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New York

President: Mr. Wood/Ms. Shea (United States of America)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Merabet
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
Guyana	Ms. Persaud
Japan	Mr. Iriya
Malta	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Mr. Ponikvar
Switzerland	Mrs. Baeriswyl
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: More than 1,000 days have passed since the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, launched on 24 February 2022 in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. Since then, the hostilities across Ukraine have continued to escalate, exacerbating humanitarian needs. Since the previous briefing to the Security Council on this topic on 31 October (see S/PV.9769), we have continued to witness unacceptable levels of civilian deaths and injuries and the Russian Federation's systematic and deliberate targeting of Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Those large-scale attacks raise grave concerns about the welfare of civilians, who are facing a winter of hardship and misery. Meanwhile, incidents of conflict-related sexual violence and other violations of human rights also remain a grave concern. All parties to any armed conflict have an obligation to respect and protect civilians and civilian objects and to comply with the applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, which among other things prohibits indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, and to support international efforts to investigate violations.

Transfers of arms and ammunition and the provision of other forms of military assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine have also continued. The transfers have reportedly included heavy conventional weapons such as battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters, large-calibre artillery systems, missile systems and uncrewed combat aerial vehicles, as well as remotely operated munitions and small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. There have

also been reports of States transferring, or planning to transfer, weapons such as uncrewed aerial vehicles, ballistic missiles and ammunition to the Russian armed forces and that those weapons have been used and are likely to be used in Ukraine.

There are also reports citing an increase in military cooperation between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. That includes reports that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has transferred military supplies such as ballistic missiles and artillery shells, as well as technical exchanges and the deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Kursk region of the Russian Federation. Although the United Nations is not in a position to verify or confirm any of the claims or reports, the Secretary-General issued a statement on 3 November noting his concern about reports of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea being sent to the Russian Federation, including their possible deployment to the conflict zone (see SG/SM/22438). He said that it would represent a very dangerous escalation of the war in Ukraine. I reiterate that any transfer of weapons and ammunition must take place consistent with the applicable international legal framework, including the relevant Security Council resolutions, which in certain instances impose sanctions and restrictive measures on such transfers.

The Russian Federation's use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles continues to cause civilian deaths and injuries and damage to civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. On 21 November, the President of the Russian Federation confirmed that Russia had tested a new conventional medium-range missile called the Oreshnik. That followed the Armed Forces of Ukraine's use against the territory of the Russian Federation of long-range weapons provided by the United States and the United Kingdom, some of which reportedly resulted in damage to civilian objects. I urge all concerned to refrain from any steps that may lead to further spillover and intensification of the conflict, as well as any further harm to civilians.

Between 24 February 2022 and 30 November 2024, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recorded more than 12,340 civilians killed and more than 27,836 civilians injured in Ukraine. The same Office notes that 42 per cent of casualties in Ukraine in November resulted from the use of long-range weapons launched by the Russian Federation, a

significant increase from previous months. According to verified data of the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, aerial bombs killed 341 civilians and injured 1,803 civilians from 1 January through 30 November 2024, a threefold increase in fatalities and a sixfold increase in injuries from aerial bombs compared to 2023. In addition, there have also been reports of a number of cross-border strikes using missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles by Ukraine inside the Russian Federation, with some reportedly resulting in damage to civilian objects. Just like any other weapons or weapons systems, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles must not be used in a manner inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas remains one of the most significant threats to civilians in armed conflict. The use of those weapons is unacceptable in view of the well-documented pattern of civilian harm and the likelihood of indiscriminate effects. Reports of the use and transfer of cluster munitions remain deeply concerning owing to the indiscriminate harm those weapons can cause and the widespread contamination they leave behind. Equally alarming are the recent announcements regarding the transfers of non-persistent anti-personnel landmines. Those explosive devices are prohibited under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The universal participation in and the full implementation, at all times and under any circumstances, of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons must remain a priority.

I reiterate my call on all States to abide by their international humanitarian law obligations and to become parties, as a matter of priority, to disarmament treaties and comply with the obligations thereunder. Compliance with those obligations is crucial to prevent unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury to persons and to protect civilians. I also reiterate the Secretary-General's call for States to reduce the human cost of weapons, including by endorsing the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, if they have not already done so, and establishing mechanisms to mitigate harm to civilians.

Measures to prevent and mitigate the risk of diversion of weapons and ammunition are key for preventing further instability and insecurity in Ukraine, the region and beyond. Such efforts by all parties involved in arms transfers will also be essential to post-conflict recovery. Universal participation in arms control treaties and instruments, along with their full and effective implementation, is essential for preventing the diversion of conventional arms and regulating the international arms trade. That includes the Arms Trade Treaty, the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument, and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.

I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in Ukraine, consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and in line with the relevant General Assembly resolutions. The United Nations will continue to stand ready to use our good offices and support all meaningful efforts to that end.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

This is my last Council meeting. Allow me to be direct. Nearly three years ago, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the Kremlin believed it could conquer another sovereign nation in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, with little resistance. The Ukrainians, for their part, proved the Kremlin wrong, and are courageously fighting for their homeland and future, for their Ukrainian identity, for their children, for their freedom and for their lives.

The United States, as a permanent member of the Council and along with partners from around the globe, will continue to help Ukraine defend itself from Russia's aggression. That is because we still believe in the Charter of the United Nations, which should remain the foundation of States' conduct. Ukraine must prevail against Russia's war of choice. There must be a just, sustainable peace, rooted in the United Nations Charter. That document, the United Nations Charter, has meaning. It has helped keep the world safe from

the scourge of another world war for 80 years. For 80 years, through thick and thin, the members of the Council have worked together to uphold its principles and oppose territorial conquest.

But today a permanent member of the Council is openly and unashamedly violating the United Nations Charter. Russia is violating the resolutions of the Council for which it voted — resolutions meant to keep a rogue nation from acquiring nuclear weapons. Nearly three years ago, we sat with the Russians in this Chamber urging de-escalation, negotiations, peace talks — anything but war. The Kremlin did not listen then, because Putin does not listen to the words spoken here.

In that regard, I have to refer to another permanent member of the Council. China's support for Russia is in clear contradiction to the principles of the United Nations Charter. China has said in the Council that sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected, but if China were serious about that, it would use its influence to stop Russia from violating Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We must look not at China's words but its actions. China continues to supply Russia's war industrial base with dual-use items, such as bomb-making materials, machine parts, equipment and tools for weapons factories and technology that powers drones and missiles. Russia needs those Chinese products for its attacks against Ukraine's civilians and infrastructure. Chinese companies provide them and profit from them. By continuing to permit those exports, Beijing telegraphs tacit approval of Russia's war. And People's Republic of China companies have even helped to develop and produce long-range attack uncrewed aerial vehicles for Russia.

If China truly wants a peaceful resolution to Russia's war against Ukraine, it must end its supply to Russia's war machine, impose sanctions on Russia, call on Russia to withdraw its troops and lead the international community as a permanent member of the Council responsible for safeguarding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Instead, China is a decisive enabler of Russia's war against Ukraine and has refused to use its influence constructively. It has given Russia political cover by repeating Russia's false justifications for the war and by suggesting we should ignore the United Nations Charter because "the situation on the ground has changed". China has suggested that we not link Russia's aggression in Ukraine with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's pursuit of

nuclear weapons, while it is clear that Russia is helping the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its nuclear ambitions in return for troops and weapons to use against Ukraine. When it comes to Russia, China has demonstrated that it is not a legitimate actor for peace.

In the Council, China outlined its three principles for the war — no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation of the conflict and no provocations. But China stood aside as Russia violated all three principles by bringing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea into the conflict. Russia has deployed nearly 12,000 troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including elite special forces, to fight against Ukraine. Russia has also violated multiple resolutions of the Council by importing from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea more than 20,000 shipping containers of munitions, containing at least 6 million heavy artillery rounds and well over 100 ballistic missiles. China has considerable influence with both Moscow and Pyongyang, but it has declined to use that influence to oppose military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. China has not criticized Russia for importing missiles and Shahed drones from Iran, or for testing on the people of Ukraine an experimental hypersonic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

In the Council, China has called for the protection of civilians and prisoners of war. But China has failed to condemn Russia's forces for committing summary executions, arbitrary detentions, torture, rape and other forms of sexual violence; forced deportations of hundreds of children; and deliberate attacks on Ukraine's energy grid and other critical infrastructure. China did not end its support to Russia when Russia weakened global food security by blockading grain exports through the Black Sea and by attacking grain ships and ports and Ukraine's food production.

Russia listens only to strength and action — something that we collectively lacked when Russia invaded Crimea, and when it invaded Georgia before that. Appeasement did not work then, and it will not work now. That is why the United States and its partners will continue supporting Ukraine and the Charter's fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. As an international community, we must reject wars of aggression. I do indeed understand that there have been air strikes in both directions across the Russia-Ukraine border in the past 24 hours.

Regrettably, there are reports that civilians were killed on both sides. We should not be here. No civilian, Russian or Ukrainian, should be suffering. Russia started this war, and Russia can end the suffering.

Given that this is my last Security Council meeting, as I said, it has been an honour to serve on the Council. The work that we do matters. Our willingness to hold bad actors responsible matters. I wish that I could leave the Council on a more positive note. If Russia is not held accountable, many more people will suffer in preventable wars. No leader should ever again believe they can conquer another country and not face united global resistance. The world must always respond with strength to deter further aggression. I thank the members of the Council for their camaraderie and leave them with my best wishes, and with hope.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Given that this is your last meeting in the Security Council, Mr. President, allow me too to be very direct. However, we have always been direct with you — but as it turns out, you have only been direct today, as you have just announced.

If the United States had not supported and sponsored the 2014 coup in Kyiv, had not made Ukraine anti-Russia and had not allowed the Kyiv regime to sabotage the Minsk agreements — which was announced openly by the politicians who were supposed to be the guarantors of the agreement — there would have been no war at all. Neither would there have been any situation in Crimea had the authorities in Kyiv who came to power as a result of the coup in Kyiv respected the rights of all their citizens rather than attacking them with weapons and conducting a so-called anti-terrorist operation with the help of the Ukrainian army, which incidentally is prohibited by the Ukrainian Constitution.

Even in the few days that have elapsed since our previous meeting on Ukraine of 16 December (see S/PV.9816), the trends in the Ukrainian crisis that we pointed out then have become even clearer. They can be summed up this way. On the one hand, we have a United States Administration that has lost the election but is feverishly trying to use up all the funds that are left to provide assistance to Ukraine. In that context, the actions of those lame-duck American politicians

run completely counter to the course proclaimed by the United States President-elect, who will take office in exactly a month, on 20 January. On the other hand, the Ukrainian president, whose term has expired and who is failing disastrously on the battlefield, is doing everything he can to derail any peace initiatives and provoke Russia into a massive escalation of the conflict.

In the past few days, the former Ukrainian comedian has managed to take at least three steps backward from a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The first of them was taken on 18 December in Moscow on the Kyiv regime's orders, when an explosive device detonated and killed General Igor Kirillov, head of Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Defence Forces, and his assistant. The perpetrator of that terrorist attack was apprehended the very next day. He confirmed that he had been recruited by the Security Service of Ukraine. The crime fully demonstrates the hateful and terrorist nature of the current Kyiv leadership. However, Kyiv's Western patrons are also complicit in that crime and similar crimes committed against representatives of Russia's military, creative and political elite, and are hypocritically trying to ignore what is going on in Ukraine, thereby betraying the very principles they are constantly promoting internationally.

In that connection, I would like to point out that General Kirillov frequently provided facts confirming Washington's military biological activities in Ukraine. We have every reason to believe that the United States was developing biological weapons in its closed biological laboratories located around the world. We would like to assure Kyiv's American puppeteers that our investigations into that issue will not end with General Kirillov's death. It will be crucial to expose the people conducting inhumane experiments on Ukrainians and endangering the entire region.

The second clear step escalating the situation was taken yesterday by the leader of the Kyiv junta when he authorized yet another bombardment of targets deep inside Russian territory, using Western long-range weapons. On 18 December, ATACMS and Storm Shadow missiles were used to strike a facility in the Rostov region. All the missiles were destroyed by the Russian air-defence system while one, which strayed off course, inflicted some damage on a technical structure. When it launched that strike, the Kyiv regime knew that such actions would inevitably be followed by a response, which did indeed happen. In the early hours of this morning, a group strike was carried out using

long-range precision weapons against a Ukrainian army command post in Kyiv's Luch Design Bureau, which is a missile developer, as well as against a nearby Patriot anti-aircraft missile system. The strike hit all of the facilities targeted, and reportedly several Ukrainian high-level staff officers were also hit.

Lastly, the Kyiv regime's third clear step towards escalation is its massive missile strike on the peaceful town of Rylsk in the Kursk region, which was launched this afternoon local time using the HIMARS multiple rocket-launch system. Among its targets were a local culture centre, a stadium, a teacher's college, a school and a fire station. As of this moment, six people have been killed, including one child, and around 10 people injured are in hospitals. As everyone can understand, our response to that crime deliberately targeting peaceful Russian citizens will not be long in coming.

By acting in that way, Zelenskyy ignores the interests and opinions of his own citizens, many of whom oppose new escalatory steps as they lead to the destruction of enterprises and energy facilities important to the Ukrainian economy. As a result, many experts already doubt Ukraine's capacity to survive the winter, but the former comedian, who has completely lost legitimacy, is prepared to endanger the entire country he has held hostage and sacrifice all its citizens in order to preserve his power. On a daily basis, Zelenskyy's henchmen are going into the streets, rounding up dozens of Ukrainians who are unwilling to fight and driving them to the front. Of course, that is impacting the quality and morale of the Ukrainian army. Consequently, according to the Ukrainian military commanders themselves, the number of deserters at the end of November amounted to 200,000. In addition, 85,000 Ukrainian military personnel left their positions in November alone — three times higher than the rate in October. Those Ukrainian military personnel training abroad are also deserting their posts. In Poland alone, an average of 12 people run away from training grounds every month. It has been reported that half of the Anna Kievska brigade, which trained in France, deserted on the battlefield itself and what was left of the brigade was disbanded. That is supposedly the elite of the Ukrainian army. In 2024, the Ukrainian armed forces' losses exceeded 560,000. Since the beginning of 2022, the number of killed and wounded servicepeople has reached 1 million.

The Western masters of Ukraine are trying to ignore all of that. For example, the outgoing Secretary of State of the United States, Antony Blinken, who was sitting in

the President's chair in this Chamber yesterday, recently demanded that Kyiv start mobilizing Ukrainians as young as 18 years old — the age of recruitment is currently 26. Meanwhile, former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson — the same man who prevented Russia and Ukraine from making peace in March 2022 — admitted in an interview that the West is waging a war with Russia in Ukraine by proxy.

I would like to recall what United States Senator Lindsey Graham had to say on the matter. In September 2023, he referred to the provision of assistance by the United States to Ukraine as a good investment for the American people. During his visit in Kyiv, he rejoiced in the fact that the United States was destroying the Russian army without losing a single soldier. Moreover, Colonel Todd Schmidt of the United States Army recently cynically acknowledged in a report that the war in Ukraine has become an open-air laboratory for the American military. By labelling the military campaign in Ukraine a good investment, Mr. Graham was not simply using a figure of speech. It is well known that Ukraine has become a veritable gold mine for the military-industrial complex of the Anglo-Saxon countries and their allies, but it is the American magnates who profit the most from the conflict. According to the latest data, 41 American corporations were responsible for half of the world's 100 largest weapons producers' total arms sales in 2023. Those American corporations received \$317 billion — 50 per cent of global revenues — from arms sales. Overall, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the income of the 100 largest weapons-producing companies in the world reached \$632 billion in 2023. It would be naive to expect that those unscrupulous traders, who have had a taste of the profits to be made, would give up such a lucrative activity for the sake of some unfortunate Ukrainians.

At the same time, those corporations sometimes act in conjunction with the Kyiv regime. Indeed, after the outbreak of the conflict, 25 foreign lobbying and consulting companies began to represent the interests of Ukraine free of charge. One such company is BGR Group and its Government Affairs team, whose leadership has publicly called for increased military aid to Kyiv. One of their clients — Raytheon — is a major arms supplier and exporter. Another method that the American military-industrial complex resorts to is the financing of analytical centres, whose conclusions are then quoted by the mass media. Money

is therefore being made not only through the feverish sale to Ukraine of the weapons that those corporations have manufactured, because they are rushing to do so before Mr. Trump's inauguration, but also through the exploitation of American citizens by the artificial inflation of the prices of the military and industrial complex's products. Despite the detrimental impact on the well-being of ordinary Americans, the outgoing Democratic Administration is actively playing along with the arms corporations. Indeed, as Mr. Blinken confirmed, most of the \$100 billion that Washington has granted in aid to Ukraine was spent by the American military-industrial complex.

The independent United States Senator Bernie Sanders commented on the issue, specifying that leading defence contractors regularly padded their prices for the Pentagon by 40 per cent and in some cases by staggering amounts — up to 4,000 per cent. In October, RTX Corporation — of which the corporation Raytheon that I mentioned is a part — was fined \$950 million for artificially raising prices for the United States Department of Defense. It misrepresented its material costs and paid bribes to secure contracts overseas. Mr. Sanders continued by complaining that when it comes to improving the lives of the American working class, he is told: “No, no, no, no, we cannot afford it”, but when it comes to the military-industrial complex and its needs, he hears: “Yes, yes, yes, yes”, with almost no debate.

We already spoke at length during the previous meeting (see S/PV.9816) about why the entire criminal cabal, including the man in the green sweater, is so afraid of the Trump team's promised audit of the funds provided to Ukraine. The European Union — which according to Ursula von der Leyen, has already invested €130 billion in the Ukrainian project, €47.3 billion of which was military aid — should also consider a good audit. Bernie Sanders' words only illustrate the degree of corruption that accompanies the supply of Western weapons to the Kyiv regime. More details of that criminal enterprise are increasingly being revealed. For example, it was recently announced that an audit by the United States Department of Defense uncovered an inaccurate inventory of the Javelin missiles supplied to Kyiv. The Pentagon was forced to admit that the whereabouts of more than half of the Javelin and Stinger missiles sent to the Ukrainian armed forces remain unknown. We can help our American colleagues in that regard. If they would like to know where those

missiles are, they should take a look at the dark web and its devious online trading sites. Terrorists of all description are actively acquiring them, perhaps to use them in a regional conflict somewhere in Africa or even in some American or European airport. We have warned them about that.

It is difficult to say how things will end for Ukraine in the light of all those manoeuvres by its illegitimate leader, who is trying to pull the wool over the international community's eyes with his false statements about being ready for peace, while doing everything he can to escalate the conflict. After all, as we have repeatedly said, for Zelenskyy, peace is the worst possible scenario. With only 11 per cent of Ukrainian citizens' support, elections will have to be organized and he will lose power before being held accountable for all of the crimes he has committed against his own people since making them a pawn in the geopolitical game played by the West against Russia. That is why he is afraid of negotiations of any kind and continues to reject one peace initiative after another, just as he did this week in the context of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's proposal for a Christmas truce and prisoner exchange.

The real attitude of the Kyiv clique to any negotiations was recently revealed by the Head of the Office of the President — the éminence grise of the Zelenskyy regime — Andriy Yermak. He said that real negotiations on sustainable peace will begin only when Russia has no resources left to fight. As I am sure we all understand, that translates to human as “never”. We are very familiar with the true face of the gang that has seized power in Ukraine and therefore we are under no illusions. Moreover, as we have repeatedly said, we do not need a frozen conflict; we need a long-term and just solution to the conflict with the elimination of all of its root causes, which are well known. Therefore, my advice to all of those pinning their hopes on an end to the hostilities is not to harbour unfounded illusions about the true intent of the comedian Zelenskyy. We never had any such hopes and therefore we continue our special military operation, the goals of which will certainly be implemented.

To conclude, I have one final point to make. At the beginning of this month, the delegation of the United States insisted on holding a meeting on Ukrainian children (see S/PV.9799), the rights of whom Russia is allegedly violating. We drew the attention of our colleagues then to the fact that, unlike the fabricated

topic of Ukrainian children, which is used by the Kyiv regime to groundlessly smear Russia, there are other child-related topics that demand the attention of the Security Council, in particular the situation of children in Gaza and in the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole. At the time, we called on the United States to convene a meeting on the topic before the end of its presidency. Our American colleagues did not heed our appeal, of course. The fate of the children of Gaza is of no interest to them in principle, and the topic is inconvenient for their strategic ally, Israel. We believe that such double standards are unacceptable in the Security Council. We will therefore request the holding in January of a meeting on children in Palestine, and we ask the incoming Algerian presidency to keep that in mind for its programme of work.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): I thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her briefing. This is the seventeenth time in the past year that Russia has called a meeting that seeks to rewrite history and undermine United Nations-verified facts. Russia's aim is to distort reality so thoroughly that the international community can no longer discern what is true. We continually listen to Russia's attempts to justify its violation of the Charter of the United Nations and its invasion of a neighbour, but the Charter provides no justification for Russia's actions whatsoever. And now we are sitting here for the seventeenth time this year, listening to Russia try to tell us that Ukraine should not be permitted to defend itself against Russian aggression, and that no matter how many weapons and troops Russia deploys or gets from third parties to prolong its aggression, Ukraine should be prevented from seeking support from its partners in defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. If Russia is so concerned about Ukraine's defensive action, maybe Russia should stop invading. The solution is really very simple. Russia should withdraw its troops from its neighbour and cease its aggression.

Russian weapons have now been used in Ukraine for more than 1,000 days. Leaving millions without essential services, they are targeting Ukrainian cities and energy infrastructure, not to mention their deadly, well-documented attacks on medical facilities. The World Health Organization has recorded more than 2,000 attacks on healthcare in Ukraine, including hospitals, since the start of Russia's invasion. And 12,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed — 12,000 innocent lives — leaving behind grief and trauma for

their families. But it is not Russia's weapons alone that are costing countless lives. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran have supplied Russia with munitions and ballistic missiles for use on the battlefield in Ukraine. And now thousands of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have joined forces with Russia, prolonging the war and increasing the suffering of the Ukrainian people. We also know that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will be extracting a high price in return, which has significant implications for global security and for all of us.

This Christmas I suggest that the Russian delegation read *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*, by Leo Tolstoy. It is a story about a man who in his greed to acquire more and more land exhausts himself and dies. He is buried in a six-foot grave, which is all the land that he ends up with. The moral is quite clear. The Russians would do well to heed the wisdom of their forebears, because the supporters of Ukraine are on the right side of history. Until Russia ceases its aggression, we will continue to support Ukraine in defending itself, and we will continue to support its efforts to find a just and lasting peace, based on the principles of the Charter. It was a breach of the Charter that brought us to this horrific situation, and only full adherence to the Charter will resolve it. That means Russia ceasing its aggression and fully withdrawing from a sovereign and secure Ukraine.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her timely briefing.

Today's meeting is the third that the Security Council has held this month on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.9799 and S/PV.9816). The topics addressed at the previous two meetings — the war's impact on children and the attacks on critical infrastructure — still require urgent attention and action from the international community. In addition, just two days ago, we gathered once again in this Chamber to address another critical issue (see S/PV.9820) — non-proliferation and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — and at that meeting a majority of Security Council members condemned the illegal military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. On every previous occasion, we have clearly heard the international community's collective voice urging Russia to end its unprovoked war on Ukraine.

The Republic of Korea reiterates its consistent position that Ukraine is acting to defend its people and territory in line with the Charter of the United

Nations and international law, with the international community's assistance. Indeed, it is quite clear that the conflict began with Russia's invasion of a neighbouring country, in violation of the Charter. Needless to say, the global support for Ukraine's efforts to safeguard its people and territory is entirely legitimate. For that reason, as we have previously mentioned, we are of the view that today's meeting on the issue of weapons transfers to Ukraine is irrelevant.

Russia is arguing that Western countries' provision of weapons prolongs the war. However, few countries would support that argument. The world knows the difference between an aggressor and a victim, as attested to by the repeated condemnation of Russia in the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States. Despite its best efforts, Russia cannot justify its unjust war against Ukraine, and neither will it succeed in shifting the blame for the origins of the illegal war and its subsequent escalation. To make matters worse, military cooperation between Russia and North Korea is significantly intensifying. North Korea has supplied Russia with large amounts of munitions, missiles and artillery, in violation of Security Council resolutions. In addition, more than 11,000 North Korean troops have been sent to fight in Russia's war against Ukraine, with more than 1,000 casualties so far. Such an unexpected level of collusion raises serious concerns about the future of that illegal coalition. Their cooperation is undermining the global non-proliferation regime and internationalizing the conflict. The international community must unequivocally and resolutely condemn that illegal military cooperation, and we call for it to end immediately.

As people in other parts of the world look forward to gathering with their families, friends and loved ones for the holidays, Ukrainians are enduring harsh winter conditions, exacerbated by Russia's illegal and inhumane attacks on Ukraine's energy network, affecting more than a million civilians. We once again urge Russia, as a responsible permanent member of the Security Council, to change course and end its brutal war. The first crucial step would be to return the North Korean troops, as well as their own, back home where they belong. We hope that 2025 will be the year that Ukrainians can finally return to the peaceful lives that they knew before the war. The Republic of Korea will continue to stand with Ukraine and its people in their efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace and make that hope a reality.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing.

This umpteenth meeting on arms deliveries requested by Russia is only a smokescreen that cannot mask how Russia continues to treat the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. There is indeed an aggressor — Russia, which attacked a sovereign State that posed no threat to it, and an attacked party — Ukraine, which is free, like any other State, to decide its own destiny. Russia will not make others bear the responsibility for a conflict that it alone chose to start and continue for almost three years, without any respect for international law. Let us recall that Russia ignored the order of the International Court of Justice, which ordered it on 16 March 2022 to immediately suspend its military operations. It has ignored the resolutions of the General Assembly, which has condemned that aggression by a very large majority seven times (see resolutions ES-11/1, ES-11/2, 77/229, ES-11/6, 78/221, 78/316 and 79/184) and called for respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We repeat once again: Russia can choose to stop its aggression every day, without compromising its own security.

Article 51 of the Charter is very clear: Ukraine has the right to defend itself. The exercise of that right to self-defence includes the possibility of neutralizing Russian military targets involved in operations targeting Ukrainian territory. For more than 1,000 days, Russia has violated international humanitarian law by conducting systematic campaigns using missiles and drones to strike Ukrainian civilian populations and civilian infrastructure directly, in particular in the energy sector. As Ukraine prepares to enter its third winter of war, France will remain committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of the Ukrainian population. Russia's pursuit of that illegal aggression is facilitated by the arms deliveries that support its war effort. Russia continues to deliberately undermine the foundations of the international non-proliferation architecture by obtaining drones and ballistic missiles from Iran and, in violation of resolutions that it supported, by obtaining munitions and ballistic missiles from North Korea. The deployment of North Korean soldiers in Russia and their engagement alongside the Russian armed forces constitute a further escalation. That engagement, which is probably an unexpected military exercise for Pyongyang, is unacceptable and dangerous

for international peace and security. France urges all States to refrain from supplying Russia with military equipment, dual-use goods and all components that fuel this war of aggression.

France, with its partners, will continue to stand by Ukraine and support it at all levels for as long as necessary. It will continue to provide Ukraine with the military support necessary for the defence of its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in accordance with the Charter. The so-called capitulation of the party being attacked cannot be a condition for negotiations. That will never be the basis for a just and lasting peace, which can have no other basis but respect for the fundamental principles of the Charter and therefore for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.

Mr. Ponikvar (Slovenia): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Let me make a couple of points on behalf of my delegation.

First, every country has an inalienable right to defend itself, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. By extension, every country has the right to procure the means to defend itself. As underlined by Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu, the acquisition itself must be in line with the international legal framework, which among other instruments includes resolutions adopted by the Security Council. It is worth pointing to the source of inconsistencies with international law during this war. It is Russia that illegally invaded Ukraine. At the same time, for more than a year now, reports of artillery shell and ballistic missile transfers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been mounting. And those weapons have been sustaining the ongoing aggression. That represents a violation of Security Council resolutions and needs to be further addressed. Wednesday's briefing was informative in that regard (see S/PV.9820).

Secondly, we are gravely concerned about the extent of mine use in Ukraine. Russia has already laid an estimated two million mines, making Ukraine the most mine-contaminated country in the world. To date, more than 1,200 civilian victims of mines and explosive remnants of war have been documented. That is just the start, as those weapons will pose a threat to the civilian population for years to come. In that regard, we call for the full respect of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Slovenia is gravely concerned about the escalation of the war. It is engulfing more and more territories and we are witnessing ever-larger aerial attacks and the use of modernized weapons with more firepower. Each day of the war increases the risk of spillover and crossing the point of no return. We need peace in Ukraine as soon as possible and it cannot come a moment too soon. But for it to last, it needs to be in line with the United Nations Charter and international law.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for the important updates provided.

Today's meeting comes on the heels of alarming reports of further escalations in the war between Russia and Ukraine. Media reports this morning of a missile strike that damaged six foreign diplomatic missions in Kyiv and killed at least one individual are deeply distressing. Guyana maintains that any attack directed against a diplomatic facility is unacceptable. We reaffirm the provisions of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961, including the inviolability of diplomatic premises, and we call for a full and impartial investigation into that incident.

United Nations agencies, grappling with the humanitarian fallout of this war, have all sounded the alarm about the gravity and scale of the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law being committed in Ukraine. In addition to reports of human rights abuses, one persistent pattern observed is the almost wilful disregard for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, with the use of weapons that are indiscriminate by nature and in locations in which the effects of their use cannot be limited as required under international humanitarian law. In its latest update, the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine noted an increase in civilian casualties from the use of aerial glide bombs in densely populated urban centres, including in Kharkiv, Sumy and Zaporizhzhya. The Office of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs has also repeatedly expressed concern about reports of the use of cluster munitions and widespread contamination with mines and explosive remnants of war in Ukraine, underscoring that those weapons could contaminate communities for decades to come. According to the United Nations Development Programme, Ukraine is now considered the most mined country in the world, with potentially 23 per cent of its land at risk of contamination with landmines and unexploded ordnance. It is estimated that clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance in Ukraine is likely to cost more than US \$34 billion.

Several reports indicate that most civilian casualties recorded to date were caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas, such as artillery shells and rockets, bombs, missiles, loitering munitions and other explosive munitions dropped by unmanned aerial vehicles. As a State party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Guyana is gravely concerned about the devastating and lasting impact of the use of landmines and cluster munitions. They have no place in this world. We also emphasize the fact that conventional arms and ammunition are at risk of diversion throughout their life cycle and even more so when they are transferred into an armed conflict. We call on all States transferring weapons and ammunition into the conflict area to comply fully with their obligations under international law and with the international disarmament instruments to which they are party. Weapons transfers must be conducted within the existing international legal framework, including Security Council resolutions, and with adequate controls in place to prevent their irregular transfer. We also continue to stress that any lasting solution to the conflict will not be achieved through military action, but rather through diplomacy and good-faith negotiations conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call for the Russian Federation to withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine and urge the parties to commit to a political and diplomatic process towards ending the conflict.

Mr. Iriya (Japan): I thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

On Monday (see S/PV.9816), Council members once again condemned the humanitarian consequences caused by Russia's aggression, a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Today's meeting was convened by Russia to discuss a shamelessly familiar topic — the purported increase in the West's supply of weapons to the Kyiv regime. As always, that is totally misguided. We should make no mistake. There is only one aggressor in this conflict. It was Russia and no one else that launched an unprovoked war of aggression. It is Russia that has systematically violated international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and that has escalated the situation. The country under attack is Ukraine, which is defending its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. For the war to end, it is Russia that must stop its aggression first.

Just this past Wednesday (see S/PV.9820), the Council condemned the unlawful military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, including the transfer of ballistic missiles from North Korea to Russia in violation of Security Council resolutions and the engagement in combat against Ukraine of North Korean troops deployed to Russia, which constitutes a clear violation of international law, including the Charter. We also reiterate our deep concern about the military cooperation between Iran and Russia. We must focus on Russia's violations of international law and not fall prey to its disinformation or malicious tactics. We continue to strongly and unequivocally condemn actions that violate the Charter. At the same time, we remain committed to supporting Ukraine's legitimate efforts to defend itself. We have not wavered, and will not waver, in stating that any attempts to undermine Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are unacceptable. We reiterate in the strongest terms our demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the month, I would like to convey our profound appreciation to the United States, as the current holder of the presidency, for its leadership and dedication in steering the Council's work in December. In addition, as our two-year term on the Security Council draws to a close, we want to express our deep gratitude to all Council members, our Security Council Affairs Division colleagues and the interpreters for their cooperation. It has been a distinct honour to work in the pursuit of maintaining international peace and security. As we step away, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the vital work of the Council, and we look forward to once again serving on this body as a responsible member within a decade.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The crisis in Ukraine continues to drag on, with the fighting showing no signs of abating. The ongoing flow of large quantities of all kinds of increasingly lethal and destructive weapons and ammunition onto the battlefield and the heightened risks of diversion and proliferation are a cause for deep concern. I would like to reiterate that weapons may help win the war, but they cannot bring about lasting peace. It is imperative to observe three principles — no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation in the fighting and no provocation by any party — and to promote a de-escalation as soon as possible. We once again call on the parties to the

conflict to take the same path and engage in peace talks promptly. We call on the international community to actively foster conditions conducive to that end and provide the assistance necessary.

China has been calling on the parties to the conflict since the outbreak of the war to achieve a ceasefire, start negotiations and restore peace as soon as possible. That is what we have been saying and doing for the past three or so years. China has always been committed to promoting a political settlement and has been working for peace and promoting dialogue. The day before yesterday, the Friends for Peace Group on the Ukraine crisis held another meeting during which representatives of 17 countries of the global South — including China, Brazil, Algeria, South Africa and Türkiye — jointly assessed the current situation, expressed concern about the recent escalation of the conflict, reaffirmed the importance of respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity and the legitimate concerns of all States and reiterated their strong call for a speedy cessation of hostilities and a comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Ukraine crisis on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. At the same time, they also reaffirmed the readiness of the countries of the global South to continue playing a constructive role to that end.

China's efforts for peace are well known to the international community and have received the recognition and support of a vast majority of countries. Russia, Ukraine, the countries of the global South and many European countries have all welcomed China's role and contribution to resolving the Ukraine crisis. The United States is the only country that has chosen to turn a blind eye to China's efforts and has continued to publicly spread false information. Just now, our colleague, Ambassador Wood, in his statement as United States representative, said that this might be the last time that he participated in a Council meeting. I see that he is no longer here. Yet he did not miss that last chance to blatantly attack and besmirch China, insinuating that China was to blame for the fact that the war continues to this day. I have responded to various fallacious remarks from the United States many times, and so I will not reiterate my response today. Given that this could be the last time this year that the Council will consider the issue of Ukraine and hold an open meeting, looking ahead to the new year, I would like to make three points expressing our hopes to the United States.

First, China did not create the Ukraine crisis, nor is it a party to it. The United States cannot wish that China would play a greater role in ending the war, on the one hand, while continuing to disparage China's efforts aimed at peace and to slander and put pressure on China, on the other. It is our hope that the United States will stop its senseless blame game and its antagonism and confrontation. Instead, it should work with the countries concerned, including China, to build unity and consensus and foster the conditions and a climate conducive to a political settlement of the Ukraine crisis.

Secondly, no country in the world can enjoy absolute security. One country's security cannot come at the expense of the security of other countries. The United States, under the pretext of maintaining regional security, is attempting to exploit this opportunity to weaken and contain other countries in order to serve its own agenda. That will only create more disputes and chaos in the world. We hope that the United States will abandon the zero-sum mindset of the cold war, stop taking advantage of the Ukraine crisis to advance its geopolitical strategy and take real steps towards the early restoration of peace and stability on the European continent.

Thirdly, the current situation with regard to the Ukraine issue is changing. Both parties to the conflict have sent political signals that clearly express their willingness to engage in negotiations. Discussions in the international community are increasingly geared towards negotiations and moving closer to peace. That fully demonstrates the increasing momentum for a ceasefire, an end to the war and the restoration of peace. We hope that the United States will adapt to the changing situation, stop clamouring for war, stop obstructing the efforts towards peace of the international community and adopt the correct path of promoting a prompt political settlement of the crisis.

Mr. Merabet (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her valuable briefing.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, which has now engulfed Russian territories, rages on. Its effects continue to weigh on the peoples of the region at large. The losses of innocent human lives, including among women and children, have been on the rise since the outbreak of war. The suffering of civilians, including the injured and the displaced, are increasing. Many now dream of a warm shelter where they can seek refuge from the harsh

cold, especially during winter. The conflict's economic repercussions continue to reverberate, not only in the region but across the world, mainly in developing countries, whose populations have been profoundly affected by the energy and food crises. Unfortunately, the mindset of confrontation and escalation, regional and international wrangling and polarization continues to prevail, affecting the course of the conflict, which is about to enter its third year. Algeria has repeatedly warned that such a mindset will only fuel tensions that may plunge the whole region into a quagmire of endless conflicts and crises. That is the sad reality on the ground. Tensions have not subsided; rather, they have been fuelled by the influx of weapons and ammunition to conflict zones, escalating the war and its risks and steering us away from a political peaceful process that could lead to a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

I would like to reaffirm the following points.

First, the ongoing escalation and bloody armed confrontation between the two parties remain a grave cause for concern for Algeria. We reiterate our condemnation of the violations of international law, including international humanitarian law. We call again on both parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate, respect their international obligations and make the protection of civilians a top priority. Targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is unacceptable under any circumstances and is prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Secondly, we reiterate our deep concern about the use of lethal and destructive ammunition and weapons in conflict zones, which was recently reinforced by the use of modern, medium- and long-range missiles in the territories of Ukraine and the Russian Federation. We call on both parties to ensure that those weapons do not fall into the hands of criminal, terrorist and extremist groups, which often use such weapons in hostile acts of hegemony against defenceless civilians.

Thirdly, we call again on both parties to prioritize dialogue and diplomacy and engage in inclusive and constructive negotiations and not politicization. The war and fighting have had a limited impact on advancing progress towards peace. The time has therefore come to give diplomacy a genuine chance to achieve a just and lasting peace. That peace must be rooted in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, on whose supremacy we all agree, and must take into consideration the legitimate security concerns

of both parties. The international community must step up its diplomatic efforts at all levels in order to create the conditions conducive to launching a path towards negotiations in order to de-escalate the war and achieve peace and security in the region.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I would like to thank the United States for convening this meeting. I also thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her valuable briefing. I welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Ukraine in this meeting.

The evolving situation in Ukraine continues to command our grave concern, particularly in the light of the recent escalation and the deepening humanitarian crisis. The Security Council's decision to meet for the second time this week (see S/PV.9820) underscores the urgency and gravity of the situation. Such frequent deliberations, among countless others since the conflict's inception, consistently reveal one common thread — an unwavering collective aspiration for peace despite the varying perspectives on how to achieve it.

However, we observe with deep concern that the developments on the ground reflect an increasing reliance on military solutions rather than peaceful conflict-resolution mechanisms. That trajectory inevitably compounds the challenges of establishing lasting peace and stability. The unprecedented scale of weapons transfers serves as a stark indicator of the deteriorating trust in an already fragile and complex regional and international landscape. While we fully recognize every State's sovereign right to self-defence, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including through arms procurement, we must exercise prudence in that regard. The massive influx of arms, ammunition and military equipment carries the potential to intensify and prolong the conflict, potentially undermining broader international efforts towards peace and security maintenance. Of particular concern are the risks of weapons diversion to unauthorized actors and, most critically, the disproportionate impact on civilian populations, which continue to bear the heaviest burden of this conflict.

To mitigate the devastating consequences of those extensive arms flows, we propose two mitigation measures.

First, all parties must uphold responsible and transparent arms transfer protocols, consistent with the existing international legal framework. That is

crucial to preventing unregulated transfers of arms, which can lead to the proliferation of weapons and illicit trafficking.

Secondly, both exporting and recipient States must fulfil their respective obligations. Exporting States must refrain from transferring arms where risks exist of human rights violations or breaches of international humanitarian law. Recipient States must ensure that the arms transferred are used in a manner consistent with the relevant international legal instruments and are not diverted or transferred to other destinations. Comprehensive risk assessment mechanisms are fundamental to that process.

While mitigation measures are crucial, they serve only as temporary solutions. Genuine conflict resolution demands genuine political will to address both the immediate and underlying causes of conflicts, which is essential to achieving lasting peace and stability. In that context, Mozambique reiterates its steadfast position and urges the relevant parties to immediately halt their hostilities, engage in direct, meaningful negotiations in good faith and adopt a constructive, inclusive approach focused on mutual benefit rather than competitive advantage.

Finally, as this is the last statement that my delegation will make before leaving the Security Council, I would like to thank the members of the Council for the support we have been given during our two-year term. We are also grateful to the Secretariat, the interpreters and those behind the scenes who helped us during our term.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Almost three years since the invasion of Ukraine began, and after more than 100 meetings of the Security Council, Ecuador regrets that we have yet to see any positive signs towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. On the contrary, the hostilities and the risks of escalation continue to grow more intense, exacerbating an already tense geopolitical situation and increasing the risk of a wider conflict. A few days ago the Council received a report from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. It described an alarming situation, especially with the onset of winter and the systematic destruction of the country's energy infrastructure. It also reminded

us that over these nearly three years, it is civilians who have suffered and continue to suffer the gravest consequences of a war they did not choose.

New missile attacks were reported in the capital of Ukraine this morning, injuring civilians and damaging residential buildings as well as the diplomatic headquarters of several countries. Those deplorable attacks violate international humanitarian law, increase the suffering of civilians and exacerbate tensions in a conflict that urgently needs de-escalation. I reiterate the call for the parties to refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas and to move the fighting away from urban areas and nuclear facilities. International humanitarian law clearly prohibits attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and must be respected.

Regarding the issue before us today, Ecuador's position is clear. Weapons and ammunition transfers must be conducted in strict compliance with the applicable international legal framework and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. Ecuador supports the recommendations that Mrs. Nakamitsu made today regarding the measures required to mitigate risks related to the diversion and proliferation of weapons and ammunition. States must act responsibly at every step of the arms-transfer chain to prevent the diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse of weapons. History has shown us that even years after a ceasefire, the weapons used in conflicts can continue to affect civilians and become a factor in long-term instability. We are deeply concerned about the reports of the use and transfer of cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, given those weapons' indiscriminate effects. The full implementation of the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons must remain a priority. I want to emphasize the importance of prioritizing the protection of civilians and the goal of achieving global stability over any other industrial, production or distribution logic.

We cannot underestimate the risks that would be posed by a further escalation of conflict and its implications for international security. The use of increasingly destructive weapons, as well as the deployment of thousands of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea into the conflict zone and the possibility that they could participate in the hostilities, should be thoroughly examined by the international community and followed up by the Council. The parties

should act with responsibility and restraint and refrain from taking any action that could lead to a further expansion or escalation of the war. The strategy of escalating to de-escalate is highly risky and takes us further away from a peaceful solution.

Reversing the current dangerous trajectory and achieving a ceasefire requires diplomatic efforts and political will. Diplomacy and dialogue cannot be considered red lines. It is time to end the human suffering and achieve a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine. The United Nations system has the necessary instruments and experience to contribute to achieving that goal. For its part, Ecuador remains ready to contribute to any good-faith effort that leads to a lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolutions of the General Assembly.

Considering that this could be the last public meeting on the agenda of the Security Council this month, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the United States on its successful presidency, and of course to reiterate Ecuador's commitment to respect for international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It is also important for us to express our gratitude to the Security Council Affairs Division, in particular for its efforts last year when we held the presidency of the Council in December 2023.

Finally, I should not fail to thank the interpreters for their patience — just as they showed today — in interpreting the statements of the representatives of Ecuador, who sometimes improvise. I therefore express my heartfelt thanks to them.

Naturally, I would also like to state that as I said, Ecuador will continue working towards and contributing to the noble cause of international peace and security. To that end, we will of course be counting on the current and future members of the Security Council.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

Sierra Leone takes note of the different perspectives on the transfer of arms in the context of the conflict in Ukraine. In particular, we take note of claims that on the one hand, the transfer of arms prolongs the conflict and undermines the prospects of a peaceful resolution, while on the other hand, it is premised on

the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and the application of the right to self-defence. In view of the acknowledged and reported arms transfers in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, Sierra Leone continues to reiterate its principled position that all transfers of weapons in conflict situations should occur within the applicable international legal framework and in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions. They should also include pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification in order to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition.

Sierra Leone is deeply concerned about the continuing impact on civilians and civilian infrastructure of the weapons used in the conflict. On that note, we wish to focus our statement today on the impact of those weapons on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine and to urge all parties to prioritize their diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict. The fighting is not just happening in open fields; it is occurring in towns and villages and in built-up areas. Therefore, ballistic missiles, long- and intermediate-range missiles, artillery, glide bombs, drones and even personal rifles are being launched and fired at human beings and against energy facilities, residential homes, schools, children's playgrounds, hospitals, marketplaces and shopping centres, factories, storage facilities, seaports, transportation facilities, cultural centres and churches. Regardless of the intent, the end result of the use of weapons is death, destruction and suffering. It is ordinary Ukrainian civilians — and in some cases now, Russian civilians — who suffer the most. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented a total of more than 37,000 civilian casualties since the start of the conflict on 24 February 2022, with more than 12,000 people killed and 25,000 people injured. UNICEF confirmed that those casualties include more than 2,000 children killed or injured in Ukraine since the start of the conflict, highlighting that the number of child fatalities this year alone has increased by almost 40 per cent compared to 2023.

It is estimated that 60 per cent of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed by missiles, artillery, bombs and drones that made it past Ukraine's air defences, leading to daily power cuts for millions of people across Ukraine. Those outages, often lasting many hours, limit access to water, mobile networks and the Internet, public transportation and elevators in high-rise buildings. In addition to the

damage or destruction to energy infrastructure, those weapons have caused the disruption of essential services such as electricity, the Internet and transportation, among other services. They have destroyed thousands of homes and hundreds of hospitals and entire neighbourhoods and villages have been decimated, causing millions of people to become internally displaced or refugees in other countries. Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Programme estimates that those weapons have caused the release of toxic materials into the air, including greenhouse gas emissions. They have also damaged ecosystems, leading to biodiversity loss, soil pollution and other forms of contamination. Sierra Leone reiterates that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are prohibited under international law. We call on all sides to ensure compliance with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

The conflict has been ongoing for almost three years and there is seemingly no end in sight. Sierra Leone reiterates that military means alone will not achieve the political objective of the conflict in Ukraine. Therefore, Sierra Leone urges all parties to refrain from further escalation in pursuit of the option of winning the battle at all costs. We call on all parties to seek and pursue political dialogue, as the military instrument will not achieve just and lasting peace in Ukraine, neither will it achieve any political objective of the conflict. Diplomatic efforts should be the primary tool employed to pave the way for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The alarming civilian casualties also underscore the urgent need for all parties to take meaningful steps towards the immediate cessation of hostilities.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone calls for full respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, in particular the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We urge the parties to the conflict to engage constructively, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all parties, to find a political and diplomatic solution, as envisaged in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Over the past two years as an elected member of the Council, we have heard countless briefings and testimonies from the ground on the dire humanitarian situation in Ukraine following Russia's decision to

invade its sovereign neighbour. After almost three years of fighting, the conflict has turned into the bloodiest and most devastating in Europe since the Second World War.

The briefing delivered to the Council last Monday by the Director of Financing and Partnerships Division, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see S/PV.9816), was just the latest in a long string of harrowing accounts. As we heard,

“[d]aily attacks continue, inflicting death, injury and untold suffering on ordinary Ukrainians, and destruction and damage to civilian infrastructure” (S/PV.9816, p. 2).

Despite that, we have witnessed today yet another attempt to divert the international community's attention from the reality, creating a smokescreen to obscure the latest escalations. In recent weeks, the Russian Federation has intensified its drone and missile attacks against Ukrainian cities. It has tested a new ballistic missile on the battlefield. It has also secured the deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Neither can we forget about the provision of military assistance from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran, which is having a direct impact on the war.

The facts are clear: through its decision to invade Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation violated and undermined the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The relentless bombing of Ukraine's civilian infrastructure, including its energy infrastructure, with the clear purpose of piling on the misery in the coming winter months has continued to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. The Security Council must continue to be seized of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, in particular the lack of access that humanitarian workers are facing. Malta continues to call for full and unfettered access for all humanitarian workers currently operating on the ground in Ukraine. International humanitarian law and international human rights law must be fully adhered to by all parties at all times. There must also be full accountability for all crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine.

Let me reiterate that Ukraine has the right to defend itself under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and to rely on its allies to help it do so. That is the same right enjoyed by every other Member of the United Nations — no more, no less. We once again call on the Russian Federation to immediately end the war that it started and withdraw its troops and military

equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The current cycle of war, death and destruction is completely untenable. The people of Ukraine deserve better. The people of Russia deserve better. Both nations deserve a peaceful future and a just and lasting peace. Let us not lose sight of that goal.

As our term on the Security Council draws to a close, we join others in taking this opportunity to thank all Council members for their cooperation over the past two years. We also thank the members of the Security Council Affairs Division for all their assistance throughout our term. Malta will continue to be a strong supporter of the United Nations and multilateralism and will continue to serve as a voice for peace and dialogue.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Here we are at our last meeting on the agenda for this year, and I am about to make what may be my last official statement on behalf of Switzerland, after two years on the Council. This is also around the seventieth meeting dedicated to Ukraine. As in every previous meeting on this subject, I will reiterate today that Russia's military aggression is a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations for which there is no justification. And for the seventieth time, I will repeat that Russia must immediately withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. That repetition is nevertheless important. No matter what, we cannot and must not normalize what has happened in Ukraine and that is jeopardizing our multilateral order. The Council has been unable to act beyond discussion for the past two years because of the potential use of the veto by a permanent member. Yet the principle requiring a party to a dispute to abstain in the voting is enshrined in Article 27, paragraph 3, of the Charter. I firmly believe that beyond the making of statements, the Council must remain a place where dialogue can finally enable us to return to the path to peace.

I thank High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Nakamitsu for her briefing. We heard this week, as we have heard so many times before, that the Ukrainian people continue to endure immense suffering in this war, whose duration is no longer measured in days or months but in years, and whose end is not yet in sight. As the cold weather sets in, recent events have highlighted the intolerable nature of the situation, including the attacks of the past 24 hours that resulted in civilian casualties on both sides of the front line. Russia's attacks damaged homes, schools, hospitals and

even foreign diplomatic missions in Kyiv. Such actions are unacceptable. The ongoing hostilities in Ukraine are adding to the suffering through their damage and disruption to essential infrastructure and services. Millions of Ukrainians are facing the risk of even worse deterioration in their living conditions. I must say once again that in order to alleviate the plight of civilians, international law, in particular international humanitarian law and human rights law, must be respected by all parties at all times. The civilian population and civilian objects must be respected and protected.

The international community's call for peace has been unwavering, and yet the situation on the ground continues to deteriorate. I would like to reiterate three key messages.

First of all, the current dire situation is a direct consequence of Russia's military aggression. As I said at the outset, Switzerland continues to condemn that flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter.

Secondly, the war could end at any time if Russia ceased hostilities and withdrew its troops from Ukrainian territory. Until then, Ukraine has the right to ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Thirdly, stepping up the diplomatic efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine is urgent. Switzerland reiterates its call on Russia to respect its obligations under the Charter, which all of us — the Member States of the United Nations — have committed to upholding. We also call on third parties to refrain from any action likely to fuel Russia's military aggression. We are deeply troubled that such aggression appears to continue to be reinforced by transfers of arms and munitions to Russia. In addition, reports suggest that troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are not only being deployed in Russia but are actively engaged in combat. Switzerland urges all States to strictly comply with their obligations under international arms-control agreements, including the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As the year draws to a close and we look to a future with both challenges and opportunities, Switzerland believes that it is our collective responsibility to support efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, anchored in the principles of the Charter. Far beyond the rhetoric, the appeal for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, supported by a large majority of the General Assembly, is the

bedrock of a genuine peace that encompasses every aspect of this war, puts international law at the heart of the discussions and demands a solution that will last. It is a matter of a clear commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders. The war was launched in violation of the Charter. Its resolution must respect it. The confidence of the world in our common principles and collective security depends on it.

While it is in Switzerland's DNA to serve and vanish, there is one exception, which is giving thanks. In conclusion, Switzerland would therefore like to thank all of the members of the Security Council, the Secretariat, including Claudia Banz and all her teams, the interpreters and all the Member States that have placed their trust in us as members of the Council for the past two years. And I would be remiss if I failed to thank the members of my team sitting to the left and right behind me, who enabled us to chart a course in line with international law and to try to ensure that the Chamber remain a place of respect. We therefore would like to collectively reiterate that we were honoured to do this important work, and we wish every success to the new members who will soon sit in this Chamber.

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

An aggressor cannot undertake an unprovoked invasion of another country and then argue that that country's self-defence is escalatory. Ukraine has a right to defend itself in the war that Russia has chosen to wage against it. The United States and countries around the world will continue to support Ukraine in that defence. Just last night, Russia launched seven missiles and 65 drones against Kyiv. A couple of those missiles appear to have struck residential and office buildings, including diplomatic missions, a technical school and a gas pipe, killing one person and injuring 11, and leaving 630 residential buildings and multiple medical facilities and schools damaged.

With respect to the comments from the representative of China, one might ask, where is the condemnation for Russia's attacks of last night? Where are the words telling Russia to end its war? Without China's support to Russia, this war could and should have ended long ago. That is not a smear; it is a fact. China has supplied Russia with the political cover and material it needs to wage this war. If China is uncomfortable with that fact, China should stop supplying Russia with what it

needs to continue the war. Then, and only then, will the United States stop calling out China for enabling an unprovoked war of aggression that violates the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a United Nations Member State.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I simply wanted to ask, Madam President, whether you just read out a summary of the statement delivered by the United States representative at the beginning of this meeting.

The President: I shall speak in my national capacity.

That was an additional statement.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I recognize here the representative of Putin's caporegime in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

As is often the case, just a few days after the Security Council meeting on the maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine (see S/PV.9816), which he labelled "a desperate attempt by the sponsors and puppeteers of the Kyiv regime to keep the issue of Ukraine afloat in the Security Council" (*S/PV.9816, p.4*), yet another meeting has been called by the Russian delegation, evidently aiming to drown this topic in a flood of lies and disinformation.

We reiterate our condemnation of such misuse of the Council's time and resources. At the same time, Russia's actions follow a troubling logic. We have already drawn the Council's attention to the clear correlation between the timing of Russian attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and Russia-initiated Council meetings — such as today's meeting. The matrix of instrumentalization of the Security Council for the purpose of waging the war is as follows: first, plan a strike; secondly, call a Security Council meeting; thirdly, carry out a strike; fourthly, hold a meeting to complain about the Western supply of weapons. That correlation has been registered in at least 18 instances. Let me highlight just a few recent examples. Russia

launched a missile attack on Ukraine on 20 December; on 20 December, Russia called a meeting. Russia launched a missile attack on Ukraine on 30 October; a meeting was called on 31 October. Russia struck Ukraine on 12 September; a meeting was called on 13 September. Russia struck Ukraine on 24 July; a meeting was called on 25 July. Russia struck Ukraine on 12 June; a meeting was called on 14 June. Russia struck Ukraine on 11 April; a meeting was called on 12 April. And so on. Russia struck Ukraine on 18 May; a meeting was called on 18 May.

This morning, Russia has once again prefaced a Security Council meeting with air terror against Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, Kherson and Kryvyi Rih. In Kyiv alone, five ballistic missiles — Iskanders or North Korean KN-23s — and 40 drones of Iranian origin were launched. Residential areas in the central districts, a business centre, the iconic St. Nicholas Cathedral, one of the city's architectural landmarks, and energy infrastructure sustained damage and destruction. The diplomatic missions of Albania, Argentina, North Macedonia, Portugal, Montenegro and Palestine were also damaged. Tragically, the attack resulted in casualties and injuries. In Kherson, within just 40 minutes, Russians fired approximately 1,000 artillery shells. The city infrastructure suffered significant damage and there were casualties and injuries among Kherson's residents.

Ukrainian law enforcement agencies have continued their work to identify those responsible for the shelling of Ukrainian cities and the deaths of Ukrainian and foreign citizens. Today the Security Service of Ukraine issued a notice of charges against Russian Colonel General Kim, who ordered the missile strike on the hotel in Kramatorsk on 24 August that killed a Reuters journalist and injured five other members of the Reuters crew. Against the backdrop of ongoing aggression and atrocities against Ukrainians, including relentless air terror, Ukraine uses its weapons against legitimate military targets on occupied Ukrainian territory and on the territory of Russia. Those targets include airfields, ammunition and fuel depots, logistical routes, military industry facilities and deployment sites for military equipment and personnel.

To the regular flood of lies and disinformation that I mentioned earlier in my statement, Putin's envoy has added today crocodile tears about human suffering and destruction. In that regard, I reiterate that there is a simple way for Russia to end the suffering and destruction

caused by the war — to end the war itself. It is more than easy to do so for Russia, the country that launched the war and continues to escalate it. Instead, Putin called yesterday for a so-called “hi-tech duel” between Russia and the Western countries, in which Russia would strike the Ukrainian capital with medium-range ballistic missiles while Western missile defence systems attempt to protect it. Evidently, even Putin's envoy chose not to mention that insane idea today, realizing that it belongs in a psychiatric ward rather than in the Security Council. Indeed, yesterday's statements from Putin left no doubt about both his pathological cruelty and his evident psychiatric issues. War and killing are tragedies and disasters for any sane person, but for Putin they are an exciting and entertaining activity to be undertaken when Russians get bored with calmness and stability. When Putin — whom even Russians label the bunker grandpa — speaks of bullets whistling over his head, no further commentary is needed.

Overall, yesterday's revelations from Putin leave no room for doubt: his regime must be neutralized as soon as possible. Appeasement, agreements, advocacy for the Kremlin or hopes that one can avoid being affected — none of this works with deranged dictators. One may try to be a *Putinverstehher*, but when Putin and his cronies grow bored again and seek another entertaining activity, one of the countries here could become the next arena for “high-tech duels”. That is why Ukraine is deeply grateful to all the partners that help us defend our sovereignty, ourselves and our children.

I reiterate that Ukraine never wanted this war and more than any other country across the globe, Ukraine wants the war to end. Forcing Russia to cease its aggression requires a powerful and effective international coalition of States that share the principles of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the peace formula and the Charter of the United Nations, with which the formula fully complies. We therefore urge the Council to focus on ways to remove the threats stemming from aggressive Russian neo-imperialism and to ensure that war criminals are held accountable.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.