcoming with open arms all who are fleeing war-torn Ukraine. My country, the Czech Republic, proudly counts itself among them. The Czech Republic and its people stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine, and we have provided an unprecedented level of support. The people of the Czech Republic have welcomed and given shelter to more than 270,000 refugees from Ukraine. Around 250,000 have already been granted a special visa status that gives them access to health care, social protection and the labour market. The Czech Republic has been providing humanitarian and development assistance to Ukraine continuously since 2014, and we will continue to do so.

In the light of all that I have said, the Czech Republic welcomes draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, on the humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine, and will vote for its adoption.

The facts matter. People in Ukraine are suffering because Russia has waged a brutal war of choice in blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, further undermining international security and stability. We cannot hide from the simple truth of who did what. The Ukrainians are defending their homeland while their homes are being burned down and women, children and the elderly are being killed or forced to flee. We have to face the undeniable truth that Russia's aggression has caused untold suffering. Moreover, the war continues to have ripple effects around the globe, including through increasing food insecurity and skyrocketing energy prices. I would like to urge members to vote in favour of the draft resolution in order to take a stand against all the senseless violence and suffering. Please vote yes and send a clear message that human lives matter and civilians should not be targeted.

Let me make one additional point — after all, this is not a complicated matter. While we are trying to navigate the intricacies of international humanitarian law and cope with the difficulties of setting up humanitarian corridors, one man can end all the suffering and bloodshed just as easily as it all started. Russia should pull back all its troops and let the Ukrainians go about their lives. Let children return to their classrooms. Give peace a chance again. Our vote today is fundamentally about expressing the global conscience and the understanding that all the suffering and bloodshed should end once and for all.

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Once again, this vital international forum is seeing human rights issues being exploited in order to create polarization and politicization in the service of the political interests of certain States. In fact, those States are combining their stance on issues related to addressing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine with their hostile political positions against the Russian Federation.

The request for a resumption of this emergency special session and the submission of France and Mexico's draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.2) to the General Assembly — which was initiated in the Security Council but not put to the vote there — clearly show

that those States are in no way interested in resolving the humanitarian issues in Ukraine. Rather, they want to support their hostile political positions towards the Russian Federation by putting forward an erroneous and one-dimensional version of reality. My delegation appreciates the South African delegation's commitment to presenting a draft resolution that focuses exclusively on the humanitarian aspect (A/ES-11/L.3), a constructive approach that should encourage its objective consideration by all Member States.

My delegation shares the commitment of all Member States to ensuring the upholding of human rights and providing the necessary humanitarian assistance to all regions affected by conflict, but at the same time we reject any politicization of humanitarian issues. We reiterate the importance of ensuring that humanitarian operations are carried out in accordance with the principles of neutrality and non-discrimination. For the past 10 years my country, Syria, has continued to suffer from flagrant politicization, explicit manipulation and unprecedented hypocrisy when dealing with the humanitarian issues it is facing.

My delegation values the efforts that the Russian Federation has made regarding the humanitarian aspects of its special military operation in Ukraine. It has provided various forms of humanitarian assistance to the civilians under siege in a number of Ukrainian cities who are being used as human shields, and has guaranteed humanitarian corridors to ensure civilians' safe passage to their destinations of choice without any discrimination.

In conclusion, we also stress that States claiming to be concerned about human rights should treat all displaced people and refugees equally, whether in Ukraine or outside it, and ensure swift and secure access to humanitarian aid for all, including foreign nationals, whose return home should be facilitated without delay or discrimination.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): Exactly three weeks ago, on 2 March, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in support of resolution ES-11/1, deploring Russia's aggression against Ukraine (see A/ES-11/PV.5). That resolution, which Singapore supported, made clear the international community's position on the inviolability of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The resolution also demanded that the Russian Federation immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and completely and unconditionally withdraw

all of its military forces from Ukraine. It is time to implement it now.

The resolution we adopted three weeks ago also urged for an immediate peaceful resolution of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, emphasizing the need for all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. The terms of the resolution not only remain valid but have become even more critical now in the context of the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine. We call for the full and urgent implementation of the resolution that we have already adopted.

Singapore is gravely concerned about the continuing and escalating violence and attacks by Russian military forces on Ukrainian cities, civilians and civilian infrastructure such as schools and hospitals. We are profoundly saddened and distressed by the reports of growing numbers of civilian casualties, especially women, children and the elderly. We call on the Russian Federation to cease its offensive military operation immediately and remain engaged in negotiations with Ukraine, to work for a peaceful settlement in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolution we adopted three weeks ago.

The humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine must be stopped immediately. The international community's priority now should be ensuring an immediate cessation of all hostilities so that life-saving humanitarian aid and assistance can be provided on the ground to all in need. In that regard, Singapore commends the efforts of the United Nations and other organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross that are working tirelessly on the ground despite the dangerously challenging and life-threatening circumstances. We call for safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and all who are in need.

Singapore reiterates its full support for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, and we urge that diplomatic efforts continue towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict that can put an end to the grave humanitarian crisis that we are currently witnessing in Ukraine.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the reconvening of the emergency special session on the crisis in Ukraine. Since the General Assembly last met, just over three weeks ago (see A/ES-11/PV.6), Russia's premeditated and

unprovoked war in Ukraine has caused a humanitarian catastrophe. More than 3 million refugees, including 1.5 million children, have fled Ukraine. Another 6.5 million have fled their homes within Ukraine. More than 12 million people require humanitarian assistance, and many other countries are paying a heavy price, as we heard from the Secretary-General yesterday. A global food, energy and economic crisis is setting in, which, alongside the coronavirus disease pandemic, risks further undermining the Sustainable Development Goals and creating a wider humanitarian catastrophe.

President Putin's war on the Ukrainian people is the sole cause of that crisis. Bombs are falling on scared children. Mariupol is under a mediaeval siege. Innocent families have been without food, water and power for days. Essential civilian infrastructure has been targeted from the beginning, with 62 attacks on health-care facilities, as confirmed by the World Health Organization. The United Kingdom is doing its part to support the Ukrainian Government and people, as well as its neighbours. We have donated more than £400 million in aid for necessities and medical equipment.

The people of Ukraine are looking to the United Nations for humanitarian assistance, for an end to the war and for defence of the principle of territorial integrity and the Charter of the United Nations. We can send a united message. We can help the people of Ukraine. We can condemn Russia's invasion and reinforce the founding principles on which the United Nations was built. We can support draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, which is already backed by 86 sponsors from across every region of the world. The United Kingdom will vote with Ukraine, and we urge others to do the same.

Let me finish by echoing the Secretary-General's appeal to the Russian Federation yesterday. How many more Mariupols must be destroyed? Continuing the war in Ukraine is morally unacceptable, politically indefensible and militarily nonsensical. It is time to end this absurd war.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): France calls on the Russian Federation to put an end to its aggression against Ukraine, which for the past month has been killing civilians, including children, medical personnel and journalists. Like so many others, the cities of Kyiv, Mariupol and Mykolaiv are under siege, bombed relentlessly by the Russian army. It is

a massacre, and the worst is yet to come. Ten million Ukrainians have been forced to flee, and more than 3.5 million of them are now refugees in neighbouring countries. France commends the solidarity shown by the European Union and European States in transporting essential goods and receiving refugees. The whole world has been affected by the war, which is increasing the risk of food insecurity and famine around the world. Developing countries will be the first to be affected. That is why France proposes strengthening international coordination to guarantee supplies and build resilience.

The top priority is an immediate cessation of hostilities and full respect for international humanitarian law. Protecting civilians, especially the most vulnerable, is vital. Children's lives, integrity and future must be safeguarded. Civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, must be protected. Humanitarian access must be ensured as a matter of urgency. France welcomes the mobilization of the international community, the United Nations and the humanitarian actors who have to respond to the needs of people in every area in crisis, from Afghanistan to South Sudan and from Yemen to Haiti.

For three weeks, France and Mexico have led discussions in good faith in the Security Council on a draft resolution calling for a cessation of hostilities and respect for international humanitarian law. The

humanitarian situation has only worsened since we began, and many States have expressed their willingness to participate in those efforts. That is the reason we transferred our initiative to the General Assembly. Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.2, introduced this morning by Ukraine, is the result of an inclusive process and reflects a balance that takes into account proposals made by countries from all regions. There is an urgent need to act in order to reach an immediate cessation of hostilities, which is the only way to protect people. No one will emerge victorious from this war, and only an end to the Russian offensive can prevent us from losing even more.

The General Assembly must continue to assume its responsibilities, as it did on 2 March. We must make Russia listen to reason, renounce the use of force, respect the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions and protect civilians. Support for the draft resolution initiated by France, Mexico and so many other countries means support for the protection of the weakest among us and for solidarity among peoples and a path to peace.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers at 3 p.m. today in this Hall.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.