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Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Bendjama/Mr. Koudri	(Algeria)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Greece	Mr. Sekeris
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. Kanu
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Ms. Wu

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Ms. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: The people of Ukraine have endured three years of devastation caused by the Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of their country in February 2022. This invasion was launched in brazen violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. The holiday and New Year's season, a time meant for peace and reflection, brought no respite, but rather an escalation and even expansion of the fighting, consistent with the dangerous pattern of the past year. Most disturbingly, in 2024 we witnessed an alarming rise in the toll of civilian casualties.

Last year, the total number of civilians killed and injured was 30 per cent higher than the year before, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The increase in casualties among children is particularly distressing. More children were killed or injured in the first three quarters of 2024 than in all of 2023. According to OHCHR, between February 2022 and 31 December 2024, at least 12,456 civilians, including 669 children, were killed. A total of 28,382 civilians, including 1,833 children, have been injured, according to OHCHR. The actual figures are likely considerably higher. Verified attacks on schools and hospitals also increased in 2024, with more than 580 educational and health facilities damaged or destroyed within nine months.

On 9 January, at least 13 people were reportedly killed and more than 100 injured in Zaporizhzhya by a Russian attack. Hostilities in the last two weeks have forced new displacements, with more than 1,600 people, including children, fleeing front-line areas, primarily in the Donetsk and Kharkiv regions, according to local authorities.

In the beginning of the new year there were also civilian casualties in Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine. On 10 January, an alleged Ukrainian strike on Donetsk city reportedly resulted in the death of two civilians and the wounding of two others at a local supermarket.

I want to repeat that we unequivocally condemn all attacks targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. Such actions, no matter where they occur, are prohibited under international law and must cease immediately. The daily attacks bring death and terror to the local population, but they have also made the situation increasingly dangerous for the diplomatic community and international organizations operating in Ukraine. On 20 December, a strike on Kyiv damaged six foreign embassies. On 10 December, a drone attack struck a vehicle of the International Atomic Energy Agency near the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. Diplomatic and international

personnel and assets must be protected at all times. For humanitarian workers too, this was another difficult year. Ten aid workers were killed and forty-one injured in the line of duty.

As fierce fighting continues in the east and south of Ukraine, deadly clashes also persist in the Kursk region of the Russian Federation. We have heard unconfirmed reports of civilian casualties and remain concerned about the impact of the hostilities on the population on both sides of the Ukrainian-Russian border. Furthermore, there are reports that military personnel from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were captured in the Kursk region of the Russian Federation. The reported involvement of the troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in fighting alongside Russian forces continues to raise serious concerns regarding further internationalization of this already dangerous conflict.

The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine remains dire. The 2025 humanitarian needs and response plan for Ukraine, launched today, estimates that 12.7 million people — roughly 36 per cent of the country's population — will require assistance this year, with \$2.6 billion needed to address their acute needs. Despite the decrease in the number of people in need, from 14.6 million in 2024 to 12.7 million in 2025, thanks to improved access to services in the major urban areas of Kyiv and Lviv, humanitarian concerns near the front-line regions have deteriorated to catastrophic levels. We must also not forget the plight of the many thousands of Ukrainian civilians living in territories of Ukraine currently occupied by the Russian Federation. The needs in those areas are estimated to be severe and worsened by extremely limited access. We renew our call for the safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief to all civilians in need.

We are grateful to the donors, who provided more than \$2.2 billion in 2024, thus enabling the United Nations to reach some 8.5 million people, 60 per cent of them women and girls. We urge the international community to fully support the 2025 humanitarian needs and response plan in order to sustain operations in an increasingly complex and dangerous environment. It bears emphasizing that the humanitarian situation is compounded by the harsh winter and the widespread damage that Russia's attacks have caused to Ukraine's energy production. Just yesterday, Ukraine suffered the most recent wave of countrywide Russian attacks systematically targeting civilian energy infrastructure. In the final months of 2024, Russia conducted at least four similar large-scale coordinated attacks. We condemn such reprehensible tactics, which terrorize the civilian population and deprive it of basic services. Those tactics must end.

The United Nations continues to work with the Government of Ukraine to restore energy generation capacity, while creating opportunities in the green energy sector.

According to reports, Russia and Ukraine conducted a prisoner exchange yesterday that enabled 50 people to return to their homes. We welcome that development and the reported exchange of more than 300 prisoners of war on 30 December 2024. We commend the efforts of all involved and urge the sides to increase the scope and pace of those exchanges. However, we remain alarmed by reports of executions of Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russian forces. In its December report, OHCHR assessed that allegations of 19 incidents since August, involving the killing of 62 individuals, were credible. OHCHR also found that the Russian Federation has used widespread and systematic torture against Ukrainian prisoners of war. The use of torture against Russian prisoners of war by Ukrainian forces has also been documented. We note that Ukrainian authorities have reported opening investigations into the accusations.

As we approach the third anniversary of Russia's invasion, global calls for de-escalation and the beginning of a process to end the fighting are growing louder.

The Secretary-General's good offices remain available to support all good-faith efforts to find a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, in line with the Charter, international law and General Assembly resolutions.

The President: I thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

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

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

All wars come to an end, and after almost three years of Russian aggression, it is beyond high time for the Security Council to reflect on how the outlook for a just and lasting peace for Ukraine can be found. In recent months, we have not seen any signs that the intensity of fighting might be fading — to the contrary. What is more, the war has been constantly gaining complexity. We are perplexed about the involvement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the war and the reports of exceptionally high casualties among their soldiers. The involvement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a threat to international security and infringes upon multiple Security Council resolutions.

At the same time, the war continues to exact a high toll on civilian lives. Just last week, Russia's attack on the city of Zaporizhzhya caused the highest number of civilian casualties in a single incident in two years, with more than 100 dead or injured. Russia also continues to carry out its unrelenting attacks against Ukrainian civilian energy infrastructure. Yesterday alone, it fired more than 100 missiles and drones, putting additional strain on energy supply in the midst of winter. Moreover, the danger of a nuclear accident continues to loom.

Let me emphasize that peace ends when the Charter is infringed upon, and peace begins when it is upheld. That central document has faced countless challenges in the past 80 years, yet it has always prevailed. Based on the experience of the Second World War, it provides building blocks to address contemporary challenges to international peace and security. Without respect for the fundamental principles of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, there cannot be a lasting peace — not in Ukraine or anywhere else.

There will also be no peace if accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity is not ensured. The activities of the International Criminal Court are central to that. Slovenia also underlines the importance of the International Court of Justice. Russia still has to implement its rulings on provisional measures with regard to the war in Ukraine.

We have a responsibility to identify avenues that will produce a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. The country and the wider region need it desperately. For every day and every week that diplomacy is postponed, drones are maiming civilians and ballistic missiles are destroying critical civilian infrastructure across Ukraine. Make no mistake — Slovenia will continue to support Ukraine in its defence against aggression, just as we will actively support all meaningful efforts in the Council and elsewhere towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Ms. Wu (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her remarks.

Nearly three years ago, Russia appalled the world with its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Putin wanted to topple Ukraine's democratically elected Government. Since then, Russia has violated the Charter of the United Nations, multiple Security Council resolutions, the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. Putin has shown the world that he has no respect for obligations under international

law. In the more than 1,000 days of his reckless war of choice, Putin has failed to achieve any of his goals in Ukraine. Instead, he has left Russia's power and influence greatly diminished, 700,000 Russian soldiers dead or injured and more than 1 million total casualties. Meanwhile, Ukraine remains strong and defiant as a free and sovereign democracy.

The United States and our many global partners continue to stand with Ukraine and with Ukraine's troops, who have fought with resilience and strength. With global help, Ukraine has held off the second-largest military in the world while Russia is suffering 1,500 casualties per day. Ukraine has fought brilliantly even as China, the second-largest economy in the world, has backed Putin, as Iran, the biggest State sponsor of terror, has armed Russia with drones and missiles and as North Korea, the most notorious nuclear-armed rogue State in the world, has supplied Russia with some 11,000 troops, missiles and countless crates of ammunition and munitions. Ukraine has defied all of them, because it is fighting for its freedom, its country, its families and its identity.

As we discuss how to achieve peace, we must remember why Ukraine is fighting back. Russia has killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians and wounded another 27,000. Russia's forces have systematically attacked Ukraine's energy infrastructure, weaponizing winter by leaving thousands of households without power. Russia's forces have abducted Ukrainian children and tried to erase their identities. As long as Russia's forces occupy Ukraine and threaten Ukrainian families, Ukrainians will not have peace. Yet China insists that Ukrainians should accept the reality of the occupation for the sake of peace.

For the sake of peace, we allowed Russia to hold 20 per cent of Georgia. For the sake of peace, we allowed Russia to occupy Crimea and now, for the sake of peace, some countries are calling on Ukraine to meet Russia halfway. We all want peace, but an outcome that rewards Putin for Russia's aggression is no peace at all. Appeasement will lead to more war. We will have peace in Ukraine only when Russia leaves Ukraine and when the Charter and international law are respected and protected. We will have peace when Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity are guaranteed. We will have peace when Ukrainian families feel safe and do not need to fight. For that reason, as the victim of Russia's aggression, Ukraine must play a leading role in determining its own future. "Nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine" — that principle is paramount.

While Russia persists in Ukraine, the United States and our partners will use all the tools at our disposal to thwart Putin's imperialist ambitions, and we will help Ukraine defend itself until we achieve a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace for Ukraine. We urge all Member States to continue to condemn Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and to demand that Russia withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. Regrettably, one country on the Council has never condemned Russia's invasion or its violation of Security Council resolutions and the Charter. Instead, it has given Putin its support. Beijing claims that it has strict export controls in place for its dual-use exports, and yet China continues to support Russia's defence industrial base with those exports. China's exports are directly fuelling Russia's war against Ukraine and its attacks on civilian infrastructure. That support makes China the decisive enabler of Russia's war.

On the other hand, the Group of Seven leaders have acted in lockstep to immobilize Russian assets, and the United States has further sanctioned some of Russia's largest banks. Europe has cut its reliance on Russian gas. Consequently, inflation in Russia is at 9 per cent. Interest rates are at 21 per cent. Russia has burned through much of its reserve funds. One million Russians have fled Russia, and the Kremlin can no longer produce enough material to replenish its war capabilities. If China had worked with global leaders and cut off Russia's ability to make war

instead of fuelling it, the war would be over. But the United States will continue to stand with the more than 100 countries that do condemn Putin's aggression and to call on Putin to get out of Ukraine.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary General DiCarlo for her helpful briefing today.

With the arrival of a new year, a time when many of us are looking forward and embracing possibilities, it is sobering to consider how, for Ukrainian people, so little has changed. Russia continues to attack civilians, target energy security and threaten nuclear security. Just last week, Russia launched one of its deadliest aerial attacks in months, resulting in at least 19 civilians dead and 132 injured. Ukraine continues to prove its determination to restore its freedom and territorial integrity, to exercise its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and to secure the return of its abducted children. On his visit to Kyiv today, my Prime Minister made clear the United Kingdom's long-standing commitment to Ukraine's security.

On the cusp of the fourth year of Russia's war, Ukraine continues to fight for its survival as a nation. We must not let its courage and bravery be in vain. That is why, when we talk about peace in Ukraine, we must be absolutely clear about what real peace means. Peace means a sovereign and secure Ukraine, able to flourish without the constant threat of territorial invasion. As members of the Security Council, I trust that we can all agree that this is the only definition of peace that we can accept. It is that peace that Ukraine continues to fight for. Ukraine has made clear its desire for peace and has set out its proposals in President Zelenskyy's 10-point plan. President Putin, however, calls for Ukraine to withdraw Ukrainian forces from Ukraine's own territory, to give up protecting its citizens and to sacrifice its right to choose its alliances. That shows his complete contempt for Ukraine's sovereignty and territory, for international law and for the Charter. To Putin, peace in Ukraine means complete surrender in the face of wanton aggression — something no country would accept.

It is no longer Russia alone that threatens Ukraine's security; the direct participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea troops in combat operations is another dangerous expansion of Putin's illegal war against Ukraine and further proof that he has no interest in peace. In return for their support, Russia is emboldening the regimes in both Tehran and Pyongyang, which has direct implications for global security. That reckless behaviour is not just a significant concern for Ukraine's security — it is a concern for us all.

For as long as Russia's aggression continues, the path to peace will not be an easy one. That is why we must stand behind Ukraine and help ensure that any peace is enduring. Together we must send a clear message to Putin: redrawing borders by force does not pay.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her detailed update on the situation in Ukraine.

Soon we will mark three years since the invasion of Ukraine and the number of civilian casualties continues to rise. The consequences of the attack on Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity undermine the foundations of international peace and security. In view of that, Panama rejects the use of force and makes a strong appeal for respect for international humanitarian law and the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations.

The population is suffering the effects of the war and access to humanitarian assistance is essential. In that regard, we commend the work of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. We demand that humanitarian personnel be

protected. They make great efforts to provide assistance to the thousands of civilians who are unjustly affected.

Since August 2024, more than 170,000 people have fled eastern Ukraine, adding to the 3.6 million internally displaced persons and more than 6.75 million refugees who have sought safety outside the country. Tragically, 90 per cent of Ukrainian refugees in Europe are women and children, underscoring their vulnerability to the devastating effects of the conflict. According to UNICEF data, since February 2022, at least 2,406 children have been killed or injured in Ukraine. That chilling figure equates to an average of 16 children killed or injured each week. This is not a distant or abstract conflict; it has a face, and that face belongs to the children suffering the cruellest consequences of the war.

In the regions on the front line, the situation is dire. Three million people lack essential services and medical care, while attacks on schools and hospitals have become alarmingly common. According to the United Nations, 1,496 educational centres and 662 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed. Moreover, 1.7 million children do not have access to safe drinking water and 3.4 million lack centralized sanitation, which significantly increases the risk of illness in the depths extreme winter conditions.

Faced with that reality, Panama is speaking out to demand that all parties to the conflict comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law. It is imperative that all necessary precautions be taken to protect civilians, especially children. Also, we urgently call for the implementation of tangible measures to prevent the military use of schools, in line with resolutions 2601 (2021) of 2021 adopted by the Security Council.

Furthermore, Panama reiterates its firm commitment to strengthening the active, meaningful and safe participation of women in peace and security efforts in Ukraine. We welcome the positive impact of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund, which has provided substantial support to women-led organizations in Ukraine, strengthening their capacity to contribute to the planning and to the response to the crisis. Those initiatives ensure their access to essential services such as security, the protection of their rights and the strengthening of their participation in the socioeconomic recovery of the country.

For Panama, the return of the children and all Ukrainian civilians illegally detained is of vital humanitarian, moral and ethical importance. Taking into consideration Panama's participation in the Ministerial Conference on the Human Dimension of Ukraine's 10-Point Peace Formula, which resulted in the Montreal Pledge, which refers to the return of prisoners of war, illegally detained civilians and deported children.

We note with great apprehension the continuing explosions and military actions in the vicinity of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. It is also of great concern that the seven indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear security during an armed conflict, set out by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2022, remain partially or totally compromised.

A just and lasting peace must go hand in hand with full respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her informative briefing.

As we speak, Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues unabated. Ukraine continues to fight for its very existence, its citizens forced to endure immense

suffering in an illegal war, a war of conquest in blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

As we approach the three-year mark of Russia's full-scale invasion, the plight of Ukraine continues. Each passing day brings further death, destruction and hardship; civilians killed in attacks on residential areas; homes reduced to rubble; schools, hospitals and critical infrastructure decimated. Millions of Ukrainians face daily struggles during the winter to secure heating, water and electricity. Those are not just abstract words in a statement. They represent human lives cruelly cut short by that senseless war. They represent the suffering endured by children, by families, by entire communities and by an entire nation. And for what cause? For the Kremlin's dream of turning back the clock to a world where might makes right, where borders can be redrawn by brute force. That is the absurdity we face — an unprovoked war fuelled by lies and imperialist nostalgia.

Russia claims to act in self-defence, yet it is Ukrainian cities that lie in ruins. Russia claims to defend its people, yet it has sent hundreds of thousands of its own soldiers to needless death. Russia claims to be an advocate for the poorest and most vulnerable against alleged colonialism, yet it is fuelling instability in the world's most fragile regions by attacking global food supply routes. Those crimes cannot go unanswered. The war has global consequences. The world cannot afford to stand idly by as Russia tramples on international law and human dignity.

The suffering the Ukrainians is widespread. It is harrowing. But it is not — and I repeat, not — inevitable. The war could stop immediately if only the aggressor, Russia, stopped attacking Ukraine and withdrew its forces. We call on Russia to do just that. And when that day comes, when the fighting does finally end, Russia will need to answer for its unlawful actions. Russia must be held accountable. Denmark supports all efforts to ensure full accountability. Justice demands it.

It is also clear that Russia is not waging this war alone. We are deeply concerned about Russia's intensified military cooperation with third countries. It continues to rely on drones from Iran and on artillery, ammunition, ballistic missiles and even troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — breaching resolutions the Council has agreed on by consensus. Russia would not have been able to rebuild its military-industrial base without significant economic support and dual-use technology from third countries, all of which help sustain its illegal war. This practical cooperation all points to a further, more sinister trend — Russia is forging dangerous alliances, with ramifications that extend far beyond the continent of Europe.

Denmark stands in full solidarity with Ukraine. We remain steadfast in our commitment to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will not waver in our support for Ukraine's right to self-defence and to freely choose its own future. We will continue to stand up to Russia's aggression and those countries who seek to support it with steadfast determination. We will continue to call out Russia's attempts to legitimize its war in the Chamber. We do so undeterred, guided by our commitment to uphold and defend international law and the United Nations Charter.

Let 2025 be the year that we prove that the world will not allow tyranny to triumph. Let it be the year we prove that aggressors are not allowed to violate the sovereignty of a nation with impunity. And let it be the year that the ruinous devastation of this war is brought to an end. We will continue to stand with Ukraine today, tomorrow and for as long as it takes.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish to thank Ms. DiCarlo for her briefing.

For almost three years, Ukraine has weathered the large-scale aggression launched by Russia. This conflict has a clear aggressor, Russia, which is violating the Charter of the United Nations, is flouting entire sections of international law and is adopting an escalatory stance. And there is a victim, Ukraine, a sovereign State which, pursuant to the Charter, has the right to defend its independence and territorial integrity.

France calls upon Russia to immediately cease its war of aggression and to withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders. We condemn the indiscriminate strikes being stepped up against cities, civilians and energy infrastructure of Ukraine, in violation of international humanitarian law. On 8 January, Russia again staged a bombing of Zaporizhzhya that claimed at least 13 lives. The toll of this conflict continues to grow and is devastating. France condemns the war crimes committed in Ukraine. Russia is not shy away from the forcible transfer or deportation of children. The International Criminal Court has qualified such actions as war crimes and has stated that there is enough evidence to establish the involvement of Russian authorities at the highest level.

Russia continues its efforts to undermine the international non-proliferation architecture by equipping itself with drones and ballistic missile missiles from Iran and with munitions and ballistic missiles from North Korea. The increase in North Korean military support, with the direct engagement of troops is an indication of the increasing difficulties encountered by Russia. That engagement stands as a violation of Council resolutions that Russia itself had supported. This is a direct threat to the security of Europe and international security. Russia must uphold its obligations as a permanent member of the Security Council. France urges all States to refrain from supplying Russia with military equipment, dual-use goods and any components that fuel this war.

Russia continues to ignore the order issued by the International Court of Justice that demanded that Russia immediately suspend its military operation, as of 16 March 2022. Russia continues to ignore the General Assembly resolutions that have condemned its aggression on seven occasions, with an overwhelming majority, calling for respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity. The perpetrators of war crimes must not go unpunished. We recall our support for the International Criminal Court and Ukrainian courts, as they seek to ensure accountability. The work of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine remains vital.

France remains steadfast in its determination to continue and bolster its support for Ukraine in order to equip it with the means to exercise its right to self-defence and to thwart Russia's aggression. We will continue to work to see the restoration of a just and lasting peace in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): I too extend my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her timely briefing.

As we approach the third anniversary of the war in Ukraine, my delegation is dismayed by the fact that the situation on the ground has gotten worse. We also regret that this unjustifiable war has been conducted in total disregard of international law.

Russia's attack against the city of Zaporizhzhya last week, causing heavy civilian casualties, was not an isolated, one-time incident. Indeed, it was a part of an escalated Russian campaign targeting cities across Ukraine since last year.

As Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo briefed the Council today, civilian casualties in Ukraine increased last year by 30 per cent, compared with the previous year. Such a casualty increase was largely caused by Russia's use of powerful aerial glide bombs, missiles and explosive-laden drones in populated areas, a significant number of which were procured from abroad, particularly from North Korea. We

reiterate our condemnation of indiscriminate attacks against civilians and civilian objects. And if that were not enough, just three days ago, in the Security Council's Arria Formula meeting, we were able to hear vivid accounts of the horrible treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees at the hands of the Russian authorities.

My delegation is also appalled by the deplorable continuation of so-called double-tap attacks against the first responders. As a result, dedicated medical and humanitarian workers continue to sustain significant casualties in Ukraine.

The testimonies of two North Korean soldiers, recently captured by Ukraine's military in the Kursk region, demonstrate clearly that North Korean troops are engaged in combat and are being treated as expendable. According to video footage released a few days ago, those two North Korean soldiers indicated that they were unaware of being deployed for the war against Ukraine. They were told, instead, that they were merely participating in combat simulation drills. As a native Korean speaker, I can tell that those two soldiers definitely spoke in Korean, with North Korean accents.

Nevertheless, Russia and North Korea still refuse to acknowledge the dispatch of North Korean soldiers and falsely claim that the military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang is in full compliance with obligations under international law. But the entirety of their military cooperation is in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions.

My Government estimates that North Korean troops are currently sustaining significant casualties, with more than 300 soldiers killed and 2,700 injured, out of some 12,000 soldiers dispatched to Russia. Such huge casualties within such a short period of time are due to the inhumane tactics shown on the front lines.

The North Korean soldiers used old-fashioned human-wave tactics and were then chased and attacked by Ukrainian drones. According to the reports, they were even crossing minefields in a single column three to four metres apart — like human mine detectors — without cover or mine-clearing vehicles. If a soldier is blown up, the medics go behind to pick up the body, while the rest continue, one after the other. Furthermore, the troops have even been told to take their own lives rather than surrender. In memos carried by those killed, the North Korean authorities pressured them to commit suicide to avoid capture. Despite Pyongyang's efforts to muzzle any rumours in that regard, our intelligence reports assess that news of the troop deployments is now spreading across North Korea, and the families of those dispatched have expressed terrible fear and anxiety about the fact that their sons and brothers are being used as slave soldiers and mere cannon fodder.

Given all that information, we can plainly see that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea treats its troops only as a cynical means of sustaining its regime and advancing its illegal weapons of mass destruction programme financially and technologically. We once again condemn North Korea's participation in the illegal war on Ukraine and the ongoing expanding illegal military cooperation between Moscow and Pyongyang. It must stop immediately.

The resilience that Ukraine has demonstrated to the world in the past three years is incredible. Not only have the Ukrainians fought back against Russia's invasion, despite Russia's relentless attacks they have also worked closely with United Nations agencies and international partners to rebuild their nation, including through a series of reconstruction projects. In that regard, the Republic of Korea recently announced a contribution of \$20 million to launch new humanitarian assistance and early-recovery projects in Ukraine through the United Nations Development Programme as part of our multi-year support framework. We reiterate our principled position that any peace plan must be in line with the principles of Charter of the United Nations

and international law, and we re-emphasize our firm commitment to standing alongside the Ukrainian people until they achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in their lands.

Mr. Sekeris (Greece): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

During another holiday season, Ukraine had to defend its political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity against a powerful neighbour and permanent member of the Security Council, as Russia launched new, large-scale aerial bombing attacks on Ukrainian cities and territories that continued well into the new year. Only last week, the aerial attack on Zaporizhzhya resulted in the highest number of civilian casualties in almost two years. It was the latest in a string of relentless attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in the middle of another harsh winter. The overall figures reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights leave no room for complacency. The year 2024 saw a 30 per cent increase on the previous year in the total number of killed and injured Ukrainians. Fourteen million are in need of humanitarian assistance, while the most vulnerable, particularly children, women and the elderly, are bearing the brunt of Russia's aggression. Casualties among children — the future of Ukraine — have now exceeded 2,500, while many women and girls have been subjected to conflict-related sexual violence. We must remind ourselves that it is always the people who must suffer the scourge of war.

Greece condemns attacks on civilians in the strongest possible terms. We join the calls for an immediate end to all attacks on residential areas and critical infrastructure in Ukraine and for all parties to adhere to their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. In recent months, instead of seeing this war of aggression, already in its third year, winding down, we have witnessed a grave escalation. The presence of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a theatre of war endangers international peace and security on an expanded regional scale with potentially far-reaching consequences for global nuclear security. Greece is a steadfast supporter of the critical work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and calls for respect for the seven pillars and five basic principles introduced by IAEA Director General Grossi.

The war has had global repercussions and impacts on international food security, affecting economies and the basic needs of populations around the world, especially in Africa. Russia's attacks on Ukraine's ports and third countries' vessels have aggravated the security situation in the Black Sea, obstructing the export of Ukrainian grain by sea. In that respect, we support the Secretary-General in his engagement to revive the Ukrainian grain initiative, following Russia's withdrawal.

Greece's foreign policy has always been defined by its commitment and adherence to international law, and the belief that all disputes can be resolved through dialogue is embedded in our culture. We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. On that basis, we support a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, which requires, first and foremost, the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and numerous General Assembly resolutions.

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her valuable briefing on the situation in Ukraine and the region.

We are holding this meeting at a critical juncture. Next month, February 2025, will mark three years since the outbreak of hostilities in Ukraine. The situation continues

to be a cause for grave concern, in particular because of the disproportionate toll that the conflict has had on the lives of civilians. The considerable material damage and loss of civilian infrastructure is equally disturbing and deplorable. Further escalation would only exacerbate the current crisis. We need a speedy cessation of hostilities and a solution that brings sustainable and lasting peace.

My delegation would like to underscore the need to give primacy to dialogue and diplomacy rather than further fuelling and escalating the conflict. The solution lies in dialogue and negotiations, not on the battlefield. Pakistan stands ready to play a constructive role in promoting the diplomatic endeavours aimed at bringing an end to the conflict, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Yusuf (Somalia): I am grateful to Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her invaluable insights into the situation on the ground in Ukraine, highlighting critical areas requiring our immediate attention.

We express our solidarity with all those affected by the conflict and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to a peaceful resolution of the dispute, as outlined in the Charter of the United Nations. As the conflict in Ukraine nears its third anniversary, the prolonged hostilities and ongoing escalation are profoundly concerning. The ongoing military activities underscore the urgent need for de-escalation and renewed diplomatic efforts.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for an immediate ceasefire and a return to negotiations, as the only viable path to enduring peace. We note with concern the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, which remains severe, with millions displaced and in dire need of assistance. Recent reports indicate that more than 12 million people, including 2 million children, require multisectoral humanitarian assistance. Somalia emphasizes the importance of ensuring unhindered access for humanitarian workers and the establishment of safe corridors for the delivery of essential services. Vulnerable populations, particularly women, children and those with disabilities, continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. We join the call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and prioritize the protection of those groups, ensuring that they have access to the necessary aid, medical care and education. In that vein, we welcome the recent positive development of a prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine, which represents a glimmer of hope and humanitarian progress and a potential pathway for dialogue and mutual understanding.

In addressing the maintenance of international peace and security, we stress that there can be no military solution or decisive victory that can end the conflict in Ukraine. In that context, it is essential to maintain open channels of communication and create conditions conducive to diplomatic engagements. The international community must support efforts to de-escalate tensions and facilitate constructive dialogue between the parties involved. We encourage all Member States to work collectively towards creating an environment that enables the peaceful resolution of this conflict.

In conclusion, we remain committed to working alongside all members of the Council and all members of the international community to achieve that goal. We are convinced that, through collective effort and unwavering commitment to peaceful resolution in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, we can help bring an end to this conflict.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing, and I welcome the participation of the representatives of Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Estonia and the European Union in today's meeting.

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has created a humanitarian catastrophe of epic proportions, with the vast majority of civilian casualties and damage to educational and health facilities occurring in the territory of Ukraine. Guyana is alarmed by the recent intensification of attacks against critical civilian infrastructure, resulting in immeasurable human suffering for millions of innocent people. Recent attacks against energy infrastructure have also resulted in power outages affecting more than 1 million people across Ukraine and having an impact on access to essential services in several regions. We have repeatedly expressed our grave concern about the impact of this conflict on civilians, with seemingly little to no effort being made to minimize civilian harm.

Even as we approach the third year of this war, there appears to be no respite from the mounting wave of violence. We continue to receive report after report of indiscriminate missile and drone strikes. As Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo recalled, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has reported a 30 per cent increase in the number of civilians killed and injured in 2024, with this month's attack in Zaporizhzhya city causing the highest number of civilian casualties in a single incident in almost two years. Also deeply alarming are the findings of the human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, pointing to patterns of torture and other forms of human rights abuses being committed against prisoners of war and other detainees. Those violations must end.

International humanitarian law is clear: parties to conflict must take all feasible precautions to minimize civilian harm. Yet, repeated violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law continue to feature in this war. Guyana again stresses that the consequences of violations of international law are not confined to borders and cannot be left unchecked. We insist on adherence to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, Guyana reiterates its call for the cessation of hostilities and for full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We call, once again, on the Russian Federation to immediately withdraw its military forces from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine.

History has taught us that in war, there are no winners and that peace achieved through force is not sustainable. We support those who seek to apply the tools of diplomacy to bring about a peaceful and lasting settlement, and we appeal to the parties to commit to a serious diplomatic process to end the conflict. Meanwhile, we must all uphold our responsibility, and, as custodians of peace and defenders of the Charter of the United Nations, we must protect the vulnerable. We must end this war now.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will have to interrupt the dull anti-Russian mantras of the Western members of the Security Council. We are, after all, gathered together here today precisely to listen to those mantras, even though all this is nothing but a box-ticking exercise, needed to somehow maintain the illusion that the Ukrainian issue remains on the Security Council's radar. In reality, the Ukrainian issue today boils down to just a few points that really deserve the attention of our colleagues, specifically given the fact that those are the points about which our Western colleagues have not uttered a single word.

Since our most recent meeting (see S/PV.9816), the situation of the Ukrainian armed forces on the battlefield has significantly deteriorated. Ukraine itself acknowledges that in the past 10 days alone, the Russian army has liberated eight towns, including Kurakhove, the Ukrainian armed forces' most important stronghold. The eastern front was also broken through in a number of other places, several hundred Ukrainian soldiers and foreign mercenaries were surrounded and taken prisoner, and hundreds of pieces of military equipment were destroyed. Such large cities as Pokrovsk, which is soon going to become Krasnoarmeysk, Toretsk,

soon to be Dzhерzhinsk, and Chasiv Yar are about to fall. In some areas, Russian troops have almost reached the borders of the Dnipropetrovsk oblast.

Ukrainians are increasingly reluctant to fight for Zelenskyy's corrupt clique and Western geopolitical interests. The data on the number of deserters have already been repeatedly voiced by us in this Chamber. According to the Ukrainian Ground Forces command, more than half a million people are wanted for evading mobilization. Zelenskyy's office is, of course, trying to conceal the scope of those developments. Nevertheless, from time to time, new facts are leaked to the media, allowing us to draw conclusions about what is really going on. For example, at the beginning of the year, journalists reported that Ukraine opened an investigation on charges of "desertion" against the 155th separate mechanized "Anne of Kyiv" brigade, which was equipped and trained in France. A total of 1,700 of the brigade's 2,300 servicemen went absent without leave soon after being sent to the front — and that is an elite unit. What, then, can we say about men who are caught on the streets, only to be thrown into the bloodbath as cannon fodder with little or no training. It is no surprise that people seize the earliest opportunity to surrender, and the main danger for them are the "barrier troops" of Ukrainian nationalists who are shooting in the back those who want to retreat.

The Kyiv regime's puppeteers in Washington are, of course, unhappy about this situation, as they worry that their multi-billion-dollar investment in the anti-Russia project and weaponry they supplied may turn out to be useless and that the Kyiv regime is likely to ingloriously collapse, just as the pro-American regime in Afghanistan did in 2021. Ignoring the outcry of ordinary Ukrainians who do not want to be sent into a senseless meat grinder by forced mobilization, they are now insisting that the expired Ukrainian stage actor lower the conscription age in the country from 25 to 18. And in doing so, they are disregarding the opinion of experts who say that many men in that age bracket have already left Ukraine and that the number of people needed who are willing to die cannot be obtained using that measure.

The former actor, Zelenskyy himself, is doing his best to make his masters believe that his regime is still capable of fighting. He is ignoring the continuing collapse of the Eastern front, and he is throwing all the Western-trained reserves into the Kursk oblast, where the Ukrainian troops, despite suffering huge daily losses, still control less than one third of the territory that they captured in August 2024. The other day, he undertook yet another failed attempt at a counteroffensive there, but the Ukrainian armed forces were pushed back, and they lost thousands of soldiers and hundreds of units of Western-supplied equipment.

What, then, is left for the leader of the Kyiv junta in this grim situation? He is trying to win new "media victories" by attacking objects in Russia's territory with drones and long-range Western missiles. The effectiveness of those attacks is close to zero, but some damage is being done by the debris. Furthermore, there is continued shelling of peaceful Russian territories, killing civilians. For example, early this year, as a result of a targeted and deliberate strike by a Ukrainian drone on the Donetsk-Gorlovka highway, a freelance correspondent for Izvestia, Alexander Martemyanov, was killed, and other Russian reporters were wounded. Donetsk and Belgorod oblasts are being shelled regularly. Currently, however, the Ukrainian armed forces' artillery does not reach these territories, and the nationalists have to use missile systems. What stands out in the Kyiv regime's series of attacks is the 11 January strike on the compressor station of the TurkStream gas pipeline in the Krasnodar region. I want to point out that a few days before, the expired-term Ukrainian President had refused to renew the contract under which the gas flowed through Ukraine to Europe, a significant step in further undermining the economic potential of the "old" continent. We have every reason to believe that the attack on the TurkStream infrastructure was instigated by Washington and London with the aim

of steering the European Union towards expensive liquid natural gas from the United States. It should not be forgotten that it is those two countries that are impeding an objective international investigation into the September 2022 terrorist attack on the Nord Stream pipelines. The conclusions are what we might term obvious.

The desire of the sponsors of the Kyiv regime to save their collapsing anti-Russian project at all costs has so far prevailed over any sensible ideas about the need to find a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian conflict and deal with the reasons for it, about which some Western politicians have been increasingly speaking out. It is true, however, that there has recently been a marked shift in the rhetoric of the United States and its satellites. At the beginning they talked about the importance of ensuring victory for Ukraine. Then it became about their willingness to support the Kyiv regime for “as long as it takes”, followed by talk about the unacceptability of a Russian victory. And now the subject is the need to secure a strong negotiating position for the sinking Ukrainian ship. That is making Ukraine’s performing artist nervous. He and his entourage are talking openly about the need for some kind of tragedy on a massive scale that could revive the Western public’s support for Ukraine, some heinous provocation on the level of Bucha, thanks to which he and the British succeeded in scuppering the almost-finalized Russian-Ukrainian negotiations in April 2022.

As we have said, the usurper Zelenskyy is nervous not so much about Ukraine’s clearly inescapable defeat as about the holding of elections and the probability that the new United States Administration will review the aid supplied to Ukraine, which will inevitably expose the scale of the corruption in the country covered up by him. That is why he has recently been trying as hard as he can to provoke Russia by striking various targets on our territory, with the aim of eliciting a large-scale response from us. But to his disappointment, Russia is still not responding to his provocations and has continued to strike only objects related to Ukraine’s military capabilities. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the tragedies that occur when debris of shot down drones and missiles falls on civilian infrastructure are the result of the fact that Ukrainian air defence systems are deployed in residential areas, in violation of international humanitarian law, and they are clearly not enough for the shock waves that Kyiv’s ringleader is seeking. There are persistent rumours in Kyiv that the regime and its British mentors are preparing a massive, bloody provocation that will be blamed on Russia.

In the circumstances, the call most commonly heard on Ukrainian social networks today is “flee Ukraine before it is too late.” And Ukrainians are fleeing the “Zelenskyy concentration camp”, as citizens have increasingly been referring to the country since the former comedian cancelled any kind of elections. Potential soldiers are fleeing training grounds in Western countries, politicians, as are members of the Verkhovna Rada members, Supreme Court judges, diplomats and athletes. At the beginning of the year, Ukrainian media outlets reported that those who had left the country included Oleksandr Poklad, Deputy Head of Ukraine’s Security Service, Oleksandr Ruvyn, former Director of the Kyiv Research Institute of Forensic Medicine, and Ihor Cherkasky, former Head of the Financial Monitoring Service.

Today Ms. DiCarlo told us of the alleged torture of Ukrainian servicemen, citing information that was carefully supplied by various bodies and commissions with the help of the Western and Ukrainian propaganda machine. But let me read former Verkhovna Rada member Artem Dmytruk’s account of the torture he endured in 2022 when Ukrainian Security Service officers attempted to extract evidence and confessions of high treason from him. The main accusation against him was that he had spoken in defence of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Here are some extracts from his horrific account, which is available online.

“I was pushed down onto the cold and wet floor. I heard screams and moans from my friends nearby. A little further away I heard the screams and moans of other people and horrible sounds of torture [...] I was beaten severely [...]. They tried to gouge my eyes out [...] I lost consciousness several times and fell off the chair and when I came to, I was tortured again.”

They threatened to shoot him or cripple him. Afterwards, he was moved to the gym of the Odessa office of the Ukrainian Security Service, where he was forced to say loudly and clearly on camera that he would never again criticize Volodymyr Zelenskyy or his Chief of Staff, Andrey Yermak. In addition, they tried to turn him into a Ukrainian security service agent to counter the opposition to Zelenskyy. And Dmytruk is not the only politician saying that there are Security Service concentration camps in Kyiv. In particular, another Verkhovna Rada member, Oleksandr Dubinsky, had previously spoken about their existence in Kyiv. According to him, more than 300 people were tortured in them in order to obtain evidence against the now President-elect of the United States, Donald Trump, so as to use it to influence the United States election campaign.

Those are interesting revelations, right? They can give us an idea of what the American journalist Gonzalo Lira went through after August 2023, when he was arrested. He was tortured to death and died in the dungeons of a Ukrainian Security Service prison a year ago, on 12 January 2024. Then there is what the 70-year-old human rights activist Elena Berezhnaya, who remains unbroken by the Zelenskyy clique, had to endure. A month ago, she was sentenced to 14 years in prison, after months of torture in the Security Service dungeons, for speaking out at the United Nations about the Kyiv regime's human rights violations. And I have not even mentioned the torture that Russian prisoners of war are being subjected to in Ukrainian prisons.

I have a rhetorical question for my Western colleagues. How does all of that square with their sedulously promoted narrative about how democracy is flourishing in Ukraine? We have never had any illusions about that. We have always been well aware of what has been going on there ever since the anti-constitutional coup of 2014, backed by the United States and its satellites. Unlike our colleagues, we can speak the truth and have no need to engage in hypocrisy, as our British colleagues are doing, for example. At their informal Arria Formula meeting on 13 January, they brought openly Nazi Ukrainians to New York, one of whom has a tattoo of the German Totenkopf division, which Britain convicted of the murder of 97 British prisoners of war in 1940.

I would like to conclude my statement today by quoting what Marco Rubio, the nominee for United States Secretary of State, said at yesterday's Senate hearing. “Ukraine's problem is not that it is running out of money, but that it is running out of Ukrainians.” Let me add that the problem is also that the people of Ukraine do not want to fight for a person who usurped power and has turned their country into a concentration camp. The sooner our Western colleagues realize that, the better it will be for them and for the citizens of Ukraine themselves.

Mr. Kanu (Sierra Leone): This briefing convened at the request of Slovenia and the United States offers another important opportunity to emphasize the urgent need for peace in Ukraine and the creation of a stable and peaceful region, nearly three years into the conflict. I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her comprehensive briefing.

As we approach the third anniversary of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the devastating effects of the war and its intensity remain evident. Despite the continuing efforts of the Security Council and the broader international community, a peaceful solution remains elusive, as the conflicting parties persist in prioritizing military

objectives. Sierra Leone is deeply concerned about the intensification of the conflict, particularly through the increased use of stand-off weapons such as long-range missiles, drones and glide bombs, whose extended reach and multiple applications result in greater casualties and further suffering.

In the past two weeks alone, both the Russian Federation and Ukraine have launched large-scale air strikes into each other's territories. Recently, long-range missiles fired into Russian territory caused significant damage to factories, gas storage facilities, oil depots and led to school closures and airport restrictions. In retaliation, over 117 missiles and drones were launched at Ukraine's energy infrastructure, including key gas facilities.

We also take note of Ukraine's letter dated 9 January 2025, addressed to the Secretary-General, which reported a large-scale Russian aerial attack on Zaporizhzhya on 8 January, resulting in at least 13 deaths and 110 injuries. That attack represents the highest number of civilian casualties in the past two years, with further damage to residential buildings, transport facilities and administrative offices.

The Head of the Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine recently underscored that "aerial glide bombs have become one of the greatest threats to civilians in cities along the front line" and highlighted that their use contributed to a 30 per cent increase in casualties from 2023 to 2024.

We have condemned the violations of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law. Given the intensity of the conflict, we are deeply concerned about the indiscriminate use of long-range missiles and drones in densely populated areas, with disregard for the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

Concerning the recent attacks on Zaporizhzhya, we reiterate the warning of Director General Rafael Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency about the risk of destabilizing the nuclear power plant in the city. Further attacks could result in a nuclear disaster, with catastrophic consequences for the region and the world. We call on both parties to refrain from launching any attacks on or near nuclear facilities in both Ukraine and Russia.

Sierra Leone remains profoundly concerned about the humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict. The suffering of civilians in Ukraine has been immense, with daily loss of life, injuries and the destruction of homes and properties. The United Nations has reported more than 28,000 civilian casualties and more than 10,000 deaths in Ukraine since the conflict began. Nearly one third of the population has been displaced, with 6.3 million people fleeing to neighbouring countries as refugees and 3.7 million internally displaced.

The ongoing targeting of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has led to the destruction of more than 60 per cent of the country's energy generation capacity, resulting in widespread power outages. Millions of people across Ukraine now endure daily electricity shortages, limiting access to essential services such as water, mobile networks and public transportation, while disrupting children's education, particularly those attending school remotely.

Sierra Leone reiterates that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are strictly prohibited under international law. We call on all parties to comply with international law obligations, particularly international humanitarian law.

As the civilian population faces a harsh winter during the third year of the conflict, with temperatures plummeting as low as -20 °C, vulnerable groups, especially children, the elderly and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately affected by those disruptions to essential services. While we note Ukraine's Parliament's

adoption of Law No. 9381 to address the energy crisis, we emphasize that the attacks on energy infrastructure must cease.

The 2024 humanitarian needs and response plan for Ukraine is aimed at assisting more than 14 million Ukrainians with food, medical services and other essential humanitarian aid. The plan also targets 1.8 million people in need of winter assistance through March 2025. We echo the appeal of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for additional support to address the funding gap for that vital plan.

I would like to conclude by recalling Sierra Leone's initial statement in the Council regarding the conflict last January, in which it stressed that conflict only breeds destruction, suffering and the loss of lives (see S/PV.9526). A year later, that remains the tragic reality: death, destruction and suffering on an even larger scale.

We once again urge all parties to commit to political and diplomatic engagement that will lead to the cessation of hostilities and ultimately to the resolution of the conflict. We call for good-faith diplomatic efforts to address the legitimate concerns of all parties involved.

Finally, I reiterate our call for the full respect of Ukraine's national sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

As the crisis in Ukraine continues, war and conflict are spreading, leading to an increase civilian casualties and an increasingly dire humanitarian situation. It is heart-wrenching and worrisome. Every day that the war continues is another day it causes harm, destruction, unrest and instability. China once again calls upon all parties to abide by the three principles of no expansion of the battlefield, no escalation in the fighting and no provocation by any party. We call on the parties to the conflict to put an early end to hostilities, start negotiations and restore peace, and we call on the international community to actively create conditions and offer help to that end.

China's position on the Ukraine issue has been consistent and clear. In summary, it is to promote peace, facilitate talks and find a political solution. Since the beginning of conflict, we have maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, all purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed, the legitimate security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously and all efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported. China has issued a strong call for an early cessation of hostilities and for a diplomatic solution to the disputes.

Over the past three years, China has worked tirelessly to restore peace and facilitate talks. We have remained engaged with Russia and Ukraine and have had exchanges of views frequently with European countries and with the United States. China has sent its special envoys four times to relevant countries for shuttle diplomacy. Together with Brazil and other countries in the global South, we launched a Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis in the United Nations. The Group has met twice so far and made concrete efforts to advocate and build consensus for peace. It has been widely recognized and commended by the international community.

For some time now and, in fact today, the United States representative has been peddling a false narrative to discredit and smear China at Security Council meetings on the Ukraine issue. That is completely unacceptable. It has mainly three points: first, China provides military supplies to Russia; secondly, China provides political cover for Russia; thirdly, if China had not supported Russia, the war would have ended long ago. Those three points are all downright lies.

In previous meetings, I have responded to the United States falsehoods many times. Today I will be more straightforward.

First, if China had really provided military supplies to Russia, the situation on the battleground would not be what it is now. Secondly, if China had provided political cover for Russia, it would not have repeatedly stressed in public the importance of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Thirdly, if China really did not want an early end to the war, it would not have sent its special envoys on multiple shuttle diplomacy missions, nor would it have worked with the global South countries to establish the Group of Friends for Peace on the Ukraine crisis. The fact is, since the beginning, the United States has used the war in Ukraine to advance its geopolitical strategy and serve its own agenda.

In summary, first, the United States wants nothing more than for Russia to be weakened and defeated through the war so that the United States can dominate European security and further increase its influence in Europe.

Secondly, through the war, the United States wants nothing but to stoke bloc confrontation, sow division and contain and isolate China — a strategic rival in its eyes.

Thirdly, through the war, the United States wants nothing but to project a positive image to offset the international community's criticism of its policies on the Middle East. Unfortunately, the United States has failed on all three attempts. The United States refuses to reflect upon its own actions and the major responsibility it bears for the start and continuation of the war to this day. Instead, the United States chooses to attack and discredit China in desperation. By doing so, the United States vents its exasperation, diverts attention and shifts blame. Such acts will only further expose its blatant practice of political manipulation and double standards for the world to see.

Finally, I would like to note that lately there have been critical messages from Russia and Ukraine on their interest to enter into negotiations. The international community's discussions on the Ukraine crisis have increasingly focused on peace and converged on negotiations. The development of the Ukraine issue is entering a critical period. We hope that the international community, including the United States, can strengthen unity and cooperation and make concrete efforts to encourage parties to demonstrate political will, start peace talks at an early date to end the war and restore peace and stability on the continent of Europe.

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

I thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing.

Today we are meeting again to address the continued deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, which, unfortunately, shows no concrete progress so far. Despite the numerous calls of the international community and of Members of this very Council for de-escalation, restraint and dialogue, the situation on the ground remains very concerning. The conflict is gaining intensity and widening, and interactions between the parties remain very tense.

More importantly, this war is causing the loss of innocent lives, immense suffering and displacement and the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure. Moreover, escalation and hostilities are still marking the conflict, heavily driven by the logic of polarization. Real prospects for peace, for the moment, are almost non-existent. In the meantime, the war continues to affect the population in the region and beyond, with its economic impact felt worldwide, especially by developing countries.

Against that backdrop, I would like to highlight three critical points:

First, it is urgent to ensure the protection of civilians as the top priority and to stop the bloodshed. In that regard, Algeria reiterates its call for the parties to fully uphold their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law. Targeting civilians and civilian objects is prohibited and must be avoided in all circumstances.

Secondly, it is also vital to reverse the trend and to de-escalate tensions. Escalation has shown its negative impact on civilian populations and its consequences on eroding prospects for peace. In that vein, Algeria once again encourages the parties to cease hostilities unconditionally and to exert calm and restraint and de-escalate tensions.

Thirdly, we reiterate our call for the parties to engage in genuine dialogue and negotiations to end this war for good. The parties, the stakeholders and the international community should give inclusive and constructive dialogue a real chance to deliver. The numerous successful deals — the most recent of which occurred yesterday — through which the parties agreed on the exchange of prisoners of war are an excellent illustration of the virtues of dialogue and negotiations without preconditions.

Finally, we encourage the parties to direct their efforts towards a just and lasting solution, built on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations — a solution that duly considers the security concerns of all parties.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Wu (United States of America): I apologize for taking up the Council's time, but I need to respond to the comments made by the representative of China.

The representative cited a lot of rhetoric made by China, but we also need to look at facts and action. The United States is not smearing China. It is a fact that Chinese dual imports have sustained Russia's military-industrial base. As Russia destroys Ukraine's infrastructure and Ukrainian lives, China has a responsibility. I ask my Chinese colleague — where is China's condemnation of Russia, and where are China's calls for Russia to end the war? If the representative of China is uncomfortable with the factual statements that we are making, the United States will stop calling out China for enabling Russia's war once we see that China is taking the necessary steps.

The President: The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I will be very brief. I would like to remind the representative of the United States, if she has listened carefully to the statements of other members then she will notice that the other 14 members of the Council say different things and stress different issues. Their statements are not exactly consistent with that of the United States, but that does not mean that their statements are not correct. Countries have the right to say what they want to say. The United States is in no position to judge the statement of others or to dictate what others can or cannot say. China's position on Ukraine is objective and fair and has stood the test of history and time. We would like to remind the United States that it should reflect on its own actions and words.

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

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing. I also recognize Putin's *caporegime* in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

The best way to react to Russia's tantrums such as we heard today is to refuse to match the volume of its screams. We must stay calm and carry on calmly, explaining to Russia that it cannot and will not have what it wants. One could call it parenting 101.

A few days ago, we had a very important Arria Formula meeting to address the crimes that Russia has committed against Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees. I would like to reiterate my heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to discussing that critical issue on the platform of the Security Council. Yesterday, another prisoner exchange — the first of 2025 — took place, and 25 more Ukrainians returned home. Thanks to the efforts of Ukraine, a special mechanism has effectively been established for the repatriation of seriously ill and injured prisoners of war. The Ukrainians who were released on Wednesday endured severe hardships in captivity, as they lacked adequate medical care and faced inhumane treatment. Their conditions include loss of vision, limb amputations, severe gunshot wounds and the effects of blast trauma. Among their illnesses are tuberculosis, cancer and gangrene, stark evidence of the appalling conditions in which our people were held. Russian captivity kills, and we urge Council members to increase their pressure on Russia through both multilateral mechanisms and bilateral efforts to ensure that all detainees are brought safely home from Russian prisons.

As we approach the third anniversary of the full-scale invasion, it is clear that for Ukraine this remains a war for survival. That harsh reality was reconfirmed recently by one of Putin's closest accomplices, Nikolai Patrushev, who expressed in an interview his hope that "Ukraine will cease to exist in 2025". Let me reiterate that this destructive ambition has guided Russian policy for decades. It began with hybrid operations and economic pressure, escalated into the aggression in Crimea and Donbas and culminated in the launch of a full-scale war in 2022. Statements such as Patrushev's, exposing the true intentions of the Russian leadership, deserve our full attention, particularly from those who do not contribute to efforts to hold the aggressor accountable, mostly in exchange for short-term economic benefits.

Those efforts are even more urgent now, as Russia's accomplices have already gone beyond merely supplying the Kremlin with weapons and munitions. We all remember how vehemently Russia denied in the Chamber any involvement of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in its war against Ukraine. Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative, for instance, called that information "fearmongering" and oddly mentioned "Martians and little green aliens" (see S/PV.9796), perhaps inspired by visions only he could see. Three weeks later, his boss described an idyllic picture of the Russia-Democratic People's Republic of Korea partnership that "is not directed against any third countries" (see S/PV.9820).

Last week, the Ukrainian defence forces captured North Korean soldiers in the Kursk region. Despite being wounded, two of them survived and were transported to Kyiv. That was a difficult task, as Russian and North Korean military personnel typically execute any wounded Democratic People's Republic of Korea soldiers to eliminate evidence of North Korea's involvement in the war on Ukraine. As an investigation revealed, the two soldiers were regular North Korean troops — not mercenaries — who were taking an active part in combat actions. Immediately after their capture, the North Korean prisoners of war received all necessary medical assistance. Now they are being held in proper conditions in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. At the time of capture, one detainee was found with a Russian-style military identification document (ID), issued in the name of another individual registered in the Republic of Tuva, Russia. The other detainee had no documents at all. During interrogation, the North Korean soldier with the military ID stated that

the document was issued to him in Russia in the fall of 2024. He revealed that at that time, some North Korean combat units underwent coordination training with Russian groups for a week. Notably, that prisoner, like many Russian soldiers at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, claimed that he was sent for training, not to fight against Ukraine. The second prisoner corroborated that testimony.

In satisfying its irrational, Nazi-like hatred of Ukrainians, Russia particularly relies on terrorist missile attacks targeting civilian infrastructure. The latest of those was carried out yesterday. In the depths of winter, the Russian target remains the same — our energy infrastructure. Yesterday Russia tried to hit gas facilities and critical energy systems essential to maintaining Ukrainian people's everyday lives. To that end, it launched 43 ballistic and cruise missiles and 74 combat drones. At least 30 missiles and 47 drones were intercepted, and Ukraine has managed to keep its energy system operational. At the same time, the missiles that reached their targets caused damage and destruction that disrupted electricity and heat supplies in various regions. That again testifies to the urgent need to strengthen Ukraine's air defence capabilities. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, Russia has spent more than \$18 billion on missile and drone strikes against Ukraine, and Russia will persist with its escalation as long as it has the financial resources to fuel the war. Oil and gas revenues constitute the main source in that regard.

It is therefore essential to dry up those revenue streams by strengthening primary and secondary sanctions against Russia's economy. In particular, the current sanctions pressure on Russian oil-export capacities must be intensified. Russia's so-called shadow fleet consists of more than 600 vessels, transporting approximately 90 per cent of its oil. The ageing tanker fleet represents a serious environmental and human health hazard, as evidenced by the recent incident involving two Russian tankers in the Kerch Strait. The consequences of fuel oil spills affect not only Black Sea marine life but also local communities in coastal areas, with reports of casualties linked to toxic fumes. We cannot allow such disasters to occur again anywhere else.

We welcome the introduction of new United States, United Kingdom and European Union sanctions against Russia's oil sector — sanctions against the shadow tanker fleet and against companies such as Surgutneftegas, which serves as Putin's personal wallet. We are also grateful to the United States for imposing sanctions on the leadership of Russia's State atomic energy corporation Rosatom. Those designations are crucial to pressuring Russia's nuclear industry, given the fact that it is occupying our Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. While referring to those decisions by the United States, I would like to reiterate our profound appreciation for the cooperation and support of the United States delegation, under the able leadership of Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. I would also like to highlight today's signing of the 100-year partnership agreement between Ukraine and the United Kingdom. That agreement serves as a pivotal example of forward-thinking and pragmatic relations between two friendly nations, united in their determination to address the threats and challenges arising from Russia's war.

Further steps on the sanctions track could include reducing the price cap on Russian oil to \$40 per barrel, imposing sanctions on the captains of shadow fleet vessels and crewing companies, strengthening the oversight of tanker insurance compliance and restricting the passage of tankers blacklisted under international port control memorandums.

Russia's war budget for 2025 is 25 per cent larger than last year's. If we want to stop the war, we should cut off Putin's cash flow. Putin will start thinking about peace only when his inner circle tells him that he is out of money.

Ukraine wants peace like no other, but we will not accept the concept of “peace at any price”, as it will bring no real and lasting peace at all. That will only encourage the aggressor to continue violating international law, and not only in Ukraine. Russia’s geopolitical ambitions go well beyond Ukraine. For those who may have forgotten the ultimatums that Russia issued before the invasion, I would recall their core demand: “NATO must revert to its 1997 borders.” For some nations that joined the Alliance at a later stage, that is a point worth keeping in mind.

If we want to live in a safe and secure world, we must spare no effort to counteract Russia’s aggressive imperialistic policies. The implementation of the concept of peace through strength is the only effective tool to stop the aggressor and ensure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The diplomatic path to such a peace lies through the implementation of the peace formula. We are also ready to consider other nations’ peace ideas that take into account the need to restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine, that do not equate the victim with the aggressor and that are based on the principle of “nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine”. They can be discussed in the formats offered by the peace formula.

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

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her perceptive, albeit unsettling, observations.

Poland once again joins the international community in its ongoing condemnation of Russia’s continued aggression against Ukraine. Russia’s actions are not only unjustifiable, but also constitute a blatant violation of the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations and other international bodies have repeatedly concluded that the actions taken by Russia in Ukraine fulfil the criteria of the legal definition of war crimes. Despite those findings, Russia continues its criminal activities. With its paralysis, the Security Council is falling short of the expectations bestowed upon it by the international community. That is precisely why a large number of States came together in the General Assembly to adopt a resolution firmly recognizing Russia’s actions as a war of aggression and why those States have taken resolute steps to support Ukraine militarily, economically and politically. Poland is one of them.

We appeal to all States to take decisive measures in solidarity with Ukraine. In particular, energy support is crucial this winter to sustain Ukraine’s resilience against aggression and ensure its long-term stability.

Let us call a spade a spade: Russia is targeting its neighbours, employing a sinister toolkit of aggressive measures. That includes everything from acts like sabotage and espionage to outright violence, including assassinations. They manipulate information, spread lies and launch cyberattacks. They violate our airspace, exploit vulnerable migrants and try to strangle our economies. The situation in the Baltic Sea, where aggressive actions involving civilian vessels are taking place, is of particular concern. We bring that issue to the Council’s attention, owing to the potential for further escalation. It is a concerted effort by Russia to undermine our security and achieve its own twisted geopolitical goals.

We urge all countries to refrain from providing any kind of assistance to the war of aggression against Ukraine. We strongly condemn Moscow’s irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and coercive nuclear sabre-rattling, including its announced stationing of nuclear weapons in Belarus. Those actions demonstrate a posture of strategic intimidation and pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

In conclusion, we demand that Russia immediately cease its war of aggression against Ukraine and unconditionally withdraw all its forces from Ukrainian territory. We wholeheartedly welcome and support Ukraine's unwavering commitment to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, as outlined in President Zelenskyy's peace formula. Let us be clear: any acceptable future peace settlement must include ironclad guarantees for Ukraine and the region to prevent any recurrence of this brutal aggression. We categorically reject Russia's delusional belief that it stands above international law and that it can establish a sphere of subservient States — a concept that not only tramples on the very foundations of the Charter, but also poses a grave threat to regional and global peace and security.

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

Mr. Feruță (Romania): I thank you, Mr. President, for allowing my delegation to participate in this meeting. I also want to take the opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on the way you steer the work of the Council. In addition, I want to congratulate the new members of the Security Council. It is fair to say that the wider United Nations membership continues to have considerable expectations of this body, and I look forward to witnessing the important work that will be done in the Council.

Yesterday in the General Assembly, the Secretary-General presented his priorities for 2025, and he reminded all of us that there is a world of pain, and that in Ukraine, the war is on the verge of its fourth year. It depends on how we look at it. We are approaching the third anniversary of the invasion, of the aggression, but we are also about to start the fourth year of this war. And it is actually heartbreaking that we started 2025 as a repetition of the period from 2022 to 2024: with Russia conducting large-scale and continuous attacks against civilians and against Ukraine's civilian and energy critical infrastructure, as we just heard from the Ambassador of Ukraine. And the winter again complicates things even more for the civilians, but also for the humanitarians on the ground, determined to provide assistance.

The war in Ukraine is not a strictly European affair. The war in Ukraine is a global issue. Various briefings and meetings of the Security Council and of the General Assembly confirm the wide-ranging impact of this war on food security, maritime security, energy security and price spikes. In a recent development — and as an unfortunate reconfirmation — Russia is supported in its aggression by other countries with soldiers and weapons and, more generally, with an approach consisting of turning a blind eye.

Defending the principles of territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty has never been more necessary. These are not normal times. The Security Council needs to lead, especially as this year we commemorate 80 years since the end of the Second World War and 80 years since those principles were codified in the Charter of the United Nations. We are even more bound to uphold firmly the core principles of international law.

A comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine includes, first, addressing the aggression and ensuring an immediate withdrawal of Russia's troops from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, and last but not least, it will require accountability.

In conclusion, while we might be approaching the fourth year of the war, our support of Ukraine's fight for the core values of this world is resolute. Defending a country's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty is not optional, and that is the message that has reverberated for 80 years.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro,

Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, in addition to Liechtenstein, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

Like others, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

As this is the Council's first formal meeting on Ukraine this year, I want to express the EU's appreciation for its continued focus on Russia's aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for international peace and security. It is almost three years since Russia decided to launch its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and more than 10 years since it began its aggression against Ukraine, violating one of the core rules — if not the core rule — of international law. Three years of violence and destruction instituted and perpetuated by a permanent member of the Council are existential not just for Ukraine and Europe's security, but for the whole United Nations membership, for the United Nations itself. There can be no justification — no justification at all — for such a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations. In response, the international community has come together, including here at the United Nations, to condemn the aggression and stand up for the Charter. This year we must again continue to stand firm and united in defence of the founding principles of the Organization.

The year 2025 started as 2024 ended, with large-scale, systematic attacks by Russia on Ukraine's civilian and energy infrastructure in the middle of winter, as part of a Russian plan to weaponize energy. Deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime. We once again call on Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease those outrageous attacks.

Earlier this week, the Council learned first-hand about Russia's treatment of Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilian detainees. The United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine has concluded that the Russian authorities committed crimes against humanity through a coordinated State policy of systematic and widespread use of torture across their detention facilities. It was not Ukraine that decided that. Neither did I or the Council. The United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry made that finding. We are alarmed at the rise in reports of summary executions of Ukrainian service persons captured by Russian forces. We call on Russia to uphold international human rights law and international humanitarian law and ensure that the International Committee of the Red Cross and human rights monitoring mechanisms have unimpeded access to prisoners of war. We reiterate that Russia and its leadership must be held fully accountable for waging a war of aggression and for other crimes under international law. We also want to point to the legally binding order of the International Court of Justice of March 2022, requiring Russia to immediately suspend its military operations in Ukraine.

We call on all third countries to immediately cease any and all assistance to Russia's aggression. That includes both direct military support and the provision of dual-use goods and sensitive items that sustain Russia's military industrial base. In addition, the European Union strongly condemns Russia's deepening military cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran. The deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Russia's illegal war of aggression blatantly violates Security Council resolutions. The EU urges all States to comply with their obligations under international disarmament, non-proliferation and export-control agreements.

At the dawn of a new year, and amid Russia's continued attacks, the call for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace anchored in the Charter of the United Nations remains as essential as ever. The EU supports all meaningful efforts to bring an end to Russia's war. As has been clearly stated in the General Assembly, the path to

peace is for the aggressor to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all its troops. I also want to stress that no initiative regarding Ukraine can be taken without Ukraine.

In 2025 as in 2024, the courage and resilience of the Ukrainian people continue to inspire our action. We will continue to support Ukraine and its people against Russia's aggression, and we will do so for as long as it takes.

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

Mr. Tammsaar (Estonia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the three Baltic States — Latvia, Lithuania and my own country, Estonia. We align ourselves with the statement just made on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of the new members of the Security Council. And I am extremely grateful to Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her very useful briefing. We also commend the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine for its admirable efforts in mobilizing and coordinating aid to people whose lives have been upended by Russian aggression. We urge the United Nations membership to step up life-saving contributions to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, at least 2,064 civilians were killed and 9,089 injured in 2024 — a 30 per cent rise compared with 2023. Since New Year's Day, Russia has already killed civilians in Kyiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya and Chernihiv and has continued to shell Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Russia's strikes on the city of Zaporizhzhya on 8 January caused the highest number of civilian casualties in almost two years. There has also been an alarming increase in Russia's executions of prisoners of war in recent months. The deliberate torture, killing of civilians and murders of prisoners of war are grave war crimes. The continuing abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children for which the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Putin and Lvova-Belova constitute another reprehensible violation of international law by Russia.

In addition to its daily atrocities against Ukrainian civilians, on 25 December Russia downed a commercial airliner that had been flying through its air space, killing 38 people and seriously injuring many others. That is a horrific act, underscoring the regime's disregard for human life and international law. Sadly, that tragic incident is not an isolated case. It will be recalled that five years ago, Iran killed 176 people on board Ukrainian International Airlines flight 752 by shooting it down in Iranian air space. In 2014, Russian-backed forces in eastern Ukraine shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH-17. Russia and its accomplices have a proven history of recklessly endangering civilian air travel, including by downing civilian aircraft and subsequently attempting to cover up their crimes with a barrage of disinformation, propaganda and outright lies.

I want to again say it loud and clear in this Chamber. Russia's war of aggression is not compatible with its status as a permanent member of the Security Council, as it is Russia itself that has become the biggest threat to global peace and security.

Russia does not act alone. The involvement of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Belarus in Russia's aggression against Ukraine must stop immediately. The transfer of weapons between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Russia, and the involvement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's troops fighting on Russia's side constitutes a major escalation with far-reaching global consequences and, by the way, shows Russia's desperation on the battlefield.

We continue to urge China, as a permanent member of the Security Council, with a particular responsibility to upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to exercise its influence to end Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

Against the backdrop of constant calls for peace around this table, Russia's leadership, driven by its imperialist delusions, has ruled out ending the war in Ukraine until the goals of its aggression are achieved. Putin wants to completely erase the sovereign Ukraine as a political and cultural entity, nothing less. We therefore stand with the Ukrainian people and reiterate our unwavering support of Ukraine's right to self-defence and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We call upon all United Nations Member States to support Ukraine's Peace Formula, which is the only viable framework to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on the principles of the United Nations Charter.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.