



# General Assembly

Eleventh Emergency Special session

**1**st plenary meeting  
Monday, 28 February 2022, 10 a.m.  
New York

Official Records

*President:* Mr. Shahid . . . . . (Maldives)

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

## Item 1 of the provisional agenda

### Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

**The President:** I declare open the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly.

In connection with this emergency special session, a note by the Secretary-General on the convening of the special session has been circulated in document A/ES-11/1.

## Item 2 of the provisional agenda

### Minute of silent prayer or meditation

**The President:** I now invite representatives to stand and observe a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

*The members of the General Assembly observed one minute of silent prayer or meditation.*

### Organization of work

**The President:** I should now like to draw the Assembly's attention to rule 63, which states:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the General Assembly decides otherwise, the Assembly, in case of an emergency special session, shall convene in plenary meeting only and proceed directly to consider the item proposed for consideration in the request for the holding of the session, without previous reference to

the General Committee or to any other committee; the President and Vice-Presidents for such emergency special sessions shall be, respectively, the chairmen of those delegations from which were elected the President and Vice-Presidents of the previous session.”

I shall repeat the first part of that rule:

“Notwithstanding the provisions of any other rule and unless the General Assembly decides otherwise...”

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the General Assembly will proceed accordingly.

*It was so decided.*

### Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

**The President:** Next, I should like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-11/3, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General, informing the Assembly that four Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in that document?

*It was so decided.*

**The President:** In that connection, may I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to follow the provisions of resolution 76/2 of 11 October

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



2021, by which the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia are permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-sixth session and to also allow those Member States to vote at the eleventh emergency special session?

*It was so decided.*

### **Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

#### **Credentials of representatives to the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly**

##### **(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee**

**The President:** We shall now proceed to the appointment of a Credentials Committee. Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly, at the beginning of each session, shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee, consisting of nine members. In accordance with precedents, the Credentials Committee of the eleventh emergency special session should have the same membership as that which served during the seventy-sixth regular session, namely, the Bahamas, Bhutan, Chile, China, Namibia, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Sweden and the United States of America.

If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

*It was so decided.*

##### **(b) Report of the Credentials Committee**

**The President:** I now invite the Assembly to turn its attention to sub-item (b) of item 3 of the provisional agenda, entitled "Report of the Credential Committee". As proposed in the letter from the President of the General Assembly dated 27 February 2022, in the light of the urgency of the matter to be considered, it is recommended that the Assembly accept the credentials approved for the seventy-sixth regular session for the purposes of the eleventh emergency special session.

In that regard, I recall that the Credentials Committee of the seventy-sixth regular session accepted the credentials of representatives of all Member States, at its meeting held on 1 December 2021, and the General Assembly approved the report of the Credentials Committee by its resolution 76/15 of 6 December 2021. That would be without prejudice to the right of Member States to submit separate credentials with respect to the

eleventh emergency special session and would not set a precedent for future sessions.

If I hear no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to accept the credentials approved for the seventy-sixth regular session for the purposes of the eleventh emergency special session, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent?

*It was so decided.*

### **Item 4 of the provisional agenda**

#### **Adoption of the agenda**

**The President:** The provisional agenda of the eleventh emergency special session is contained in document A/ES-11/2.

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Agenda item 5**

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

**The President:** I will now deliver my remarks from the rostrum.

We are all gravely concerned about the rapidly deteriorating situation and ongoing military action in Ukraine. As I emphasized last week, the military offensive by the Russian Federation is a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and is inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations. Today, I renew my call for an immediate ceasefire, for all parties to exercise maximum restraint and for a full return to diplomacy and dialogue.

The convening of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly, rooted in the Charter and mandated in resolution 377 A (V), entitled "Uniting for peace", is a new opportunity to ensure that the leadership of the United Nations is up to the expectation of the people we serve on matters related to peace and security. It is imperative that we act on behalf of the women, children and men caught in the crossfire. It is imperative that we pursue all available channels to contain the situation, to de-escalate tensions and to seek peaceful resolution in accordance with international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I welcome the announcement by the Secretary-General on Friday that \$20 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund will be allocated to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The humanitarian consequences on civilian populations, in particular women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups, will be devastating.

The mass exodus of refugees, including foreign nationals, numbering more than half a million, from Ukraine to the eastern edge of the European Union (EU) has shown no signs of stoppings. Checkpoints at the borders of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and the non-EU member Moldova have turned into choke points. I encourage Member States to support humanitarian initiatives as they become available. There are no winners in war, but countless lives are torn apart. To that effect, security and access for humanitarian efforts must be guaranteed.

The Charter of the United Nations, drafted so soon after the Second World War, is based on the principle of sovereign equality. It outlines a world where Member States settle their international disputes by peaceful means, without the threat or use of force. The ongoing military offensive is inconsistent with that. It is an affront to the founders of this Organization and everything it stands for. The violence must stop; humanitarian law and international humanitarian law must be respected; and diplomacy and dialogue must prevail.

In April 1946, the League of Nations was dissolved, ending 26 years of the existence of an organization that, ultimately, had proven incapable of preventing the outbreak of the most destructive war in human history. It was the League's failure to provide a mechanism for the enforcement of international collective security that exposed its most fatal flaws. The Right Honourable Viscount Robert Cecil, one of the original architects behind the League of Nations, in his final eulogy to the League said: "The League is dead. Long live the United Nations".

We are now in the seventy-sixth year of the existence of the United Nations. Let us remind ourselves that we founded the United Nations to maintain international peace and security and, to that end, to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and to bring about, by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations.

Yesterday, a rare window of opportunity opened up for dialogue. As we convene here in the General Assembly, negotiators from both sides are holding talks in Belarus. That offers a ray of hope. We pray that those talks will calm down tempers and pave the way to peace.

The General Assembly, with its 193 Member States, represents the collective conscience of humankind. The strength of the Assembly is rooted in its moral authority. Let us demonstrate that moral courage and use today's debate not to whip up war rhetoric but to give peace a chance. Let us ignite the fire of love, humanity, compassion and hope. Guns are better off when knotted. Let peace prevail.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. António Guterres.

**The Secretary-General:** The fighting in Ukraine must stop. It is raging across the country from air, land and sea. It must stop now.

Russian missiles and air bombardments have been pounding Ukrainian cities, day and night. The capital, Kyiv, is encircled from all sides. In the face of the continuing attacks, Kyiv's 3 million residents are being forced to seek safety in their homes, improvised bomb shelters and the city's subways. The Ukrainian Government has distributed a meaningful number of arms to the population with the stated objective to participate in the defence of the country. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, half a million Ukrainians have fled across the country's borders.

Although Russian strikes are reportedly largely targeting Ukrainian military facilities, we have credible accounts of residential buildings, critical civilian infrastructure and other non-military targets sustaining heavy damage. That escalating violence, which is resulting in civilian deaths, including children, is totally unacceptable.

Enough is enough. Soldiers need to move back to their barracks. Leaders need to move to peace. Civilians must be protected. International humanitarian and human rights law must be upheld. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders, must be respected, in line with General Assembly resolutions.

We are facing a tragedy for Ukraine, but also a major regional crisis with potentially disastrous implications

for us all. Yesterday, Russian nuclear forces were put on high alert. That is a chilling development. The mere idea of a nuclear conflict is simply inconceivable. Nothing can justify the use of nuclear weapons.

We face what could easily become Europe's worst humanitarian and refugee crisis in decades, with the numbers of refugees and internally displaced multiplying by the minute. I am grateful for the compassion, generosity and solidarity of Ukraine's neighbours that are taking in those seeking safety. It is important that that solidarity be extended without any discrimination based on race, religion or ethnicity. The neighbouring countries will need all our support in the days and weeks to come. The United Nations will continue to assist with those efforts.

On Saturday, I spoke with President Zelenskyy and assured him that the United Nations would not abandon the Ukrainian people and conveyed our determination to enhance humanitarian assistance. Even before the events of the past week, the United Nations was providing some 3 million people on both sides of the contact line with humanitarian assistance.

The United Nations is now working 24/7 to assess humanitarian needs and scale up the delivery of life-saving support to many more people desperate for protection and shelter, particularly women, children, elderly people and those with disabilities.

We are fully committed to staying and delivering for everyone affected by this deadly conflict across the country. Some of our personnel are expanding existing programmes. Others are preparing new operations to get help to those who need it, fast. I want to highlight three concrete actions.

First, I have allocated \$20 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to support emergency operations along the contact line in the eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk and in other parts of the country. That will allow us to help more vulnerable people to get the basics — shelter, food, water and health care — as soon as possible.

Secondly, I have appointed Amin Awad as the United Nations Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine. He will liaise with the Government and all relevant actors on the ground, supported by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the United Nations country team. At the same time, we are bringing

together partners, in and outside the country, and surging personnel into the country.

Thirdly, tomorrow we will launch two coordinated emergency appeals for Ukraine and the region — one that addresses the escalating humanitarian needs inside the country, including rising internal displacement, and another that responds to the needs of people crossing international borders to seek refuge in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

As we ramp up our efforts, it is essential that the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel in Ukraine be protected, in accordance with international law, and that humanitarian access to vulnerable people and communities be guaranteed.

I call on all sides to uphold their obligations to allow the freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel and to facilitate safe, rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief.

I also urge the international community to mobilize in support of our funding appeals to address the needs of all those displaced by this crisis, as well as other vulnerable groups, whose numbers will only grow as the fighting escalates.

Humanitarian aid is vital, but it is not a solution. It is simply treating the worst impacts of the conflict. The only true solution is peace.

The attack on Ukraine challenges international law and the multilateral system rooted in the Charter of the United Nations.

Some of the possible consequences of a worsening conflict are terrifying to contemplate. Regional tensions are rising. The latest security measures underline the high stakes for all. The economic repercussions of the crisis will have a widespread impact. I count on every Member State to live up to the principles of the Charter.

The guns are talking now, but the path of dialogue must always remain open. It is never too late to engage in good-faith negotiations and to address all issues peacefully. I hope that the direct talks now taking place between Ukrainian and Russian delegations will produce not only an immediate halt to the fighting, but also a path towards a diplomatic solution.

I welcome and encourage all peaceful efforts to end the bloodshed and halt this conflict. I thank the countries that have offered to host and facilitate negotiations. The United Nations is ready to support such efforts.

War is not the answer. It is death, human suffering, senseless destruction and an immense distraction from the real challenges facing humankind: the climate crisis and biodiversity loss; vitally needed socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic; healing the divides of race and gender; and so many other pressing twenty-first-century challenges.

Humankind cannot afford to be locked in a mindset that dredges up the worst of past centuries. We need to look forward as the United Nations to overcome the scourge of war. We need to focus on solving problems, not making them worse.

In cities around the world, people are taking to the streets and demanding an end to war. People in Ukraine want and need peace. I believe that people in the Russian Federation do, too. We need peace now.

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

**Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine):** For the first time since the United Nations was born, there is a full-fledged war in the centre of Europe. Everyone in this Hall and everyone in the world knows that Russia – and Russia alone – started this invasion, now facilitated by Belarus. This war was not provoked. It was chosen by someone who is now sitting in a bunker. We know what happened to the person who sat in the bunker in Berlin in May 1945.

Before I continue with my formal statement, I would like to switch to Russian, because I would like to read from the screenshot of a smartphone of a killed Russian soldier. It is an actual screenshot from someone who is already dead.

*(spoke in Russian)*

“Alex, how are you? What took you so long to answer? Are you sure you are at the drill?” asks the mother of the dead soldier just moments before he was killed.

“Mum, I am not in the Crimea anymore. I am not on an exercise.”

“Where are you then? Dad is asking if I can send you a parcel.”

”What kind of parcel, Mum? What are you talking about?”

“What happened?”

“Mum, I am in Ukraine. There is a real war here. I am scared. We are striking all the cities one after the other, even civilians. We were told that they would welcome us, but they are throwing themselves in front of our vehicles and do not let us pass. They call us Fascists. Mum, it is very hard for me.”

*(spoke in English)*

In several moments, he was killed.

If Member States want to just visualize the magnitude of the tragedy, they must imagine next to them, next to every name plate of every single country in the General Assembly, more than 30 souls of Russian soldiers already killed — next to every name of every single country in this Assembly more than 30 Russian soldiers killed; hundreds of Ukrainians killed; and dozens of children killed. And it goes on and on and on. They should just imagine those people killed next to them as they listen to my formal statement.

A big, militarized Power, seeking geopolitical greatness, has launched a full-fledged military offensive against a smaller neighbour, aimed at invading the country. Deadly air strikes dropped on civilians’ heads across the entire country and Russian troops crossed Ukraine’s borders from the territory of Russia, Belarus and the occupied parts of Ukraine’s Donbas and Crimea.

It reminds Member States of something, does it not? Indeed, very clear parallels could be drawn with the beginning of the Second World War. Russia’s course of action is very similar to what its spiritual mentors from the Third Reich employed on Ukrainian land 80 years ago.

I will give just one, the most recent, example — an example of human suffering and a war crime. As all of us were on our way to the General Assembly today, the Russian army shelled with Grad multiple rocket launcher systems the residential areas of the city of Kharkiv, which is the second largest city in Ukraine. Innocent civilians were killed or wounded. It is very difficult to estimate the exact numbers so far, while the negotiations are still under way by the border with Belarus.

We therefore express our gratitude for the overwhelming support that made the decision to hold this emergency session possible. We are grateful to the President of the General Assembly for his taking care of this idea well in advance. We appreciate the

engagement of the Secretary-General, who has taken a very strong stance in support of peace and in support of the Charter of the United Nations.

We were prompted to call for an emergency special session, as the level of the threat to global security has been equated to that of the Second World War or even higher following Putin's order to put Russian nuclear forces on alert. What madness. If he wants to kill himself, he does not need to use a nuclear arsenal. He has to do what the guy in Berlin did in a bunker in May 1945.

The Security Council addressed the issue of the Russian war against Ukraine (see S/PV.8979), and draft resolution S/2022/155 was not adopted for an obvious reason. The country attempting to occupy Ukraine since 2014 has occupied a seat as a permanent member of the Security Council since 1991. Therefore, we do not accept the Russian logic that the Security Council was unable to act due to a one-sided and unbalanced approach. The only guilty party is the Russian Federation.

Russia is using all its military potential to attack Ukraine and has begun redeploying reserve units on the border with Ukraine. It is firing cruise and ballistic missiles at cities. It is attacking with aviation, tanks and artillery and is sending out subversion and reconnaissance groups, which mark residential buildings in preparation for the air attacks.

Russia's missiles are now aimed at destroying infrastructure objects. They targeted the radioactive waste disposal site near Kyiv and the fuel base in the town of Vasylkiv, which is effectively a Kyiv suburb. The objects of logistic infrastructure, including bridges, airports and water reservoirs, remain among the targets.

Towns such as Schastya and Stanytsia Luhanska near Luhansk, as well as residential buildings in and around Kyiv and Kharkiv, are now nearly destroyed. Russian forces seized the Chernobyl nuclear power station and a part of the southern Kherson region, including the North Crimean Canal. Due to the active moving of Russian heavy military machinery through the Chernobyl exclusion zone, the radiation level has rapidly increased.

In the Black Sea, Russian war ships deliberately attacked two civil vessels under the flags of Panama and Moldova approaching Ukraine. That constitutes a flagrant violation of the international law of the sea.

Incredibly, one of the vessels had a Russian crew. It was still attacked by the Russians.

Russians keep attacking kindergartens and orphanages, thereby committing war crimes and violating the Rome Statute. Hospitals and mobile medical aid brigades are also targeted by Russian shelling and sabotage groups working in Ukraine's cities and towns. The Russian military fired on ambulance crews in the areas of Zaporizhzhya and Kyiv. In the Okhtyrka district of the Sumy region, Russian tanks shot down a bus with civilians. Later, the Russian military did not allow ambulances on the spot.

As of today, 352 people, including 16 children, on the Ukrainian side have been killed and 2,040 Ukrainians, including 45 children, have been wounded during the first five days of the Russian invasion. That number is growing non-stop. I have already spoken about this morning's shelling in Kharkiv. At this moment, we cannot really estimate how many people were killed.

In response, Ukraine has activated its right of self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The Russian troops are suffering losses — aircraft, helicopters, tanks, trucks and personnel. The aggressor forces have already lost more than 5,000 in manpower during the first days of aggression.

The General Assembly should be vocal in demanding that the Russian Federation stop its offensive against Ukraine; in recognizing Russian actions as an act of aggression against a sovereign and independent State; in demanding that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its forces from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders; in demanding that the Russian Federation reverse the decision related to the status of certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine; and in demanding full compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

The General Assembly should also be clear with regard to the treacherous role of Belarus and its involvement in the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

What is happening now in Ukraine has already had security and humanitarian implications for the countries of all those present — immediately for Europe and somewhat later for the rest — including in terms of

food, security, energy, security, financial markets and the collapse of economies.

In September 2021, my President said, while delivering his statement at the high-level segment of the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session,

“I know that the United Nations is often criticized. But when we do that we are criticizing ourselves” (*A/76/PV.7, p. 13*).

If we fail to respond now, we will face much more than criticism; we will face oblivion. It must not happen. Now it is time to act and time to help Ukraine, which is currently paying the ultimate price for its own and the world’s freedom and security. If Ukraine does not survive, international peace will not survive. If Ukraine does not survive, the United Nations will not survive. Let us have no illusions.

If Ukraine does not survive, we cannot be surprised if democracy fails next. Now we can save Ukraine, save the United Nations, save democracy and defend the values in which we believe and for which Ukrainians are fighting and paying with their lives.

The Russian representative will speak shortly. Putin has done everything to delegitimize the Russian presence in the United Nations. But I wonder if the Russian presence in the United Nations has ever been legitimate. I wonder if this Hall — the Assembly — ever voted in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations on the admission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, in December 1991, January 1992 or at any time thereafter.

I want to ask the representatives whose countries voted for the admission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations to raise their hands to confirm that Russia was admitted to the United Nations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. I would ask them to kindly raise their hands if their countries voted in the formal session of the General Assembly in reply to the letter by President Yeltsin, dated 24 December 1991, when he told the United Nations that Russia would like to be the successor State of the dissolved Soviet Union.

Did anyone? Shall I put on my glasses if my vision fails me and I do not see any raised hands? Did anyone or any country vote for Russia’s membership? I will leave members with that for them to think about it when they listen to the Russian representative.

**Mr. Nebenzia** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In recent days, the Ukrainian story has dominated the international media and taken centre stage at the Security Council and the General Assembly. At the same time, Russia’s actions are being twisted and distorted. They are being related by a staggering number of the most implausible fabrications and fakes through the use of media outlets and social networks. I would therefore like today to elaborate on the causes of the crisis situation and its possible consequences.

I would like to emphasize the fact that the root cause of today’s Ukraine crisis is in the actions of Ukraine itself, which has been flouting its commitments under the Minsk package of measures for many years. Until very recently, there was hope that Kyiv would come to its senses and decide to implement what it committed to in 2015. To that end, first and foremost, direct dialogue with Donetsk and Luhansk was needed.

However, yet another confirmation by the country’s senior leadership of Ukraine’s unwillingness to engage in such dialogue and take the steps to grant Donbas the special status provided for in the Minsk agreements, which was actively supported by Kyiv’s Western patrons, finally convinced us that we simply had no right to allow the inhabitants of Donbas to continue to suffer.

As Ukrainian provocations against the people of Donbas not only failed to cease in February but also intensified, the leadership of the Donetsk People’s Republic and the Luhansk People’s Republic turned to us requesting military support in accordance with the bilateral cooperation agreements, which were concluded concurrently with our recognition of them, which was a logical step resulting from the Ukrainian regime’s incessant aggressions.

The Ukrainian Government, which has been armed and incited by a number of States, was under the delusion that, with the blessing of Western sponsors, it could find a military solution to the Donbas issue. Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the significant intensification of shelling and acts of sabotage under way against the Republics, which I mentioned. The people of Donbas and Luhansk continued to have to take shelter in basements. The influx of refugees into Russia continued and the nature of the operations of the Ukrainian armed forces continued unabated. However, our Western colleagues ignored that, while echoing

Ukrainian tales in which the inhabitants of Donbas were shelling themselves.

As a whole, Western countries have consistently ignored the increased suffering of the inhabitants of Donbas. During the week of discussions on the topic in the Security Council and the General Assembly, they could find no words of sympathy or compassion for the people of Donbas and Luhansk. It is as if those 4 million people did not exist for them.

As a result, in the face of the ongoing threats to the inhabitants of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic and given the lack of prospects for resolving the Donbas issue in the framework of the Minsk agreements, Russian President Putin decided to carry out a special military operation in Donbas.

The occupation of Ukraine is not part of our plans. The purpose of the special operation is to protect people who have been subjected to abuse and genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years. To that end, it is imperative to carry out the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. We will also strive to bring to justice those who have committed countless brutal crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation.

The decision was taken in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, with the authorization of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, pursuant to the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Understanding with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.

I would also like to recall that according to the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations among States, adopted in 1970, the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, which we are accused of violating vis-à-vis Ukraine today, must be strictly observed in relation to States,

“conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a Government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour” (*resolution 2625 (XXV), annex*)”.

The current Government of Ukraine is no such Government. Moreover, during the special military operation, Russia has exercised its right to self-defence from a regime that seeks to restore access to nuclear

weapons. The President of Ukraine explicitly stated that at the Munich conference held on 18 February. I recall that his statement was met with applause by the conference participants. At the same time, Ukraine seeks membership in NATO, where article 5 of the NATO Treaty is in force, and has territorial claims against Russia.

Therefore, by invoking Article 51 of the Charter, Russia is not only defending itself from the nationalist threat but also seeks to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter on the soil of Donbas and Ukraine, while ensuring that the main goal of the United Nations — to save future generations from the scourge of war — is fulfilled.

Unfortunately, we must note the extremely negative role played in all of that by our Western colleagues, led by the United States. Instead of compelling Kyiv to comply with its obligations, they have only openly incited Ukraine with the nonsensical refrain that Russia is not fulfilling its obligations under the Minsk agreements, to which, as we have repeatedly stressed, Russia is not even a party.

Our Western colleagues have also shamelessly inundated the country with weapons and military trainers, thereby effectively pushing the Ukrainians, who have brought a 120,000-strong military contingent to the line of contact, to engage in armed provocations against Donbas.

In discussing today's topic, we must not lose sight of the broader context that has caused the current crisis in Ukraine. At the 2008 Russia-NATO summit held in Bucharest, Russian President Putin warned that NATO members should think twice before proudly asserting that Ukraine and Georgia would be part of NATO. That was presented to the President as some form of great compromise, whereby Germany and France had succeeded in immediately replacing the American proposal that involved immediately declaring that Ukraine and Georgia are provided with with an action plan membership.

Subsequently, there was President Saakashvili's NATO-encouraged adventure in Georgia, which was blamed on Russia, contrary to the facts. In 2014, there was a brutal unconstitutional coup in Kyiv, which brought to power nationalists and radicals who set out to build an anti-Russia in Ukraine and ensure its membership in NATO. I will return to that topic.



For us, Ukraine's accession to NATO is a red line, primarily for military and strategic reasons. The deployment of NATO infrastructure in that country would force us to take counter-measures that would bring Russia and NATO to the brink of conflict. That is why we proposed to the United States and NATO, in December 2021, the conclusion of treaties that would give Russia security guarantees.

However, our outstretched hand was arrogantly rebuffed by the Americans and NATO representatives. We were invited to discuss important but secondary issues that failed to address our concerns. We were also denied an answer as to how the freedom to choose alliances declared in the documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) correspond to the principles of the indivisibility of security.

Many are probably wondering what to do now and what the role of the United Nations should be in resolving the Ukrainian crisis. We are convinced that the United Nations can and should play a role and help to bring the positions of the various players closer together and eradicate the causes of the confrontation. In accordance with the Charter, the key role should be played by the Security Council.

However, our partners do not even make any attempt to discuss the matter calmly. That is why the Russian Federation voted against the anti-Russian and anti-Ukrainian draft resolution (S/2022/155) submitted to the Security Council. I do not need to explain why it was anti-Russian. One has only to glance at it. Why is it anti-Ukrainian? Because the document runs unquestionably counter to the fundamental interests of the Ukrainian people, as it attempts to salvage and consolidate in Ukraine the system of power that has led the country to the tragic situation in which it has lived for more than eight years.

The main reason for our vote against draft resolution S/2022/155 was not based on what it contains but what it fails to include. If the penholders had tried to draft even a remotely balanced document, they would not have left out the issues that need to be addressed in the context of the Ukrainian issue, in particular the way in which the Maidan junta, which came to power as a result of an unconstitutional coup d'état in Kyiv in February 2014, unleashed a war against the residents in the eastern part of the country by shelling peaceful neighbourhoods with cannons and multiple-rocket

launchers and dropping bombs on the people of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The way in which the Ukrainian authorities, with the connivance of their Western sponsors, have consistently and cynically evaded the implementation of the Minsk agreements was left out of the equation. At the same time, Ukrainian death squads, primarily made up of radical and neo-Nazi elements, that were deployed on the line of contact, methodically and daily shelled residential areas of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, killing women, children and the elderly. That continues today.

How can we fail to mention the blood-curdling crimes of the "Ukrnazis" over the past eight years — the burning alive of those who protested against Maidan in Odessa and the killing of peaceful protesters at Maidan by unknown snipers? The Maidan regime deliberately covered up the investigation of both tragic incidents. At the same time, the perpetrators of the Odessa tragedy are known and are flaunting their presence. Other investigations and the confessions of the snipers themselves unequivocally confirm that the massacre at Independence Square was a provocation by the Maidan leaders.

Last year, we held an Arria Formula meeting specifically on both issues to provide our Security Council colleagues with additional information. However, in response we heard at best only clichés concerning Russian propaganda from our Western partners. What can one expect the text of a resolution on the Ukrainian issue to be like without addressing the issues I have just mentioned?

The resolution should also have included a frank assessment of the role in inflaming the Ukrainian crisis played by Western colleagues, who were not only behind the Maidan coup but actually gave Kyiv carte blanche to carry out actions that would be unthinkable for all civilized States. That includes blatant discrimination against the Russian language and, consequently Russian-speaking residents, the glorification of Hitler's collaborators and a ban on honouring the real heroes of Ukraine, who liberated it from Nazism and the religious schism created in the country.

With tales of democracy triumphing in Ukraine, the Maidan authorities and nationalists murdered with impunity political opponents, persecuted the opposition and shut down opposition television channels that provided at least relatively objective information. Six

of those television channels were shut down under President Zelenskyy alone. And we cannot forget that the country was flooded with weapons, which were then used against peaceful civilians in Donbas. The responsibility for what is happening now lies not only with the current Ukrainian leadership but also with our Western colleagues.

We would like to emphasize today that this has been inflated by the lies, fakes and misinformation around the Russian special military operation. For example, that the destruction of houses in Donbas by the Ukrainian armed forces and Ukrainian nationalists is shamelessly portrayed by western media outlets as the negative consequences of our military operation in Ukraine. We constantly hear lies and fake news about the indiscriminate bombing of Ukrainian cities, hospitals, schools and kindergartens.

The Russian army does not pose a threat to Ukrainian civilians and does not bomb civilian areas. In areas and cities in which Russian armed forces have taken control, citizens live their lives normally. Critical infrastructure, transportation and law and order are being upheld. That includes the Chernobyl nuclear power plant that is jointly patrolled by the Russian military and the special Ukrainian police who are present in the area. The Chernobyl plant is also operating normally.

The threat to the residents of Ukraine is currently posed by Ukrainian nationalists, who have effectively taken the residents of Ukraine hostage and are using them as human shields. There is abundant evidence circulated by ordinary Ukrainians that the nationalists, despite their protests, are deploying heavy equipment and multiple-rocket launchers in residential areas. That is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law and must be duly condemned. It is essentially the same tactics that are being used by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant terrorists. The entire responsibility for the possible consequences lies with the Maidan regime.

The residents of Ukraine are also threatened by the uncontrolled distribution by radical elements to all those who are willing, including criminals released from prisons, of weapons that are being used by looters and marauders. There is sufficient and abundant evidence of that provided by residents of Kyiv and other cities on social media, which demonstrates the recklessness of the Ukrainian authorities towards its women.

We have just received a letter from the Ukrainian human rights organization, the Irina Berezhnaya Institute of Legal Policy and Social Protection. For the past eight years, the Institute has been raising awareness among international entities of how neo-Nazism originated and spread in Ukraine and how it has been and continues to be supported at the State level. I will briefly quote the letter:

“Today is the apogee of recklessness and lawlessness of neo-Nazis in Ukraine. Convicts were released from prisons by the authorities. These are people who committed serious crimes: murders, robberies, acts of violence and so forth.”

In Kyiv alone, those who were willing received 25,000 machine guns without any documentation.

Killings, looting and crimes continue. The so-called territorial defenders of Ukraine yesterday shot at a car belonging to the Kudrin family, killing parents and one of their daughters. Two more children are in a hospital in critical condition. Ukraine's former Acting President following the unconstitutional coup in February 2014, Mr. Turchynov, called all citizens who are not neutral to kill Russians throughout the entire territory of the country. Yet the recent census of Ukraine conducted in 2019 reported that almost 17 per cent of the population were Russians and the percentage is in fact much greater than that.

Today we are witnessing an information war on social media against Russia. Since there is no evidence proving the destruction of civilian infrastructure by the Russian military. Ukrainian attacks and accidental attacks, as well as photos and videos from Donbas, are presented as proof of such, while in fact they demonstrate that these acts of violence are perpetrated by the Ukrainian nationalist. On social media, tutorials are available on how to create fake news items that will smear our special operation. Throughout Ukrainian social networks, there are 1.2 million instances of such fake news items. The communication between a mother and her son the soldier that was read out by the Ukrainian Ambassador today is also a part of such fake news items, which is well known.

Yesterday, we also did not support the decision (Security Council resolution 2623 (2022)) to move the discussion of this issue from the Security Council to today's emergency special session of the General Assembly, since that decision implies that the Council was unable to exercise its primary responsibility for

the maintenance of international peace and security. Yet, there was not even the slightest attempt to find a constructive solution in the Security Council.

The attempt to circumvent and disregard the position of the Russian Federation contradicts the very foundation of the Charter of the United Nations. Instead of pushing for such schemes, we need to find common ground, despite our Western partners' attempts to avoid this, including their disregard of our legitimate concerns with respect to NATO policy and Western countries' violations of core OSCE principles on the indivisibility of security.

In conclusion, let me state that the Russian Federation did not begin these hostilities. They were initiated by Ukraine against its own residents — the people of Donbas and all dissenters. Russia is ending this war.

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

**Mr. Skoog** (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, for convening us to this meeting today and thank the Secretary-General and all colleagues for being at this meeting. It is very important that the facts are heard and fully understood and that this body is able to take the appropriate decisions after the fact that the Security Council, thanks to the veto by one country alone, stopped the Security Council from taking that decision.

Let me start by expressing the European Union's full solidarity with and support for Ukraine and its people, who are courageously fighting an unprovoked and unjustified military aggression from Russia.

Since our meeting in the General Assembly last week (A/76/PV.58 and A/76/PV.59), the situation has dramatically escalated despite tireless diplomatic efforts, including at the highest level. Russia has decided to turn its back on peace; on the rules-based international order as defined, *inter alia*, in the Charter of the United Nations; on diplomacy; and on the international community. Russia's military attack

against Ukraine has already caused an alarming number of deaths, injuries, internally displaced persons and refugees.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation, in violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also condemn the involvement of Belarus in that aggression against Ukraine and we call on both Russia and Belarus to abide by their international obligations.

We are also alarmed by Russia's raising of the nuclear alert level. We call on Russia to de-escalate and immediately return to the previous alert level of its nuclear arsenal and to avoid any actions that could risk the safety or security of the nuclear power plants in Ukraine, a non-nuclear weapon State under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Russia bears full responsibility for this aggression and the resulting destruction and loss of life. We demand that Russia cease its military operations immediately and unconditionally and withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We further call on Russia to engage in earnest in dialogue with a view to a political and diplomatic solution.

Russia's actions grossly violate international law and are in clear breach of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as Russia's specific commitments to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994.

This is arguably the biggest aggression in Europe since the end of the Second World War. It follows similar Russian aggression against its neighbours in 2008 and 2014. We underscore our firm support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova and we are closely monitoring the situation in the region.

The Assembly has a responsibility immediately and effectively to acknowledge and address Russia's actions. Failing to do so will erode trust in the rules-based global order — with the United Nations at its core — and the Charter of the United Nations itself. It would send the wrong message to perpetrators of such aggression and aggravate similar risks to other Member States of the United Nations in the region and beyond.

We stand firmly by Ukraine and its people. We deplore the loss of life and human suffering. This is a dire humanitarian catastrophe and humanitarian needs are rapidly increasing. With the toll of internally displaced persons and refugees rising, humanitarian support is a priority in the wider package of EU support offered to Ukraine in these trying days.

The EU and its member States are providing urgently needed humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian population. Ukraine has activated the Union Civil Protection Mechanism and is receiving urgently needed supplies from EU member States. In addition, the Republic of Moldova — to which more than 60,000 Ukrainians have fled — has requested and received EU humanitarian support in dealing with the human catastrophe caused deliberately by the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine.

We call on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to respect international law, including international humanitarian law. Civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected and humanitarian access should be secured. We call on Russia and Russia-backed armed formations to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and stop their disinformation campaign and cyberattacks. We strongly condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression against Ukraine and call on it to immediately stop such action and to abide by its international obligations.

We recall our unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and we call on all United Nations members not to recognize the two self-proclaimed separatist entities. The EU has reacted swiftly and decisively to Russia's recognition of Ukraine's self-proclaimed separatist entities and the invasion of Ukraine by adopting restrictive measures. We intend to take such measures against Belarus.

Let us be clear on this. We firmly believe that the use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the twenty-first century. Let us recall that the Charter of the United Nations prohibits both the threat and the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations. Tensions and conflict should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

The EU together with like-minded partners have been united in making unprecedented efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution. But Russia has not reciprocated those efforts and instead opted unilaterally for a grave and premeditated escalation. With that one-sided step, Russia is further isolating itself.

We are today at a crucial and historical moment. Too many times in the past, the international community has been blind or too slow in the face of unfolding tragedies. Entire generations in many places around the world, many of which are represented by the delegations in this Hall, have paid and are still paying the price of inaction. We cannot make the same mistake again; we have to take action.

Following Russia's veto in the Security Council last week (see S/PV.8979), the General Assembly has the responsibility to send a strong and united message on the need for Russia to immediately and unconditionally cease its military operations, withdraw its troops and opt for genuine dialogue.

We call on Russia to avoid, in particular, any action that places the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear and radioactive waste installations at risk.

The people of Ukraine and the whole world are watching us and counting on us and will judge us on the decisions that we will take in this special emergency session. And it is our duty and responsibility for all of us to do our utmost to defend the Charter of the United Nations and the international order. We therefore hope that the General Assembly will massively support draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1 submitted by Ukraine and its partners.

The EU and its member States will continue to do their utmost to protect the integrity of the rules-based international system, which is key to our collective security, and we call on all United Nations Member States to do the same. For our part, we will continue to stand by Ukraine and support its democratically elected institutions and representatives and its people, including through additional political, financial, humanitarian and logistical support.

**Mr. Hermann** (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the eight Nordic-Baltic countries: Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

On the night of 24 February, the Russian leadership decided to attack Ukraine. Let me be clear: We condemn

in the strongest terms possible the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. People around the world are watching with horror the tragedy unfolding in Ukraine, a member State of this Organization, a member of this community of nations.

We are struck by a profound sense of injustice and a profound sympathy with the Ukrainian people, who are fighting for their country, their cities, their homes, their families, their lives, their freedom and their future.

The Russian leadership's aggression and brutal armed attack is in clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Their actions gravely violate international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. They are an attack on this Organization and this cannot stand.

Last week, the Russian leadership decided it would erase Ukraine's right to determine its own future. This cannot stand.

Russia counted on the world to remain silent. But we are acting. And on this day — and until peace prevails and every Ukrainian can safely return to their homes — we stand with Ukraine. The devastating consequences of this aggression — not only for Europe but globally — cannot be overstated.

Russian aggression against Ukraine will have global and long-term negative consequences, challenging the rules-based international order, if we let it go unanswered.

In the time ahead, we fear increased suffering, with a potentially large numbers of casualties and extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure. We see fighting unfolding in and around urban areas. We are deeply concerned about the long-term, cumulative and protracted harm to the civilian population.

We will continue to look at every single instrument in our toolbox, as a matter of urgency. Sanctions have already been enacted to cripple Putin's ability to finance his war machine. Similarly, the role of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus in enabling the attack on Ukraine also demands a firm response.

The Nordic-Baltic countries have been delivering financial, humanitarian and military assistance to the people of Ukraine and many of our partners and friends around the globe have joined us. Every nation must look at how to further support Ukraine.

In recent days, we have watched with horror broadcasted images of families separated, children sheltering in the safety of the Kyiv subway system, kindergartens destroyed by Russian ordnances and the ruins of bombarded residential buildings in the centre of the capital of Ukraine. We are outraged by indiscriminate attacks on civilians in this unlawful and immoral war of conquest, which serves no purpose and no principle but the naked quest for power and territory. This cannot stand. Russia must respect international humanitarian law and human rights law. Full and unhindered humanitarian access must be guaranteed. Civilians must be protected.

We call on Russia to stop this senseless war, and we echo the plea of the Secretary-General: we demand an immediate ceasefire, and we urge Russia to withdraw all its forces from Ukraine and return genuinely to the path of dialogue and negotiation.

Let me be clear: every civilian death and every war crime will be recorded, and we will ensure that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes are held accountable and brought to justice. History has its eyes on us. Every legal avenue available will be used to hold the aggressor to account.

Ukraine has filed an application at the International Court of Justice on Russia's erroneous and absurd allegations of genocide in Ukraine, which the Russian Federation has cynically used as a false pretext for its invasion. The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has also noted that he is monitoring Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has jurisdiction to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Prosecutor's Office may — and will — exercise its jurisdiction over and investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime committed within the territory of Ukraine, as Ukraine has accepted the Court's jurisdiction. We fully support the ICC's monitoring of the situation.

The rules-based international order, which governs how States interact with one another, was put in place drawing from the horrible lessons of two world wars, promising one another that future generations would be saved from the scourge of war. The attack on Ukraine — the Russian invasion of Ukraine — is a direct assault on the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. This cannot stand.

The matter is now in the hands of the General Assembly, where one veto cannot overrule the

membership of the United Nations and where power and legitimacy are manifested in numbers. Russia's shameful use of the veto on a matter for which it bears full responsibility is completely unacceptable. As a permanent member of the Security Council, Russia has a special responsibility for maintaining peace and security, not to violate the very principles of the United Nations Charter. The most recent meetings of the Council have demonstrated the need for reform. It showed who had the firmness and valour to defend the United Nations Charter.

No country can grow and thrive in isolation. Russia knows this. The General Assembly has the power to send a firm message to Putin. What we say today and how we vote on the draft resolution presented will make a difference on the ground in Ukraine and to the Ukrainian people. They will be watching us, hoping that the world will come in on the side of the United Nations Charter and our promise of "never again".

Russia's unlawful and brutal armed attack on Ukraine will affect and impact everyone. And if we do not join our forces to turn back this tide today, we will be even less equipped to deal with similar crises and crimes in future — wherever and on whichever continent they occur.

Over the last week we have heard powerful statements from representatives of every continent on this planet, from Africa to Asia, from Europe to the Americas, that Russia's behaviour — towards a fellow State Member of the United Nations — cannot stand. And we will hear more today. To those who still refer to "two parties to a conflict", we echo the words of a protester, who had so rightly written on her sign:

"If Russia stops fighting, there will be no more war. If Ukrainians stop fighting, there will be no more Ukraine."

That is the simple reality before us. That is the simple truth. The world will hold Russia and Belarus accountable for their actions — Russia as the main aggressor and Belarus as the enabler.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): Day after day, Russia is continuing its destructive work in Ukraine. Added to these brutal and criminal acts is a dangerous rhetoric that further fuels tensions.

Russia is conducting this armed aggression in violation of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which all members of

this Assembly are obligated to respect. On Friday, Russia, standing alone, opposed a Security Council draft resolution co-sponsored by 82 States (S/2022/155). Today, the General Assembly bears a historic responsibility — that of loudly and clearly relaying the voices of citizens on all continents, including those of Russia, who are demanding an immediate end to this war and the withdrawal of the Russian army from Ukrainian territory.

France supports the efforts under way within the General Assembly to prepare a draft resolution calling on Russia to put an end to the aggression and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. It calls on all States members of the General Assembly to vote in favour of this text. Beyond Ukraine, it is a question of defending the Charter and the *raison d'être* of the United Nations.

Let us be clear: in the face of armed aggression against a people, in the face of civilian victims whose numbers are growing every day, in the face of the flood of people forced to leave everything they have to seek refuge, no one can look the other way. Abstaining in the voting is not an option. To abstain is to consent to the law of the strongest. We call on all States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of the rule of law over force.

The referral of this matter to an emergency special session of the General Assembly does not mean that the Security Council is abdicating its responsibilities. It will meet this afternoon to discuss the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. France, together with Mexico, will submit a draft resolution to guarantee the protection of civilians and safe and unhindered humanitarian access to meet the urgent needs of the Ukrainian population. France and its European Union partners stand firmly by the Ukrainian people. The European Union has already announced €90 million in humanitarian aid. France will also take part.

Together with its partners, France is taking action to ensure that the international response is equal to the aggression committed by Russia. The European Union, of which France holds the presidency the first half of this year, has adopted measures to block the Russian central bank's access to its reserves. It has also announced the financing of defence equipment for Ukraine.

France salutes the courage shown by the people of Ukraine. We call on the General Assembly to express its support without delay by adopting a resolution.

**Dame Barbara Woodward** (United Kingdom): On Friday, 81 States Members of the United Nations supported a draft resolution in the Security Council to stop the war in Ukraine (S/2022/155). Russia was completely isolated in opposing that draft resolution. Today, we gather in the General Assembly to stand against Russia's illegal attack on Ukraine and its assault on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The facts are clear — Russia has invaded Ukraine, without provocation and without justification. Russia has rained missiles and rockets down on Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa and other cities. The brave men and women of Ukraine are enduring the barrage and have held their cities from the Russian invaders. They are fighting for their country and for their continued future as a free and independent nation.

But the humanitarian consequences are already immense. We hear of babies born in air-raid shelters; children with bomb craters in their kindergartens; and today, news of the shelling of residential areas in Kharkiv. Those are indiscriminate attacks on Ukrainian civilians; 7 million Ukrainians are displaced. In short, the scourge of war that our United Nations was created to prevent has been unleashed by Russia on Ukraine.

The international response to Russia's aggression has been united and swift. Around the world and here in this Hall, we must stand together to defend the rules and enforce the accountability that we have built together. If we do not stand up for them now, then the safety of every nation's borders and independence are at risk. That is why we also condemn Belarusian support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As the Secretary-General said last week, Russia's actions are violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and conflict directly with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. As he said today, the only answer is peace.

Therefore, our message today is simple: we offer our unequivocal support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We call on President Putin to stop this senseless war and we urge all fellow States Members of the United Nations to speak up for Ukraine and to defend the Charter.

**Mr. Imnadze** (Georgia): My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union. I would like to add the following comments in my national capacity.

We have gathered today in an emergency session because the Security Council has once again failed us in acting as a guardian of peace and security. It is now up to us, at the General Assembly, where we all have equal rights to vote, to stand up and make certain that the United Nations delivers on the purpose it was created for.

The use of armed force by a United Nations Member State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another Member State violates Article 2.4 of the Charter of the United Nations and constitutes an act of aggression, as defined by resolution 3314 (XXIX), adopted by consensus. What we see in Ukraine is an act of aggression on the part of Russia and we condemn it.

Last week, I spoke from this very rostrum about Russia's pattern of behaviour against its neighbours (see A/76/PV.58). Russia's full-scale military aggression against my country should have served as a wake-up call for all, but alas it has not been possible to prevent a similar scenario unfolding in Ukraine a few years later.

Without repeating myself, let me just say that we in Georgia know the toll of war. We know its disastrous consequences and that it is the people — innocent civilians, women and children — who pay the highest price. It is devastating not only for those who live through it but also for the generations to whom it is passed down.

Let me be clear: the core principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki Final Act, the Charter of Paris for a New Europe and the commitments taken under the Budapest Memorandum are non-negotiable and cannot be subject to revision by any country, no matter how large or powerful it may be. Territorial acquisition through the use or threat of force is illegal and impermissible.

Georgia calls on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its military activities and withdraw all its forces and armaments from Ukraine; allow immediate access to all international humanitarian and human rights mechanisms, wherever needed, across the entire territory of Ukraine; and reverse the decisions related to the status of integral parts of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Crimea.

It must also do the same with regard to Georgia — withdraw its forces, allow humanitarian

access and reverse the status-related decision on the occupied territories.

Georgia was among the co-sponsors of the Security Council draft resolution that was vetoed. We are also a co-sponsor of General Assembly draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1, which will soon be considered. Although the draft resolution concerns Ukraine, it represents a watershed moment for all of us — and I would dare say for the future of the rules-based order and our United Nations.

I therefore call on members to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1; to vote to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to vote for the United Nations.

In conclusion, we welcome the Secretary-General's decision to scale up United Nations humanitarian operations in and around Ukraine. Let me once again reiterate Georgia's unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea and Donbas, as well as Ukraine's navigational rights in its territorial waters.

**Mr. Szczerski** (Poland): Poland fully supports draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1, submitted by Ukraine, and calls on each Member State to stand firmly behind it. We deeply believe that in doing so, we will demonstrate our adherence to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Only by upholding those fundamental principles can we seek a truly peaceful and long-term solution to the conflict caused by the Russian aggression in Ukraine. In that sense, the draft resolution on which we are about to vote paves the way to a meaningful diplomatic effort to end the atrocities of that war.

To achieve peace, Poland, as the current Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, called yesterday for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine to let humanitarian organizations deliver assistance. However, those appeals for peace are even more urgent when you look at events in Ukraine from close up.

Let me tell members how we Poles see and respond to the horrors of this war as neighbours and friends of Ukraine.

There is no doubt that we are confronted with one of the biggest humanitarian crises in Europe since the Second World War. In the first three days of the

Russian aggression, facilitated by the complicity of the Belarussian regime of Aleksandr Lukashenko, we witnessed more than 500,000 people fleeing Ukraine, 300,000 of whom found refuge in my home country. We keep our borders open. Our diplomatic missions help those who seek refuge in Poland. The nationals of all countries who suffered from Russian aggression or whose life is at risk can seek shelter in my country. I can say that in the first half of today alone, we welcomed people of 125 nationalities fleeing Ukraine to Poland. That means that this concerns us all.

The list of those nationalities is too long to read out. I will just read out those countries with more than 100 nationals fleeing to Poland only this morning: Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Nigeria, India, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Poland, Belarus, Iran, Turkey, Algeria and Russia. Such refuge also applies to students, which I understand is a serious concern for some colleagues here in the Hall. The students are also welcome in Poland, and they were offered to continue their studies in Poland. We know that some of the missions here in New York were targeted by disinformation suggesting discriminatory practices at the Polish-Ukrainian border based on race or religion. I can say that that is a complete lie and a terrible insult to us.

Besides giving refuge, Poland is delivering very practical and tangible help to those who are suffering. My Government organized special trains for the elderly and mothers with small babies, as well as convoys with supplies and medical aid. There are 7,000 beds in 20 hospitals ready for those wounded and sick, and I want to announce that the first Ukrainian refugee babies were born in Poland in the past 24 hours and the first life-saving operations for the elderly were carried out in our hospitals. Poland stands ready to cooperate closely with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the International Committee of the Red Cross and any other humanitarian organization to ease the burden on the civilians targeted by the Russian aggression.

However, what I am most proud of is the outpour of spontaneous readiness to help by individuals. Polish families are opening their homes to refugees. They offer clothes, food and accommodation. Thousands of private cars are coming from all over Poland to pick up those who crossed the border. In the first two days, we experienced long traffic jams because of the number of cars coming from all corners of Poland. Polish people



stand in lines for hours to donate blood for Ukraine. The scale of help offered was so big that the Government opened a special website, Helping Ukraine, where volunteers can register and get guidance regarding those in need. While we diplomats at the Permanent Mission are fulfilling our diplomatic duties here in New York, our family members and friends are welcoming refugees coming directly from the war zone. In this conflict, Poland may not be a geopolitical super-Power, but we want to be a solidarity super-Power. That is how we want to change the grim reality for the better.

At the same time, I would like to pay tribute to those Ukrainians who defend their motherland and continue to stand for their country's freedom. Those are not only soldiers, but also people such as Vasylina, a 30-year-old mother of two small daughters, living in a village near the Polish-Ukrainian border. When offered a trip to Poland by my family, she answered: "I cannot leave Ukraine now. This is my country. I have to stay and take care of it." She is now cooking food for soldiers and refugees at the border.

A similar answer was given by our diplomats in Ukraine. We keep our embassies and consulates open, and they keep fulfilling their diplomatic and consular duties. Let me share the message that I received this morning from our Ambassador, Bartosz Cichocki, in Kyiv:

"I am the Polish ambassador to Ukraine. I work in Kyiv, a city the size of Berlin, inhabited by more than 4 million people. From Thursday morning, I have had to hide from the bombing in a basement several times a day. I wake to exchanges of machine-gun fire. Windows are shaking from the missile detonations. I am convinced that, right now, when you are deciding in New York, hundreds of thousands of terrified residents of Kharkiv, Dnipro, Zhytomyr, Mariupol, Lviv and Kyiv look to you with hope and faith in the power of international law."

I wish to conclude with a reference to the warning expressed by a nineteenth-century Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, in his book with the meaningful title *Crime and Punishment*. The message of the book is the following: when someone, just like Raskolnikov, thinks that he is exceptional and free from moral obligations, and therefore feels entitled to commit a crime of murder, in the end he faces the punishment from the crime itself because committing a crime is

already one's biggest punishment. There is no crime without punishment.

**Mr. Marschik** (Austria): As usual, Austria aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. However, we would also like to add our voice in our national capacity because what is currently being deliberately inflicted upon Ukraine does not allow us to remain silent.

Let me start by thanking the Secretary-General for his clear words this morning and these past days. We are grateful to see that the United Nations is there to help those suffering and in dire need of help.

We meet here today to discuss the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations.

The fact that we meet here today in this Hall is a good thing and a bad thing. It is bad because it means that, after several days since Russia launched its aggression against the sovereign territory of Ukraine, we are still witnessing military attacks, terrible human suffering and loss of life.

It is also bad because questions of peace and security should be addressed by the Security Council as the primary United Nations organ responsible for upholding international peace and security. The Security Council cannot remain silent when basic principles of our international rules-based order are trampled by military boots and squashed by tanks.

Last Friday, however, the adoption of Security Council draft resolution S/2022/155 was blocked by the veto of a permanent member, the Russian Federation, even though 81 members of the international community supported the draft resolution of the co-penholders.

It is true that the veto right of the five permanent members is foreseen in the United Nations Charter, but so is the obligation to uphold United Nations principles. If, in the twenty-first-century, the Security Council is blocked in a situation that constitutes a blatant breach of international law, we should ask ourselves whether this system of veto powers is still able to regulate our international relations.

Yet our meeting here today is also good. It is good that the General Assembly is there to step in if the Security Council cannot fulfil its mandate.

It is good that we now have the opportunity here in this General Assembly Hall to raise our voices, to

recall the principles of the United Nations Charter – our Charter – and to state clearly that we will not stay silent if the Charter is violated in the most serious way.

That is our right. That is our obligation as Members of the Organization.

At the end of this debate, we will vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1, condemning the aggression of Russia against Ukraine and showing solidarity with the people of Ukraine. Austria will vote in favour of the draft resolution and urges everyone else to do the same.

By voting in favour, we will show the world that the United Nations is able to assume its responsibility to defend the rule of law, international law and the Charter of the United Nations. By voting in favour, we will show that those acts and similarly horrifying acts are not tolerated by the international community. And most importantly, by voting in favour we will show the Ukrainian people that they are not alone.

I know that for many of us, such votes can be difficult. Some say that this is a regional issue — a European problem. An attack against one of the Members of the Organization is an attack against us all. In our interconnected world, our world is one region. Cyberweapons strike everywhere. Missiles have global reach. The world is not only regional; it has become local.

Some say that we must respect security concerns. Yes, we must. Everyone has security concerns. Ukraine had them — it gave up its nuclear weapons and trusted that others would not harm them. But clearly, if a country has security concerns it should solve them with dialogue, not tanks. If a country with one of the largest armies and nuclear arsenals feels insecure, it should seek cooperation, dialogue and disarmament, not use force against others.

Some say, “Well, look at others and the other instances that we have had. What about past violations?” We know such whataboutism well — trying to justify evil with past evil and trying to excuse oneself by pointing to the faults of others.

But just because we did not stand up in the past to injustice and evil, that should not prevent us from standing up now. Yes, it is true that others have also committed aggressions, crimes and faults. Yes, the international community has sometimes shown a lack of unity to act. And yes, the international community has sometimes been too hesitant.

But let us not make that same mistake now. Let us start a new era when we work together and stand up united for our common principles. Let us defend the rule of law. Let us not give in to the reign of the powerful. Let us vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1.

Austria is not part of any military alliance. We rely for our security on the respect and implementation of international law, treaties and custom, including humanitarian law. Reports about Russian attacks on civilians and civilian objects in urban areas are extremely worrisome. Rockets or missiles hitting apartment buildings in Kyiv cannot be accepted. Those attacks constitute war crimes under international humanitarian law.

We urge Russia to strictly adhere to international humanitarian law, in particular regarding the protection of civilians in urban warfare, and to immediately cease such attacks and refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas.

We strongly condemn the use of cluster munitions, which is incompatible with international humanitarian law and outlawed under the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Concerning the threat of use of nuclear weapons, any nuclear threat of that kind is a violation of the principles of the Charter. The implied catastrophic humanitarian consequences do not respect borders and pose a threat to all of humankind. That is completely unacceptable.

Perpetrators and those responsible for ordering those crimes need to be held accountable. The International Criminal Court (ICC) may exercise its jurisdiction over and investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime committed within the territory of Ukraine.

In that regard, we welcome the statement by ICC Prosecutor Khan, reminding us all that his Office can exercise jurisdiction over and investigate any act of genocide, crime against humanity or war crime committed within the territory of Ukraine since February 2014.

In the past couple of days, Ukrainians have endured incredible human suffering. In order to help ease the humanitarian catastrophe, Austria has contributed €2.5 million to the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations and additional humanitarian assistance will be decided

soon. Those organizations' valuable work must be ensured by guaranteeing humanitarian access.

In sum, Austria condemns the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Austria calls on Russia to reverse its decision to recognize the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk Peoples' Republics, which represents a grave violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Austria urges Russia to immediately withdraw its troops, stop any further bloodshed and return to the path of peaceful dialogue, as any State Member of the United Nations is obliged to do. Vienna is ready to host and facilitate such dialogue. We hope that today's start of bilateral discussions between the delegations of Ukraine and Russia can serve as a first step towards an urgently needed ceasefire.

We call on our colleagues to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1. I know that it is not always easy. Many Member States have good relations with Russia. We love the culture, admire the traditions and have good Russian friends. But a good friend and an honest friend will speak up and say what needs to be said and do what needs to be done when a friend commits an illegal and evil act. That is what draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1 is for.

I ask Members to imagine for one moment being in Ukraine's shoes. What would a Member expect from the United Nations and the General Assembly, if it were in Ukraine's place?

In this dark hour, it is our moral and legal obligation to condemn the violations of the Charter and show solidarity with the victim of an aggression. Austria will show its full solidarity with Ukraine, the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people. We stand with them.

**Mr. Kulhánek** (Czech Republic): The Czech Republic aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union and wishes to add the following comments in its national capacity.

Let me start with the most important words that I can say here today. We urge Russia to stop immediately its military actions and to unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine.

We are meeting here today at a critical moment, not just for Ukraine or Europe but for the United Nations as a whole. A permanent member of the Security Council has started a war of aggression against a fellow United

Nations Member State. That is a blatant violation of international law.

That is a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and its principles, which we should all uphold and abide by. That seminal document was written with the express purpose of averting the scourge of war. Russian President Putin chose to reject diplomacy and multiple offers for talks. Instead, he decided to launch a savage conquest, inflicting untold pain and suffering on the people of Ukraine. There are horrific reports coming from the country — civilians, including children, being killed in their hometowns, families separated, thousands of people forced to flee for their lives. Let me make it crystal clear: Russia and its people are under no threat from Ukraine or NATO.

We condemn in the strongest terms Mr. Putin's threat of using nuclear weapons. Indeed, it is very dangerous rhetoric and further exacerbates the overall security situation. Nothing can justify the use of nuclear weapons.

Russia must be held accountable for its aggressive actions. Ukraine has accepted the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in relation to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. We will be looking for the ICC to prioritize investigations of crimes committed in Ukraine. Similarly, we strongly support Ukraine's filing of a case against Russia at the International Court of Justice requesting the Court to order Russia to cease its unlawful attack on the country and stop Russia's false claims that acts of genocide have been perpetrated in the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts of Ukraine.

I would like to reiterate my country's unwavering support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, including the illegally annexed Crimea. That is why the Czech Republic throws its full support behind the draft General Assembly resolution contained in document A/ES-11/L.1.

The people of the Czech Republic stand firmly with Ukraine. The suffering of innocent civilians in the country has raised a huge wave of solidarity among our people. Humanitarian aid is pouring across the border and to border regions where Ukrainians are fleeing in a desperate search for safety. The Czech Government, local communities and individuals have offered and provided help to the people who have fled from the

suffering caused by the Russian aggression, and we will continue to do so.

We deeply regret the use of a veto by the Russian representative last Friday to block the draft Security Council resolution (S/2022/155) (see S/PV.8979). This prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its fundamental role to maintain international peace and security. It is yet further proof of Russia's blatant disrespect for the United Nations. However, the large number of co-sponsors of the draft resolution clearly demonstrated the prevailing opinion of the international community.

Russia cannot veto the reality on the ground. Let me now echo the words of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaking after last Friday's vote in the Security Council,

“The United Nations was born out of war to end war. Today, that objective was not achieved. We must never give up. We must give peace another chance”.

As we are about to take a vote on the draft resolution that is soon to be formally introduced, we, the representatives of 193 nations gathered in this Hall at this emergency special session of the General Assembly, have a solemn duty to uphold the basic purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. Soon, each and every member of this honourable body will have a chance to declare where it stands on the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and on, quite frankly, the most crucial matter of all: war and peace.

I am making a plea to each and every one of us representing all States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1. We must vote with our conscience, vote for the end of bloodshed and human suffering, vote for peace, vote for the United Nations Charter and international law, vote for all the good our United Nations was founded to represent. And let us not forget: the whole world is watching.

**Mrs. Baeriswyl** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As Dag Hammarskjöld clearly stated:

“The United Nations were not created to take us to heaven, but to save us from hell.”

And yet, what the population in Ukraine is experiencing in these days, looks very much like what we have pledged to avoid.

That is why the General Assembly is meeting today, in the face of a war that has already cost many lives. Each life lost is one too many. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families. We express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and their democratically elected authorities. We are deeply concerned at the humanitarian situation and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

The Assembly is meeting today at the request of the Security Council, due to the lack of consensus among its permanent members. Switzerland supported the draft resolution in the Security Council aimed at ending the hostilities and restoring international law (S/2022/155). The blocking of this draft resolution by the veto of a permanent member (see S/PV.8979) is contrary to Article 27 of the Charter. The Russian Federation, as a party to the conflict, should have abstained from voting.

We fully support the draft resolution of the General Assembly (A/ES-11/L.1) and call on all Member States to do the same.

Switzerland strongly condemns Russia's attack on Ukraine. We are also concerned about the use of Belarusian territory for this military operation. Russian attempts to legitimize its action are not credible: there was no provocation to justify such an attack.

We call on Russia, like all nuclear-weapon States, to refrain from any threat to use these weapons, or indeed from using them. Russia has just joined a declaration of the permanent five members of the Security Council that reaffirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

Switzerland reiterates its full support for Ukrainian independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Switzerland once again calls on all parties to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. We condemn all violations. This also applies to cyberspace. The protection of the civilian population as well as of persons *hors de combat* must be the priority.

Switzerland is deeply concerned at substantiated allegations of the use of cluster munitions. Assets essential to the survival of the civilian population as well as civilian and medical infrastructure must not be targeted. Furthermore, we call on the parties to ensure rapid and unhindered humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian and medical personnel.

Switzerland stands in solidarity. We are committed to mobilizing additional resources to meet humanitarian needs in Ukraine and in the region. Together with our European partners, we will continue our long tradition of welcoming refugees. Moreover, Switzerland has fully implemented the European Union sanctions against Russia. We welcome the work of the Special Monitoring Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We deplore the fact that that serious situation has left the organization with no choice other than to temporarily evacuate its staff.

Switzerland welcomes the Secretary-General's offer of good offices as well as the diplomatic efforts of Member States, which have left no stone unturned in order to promote a diplomatic solution through dialogue.

Switzerland reiterates its offer of good offices if the parties to the conflict so desire. We welcome the fact that those parties met today for initial negotiations. We very much hope, as the Secretary-General does so keenly, that those talks will lead to concrete results, such as, for example, a ceasefire. That conflict, like all conflicts, can be resolved only through dialogue.

**Ms. Schwalger** (New Zealand): Today our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine as they continue to fight Russia's large-scale invasion.

We are seeing innocent lives lost, everyday lives in turmoil, young and old lives that will never be the same as innocent people suddenly find themselves as refugees. The worst part of the trauma we see unfolding in front of us is knowing that it was completely avoidable.

New Zealand is in no doubt that the conflict in Ukraine is a direct result of the unprovoked and unjustified actions of Russia and its decision to flagrantly ignore international law. Russia is escalating its aggression by its decision to increase the readiness of its nuclear weapons. Russia's actions are nothing short of the acts of a bully.

New Zealand supports the Secretary-General's assessment that those acts represent a clear violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and are inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In standing in support of Ukraine, we are also standing in defence of the United Nations Charter. We cannot pick and choose when to espouse the centrality of the Charter.

This emergency session of the General Assembly is taking place as a direct result of Russia's actions alone.

Its ongoing military aggressions threaten not only the peace and security of Ukraine but that of Europe and the international community.

We are here today because the Security Council failed to act last Friday to condemn Russia's actions to invade Ukraine (see S/PV.8979). Russia's use of the veto when it is not only a party to this conflict but the direct cause of it is a disgrace.

New Zealand, along with a group of small States, opposed the granting of the veto to the permanent five members of the Council. We have continued to oppose the veto since its inception, and we remain strong in our conviction that there is no place for the veto in the Security Council.

With the Security Council having failed to deliver against its responsibilities, we, the General Assembly, must now stand up to play our part. New Zealand is a primary co-sponsor of General Assembly draft resolution A/ES-11/L.1, and we encourage all member States to vote in favour thereof, in support of Ukraine, in support of international peace and security, and in support of our treasured Charter of the United Nations.

New Zealand has consistently expressed our strong support for international efforts to de-escalate the Ukraine crisis diplomatically. Having turned away from diplomacy, Russia must now face the consequences of that decision.

New Zealand has joined other Member States in implementing measures in response to Russia's actions, including introducing targeted travel bans against Russian Government officials and other individuals associated with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and prohibiting the export of goods to Russian military and security forces.

Our thoughts today must be with the people of Ukraine, who are now facing a humanitarian crisis caused by the conflict. We echo the President of the General Assembly's call that all Member States must uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law. Further, we, the international community, must act now to prevent further pointless loss of innocent life and to support those who now find themselves displaced through no fault of their own.

We commend Ukraine's neighbours for their selfless acts of taking in large numbers of Ukrainians and other nationalities who seek refuge from this conflict. We acknowledge with a grim sense of horror

but, sadly, with little surprise, the role of accomplice and facilitator that Belarus has played in support of Russia's invasion. New Zealand has also extended its travel bans to key members of the Belarusian Government.

New Zealand is contributing financially to the humanitarian response and will consider all humanitarian options available to support the international humanitarian response. We welcome the submission by France and Mexico of a humanitarian draft resolution in the Security Council today.

Finally, Aotearoa/New Zealand is a proponent of peace and reconciliation and thus we say to Russia to act consistently with its international obligations; cease military operations in Ukraine; permanently withdraw to avoid a catastrophic and pointless loss of innocent life; take all possible steps to protect civilians in line with international humanitarian law; and return to diplomatic negotiations as a pathway to resolve the conflict.

**Ms. Concepción Jaramillo** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Panama, on behalf of the Republic of Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic, as countries members of the Alliance for Development and Democracy, is honoured to address this eleventh emergency special session in order to express its position on the draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.1) on the unprovoked armed aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine.

On the basis of shared values and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, the delegations of Panama, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic condemn the use of force and the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. Our Alliance supports the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. António Guterres, in his call for a cessation of hostilities and for the stepping up of the application of restraint and reason and for respecting international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. We reiterate that all efforts should also be made in favour of enabling rapid, safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Ukraine, and to protect civilians, including humanitarian personnel and people in vulnerable situations, especially children.

The grave situation posed by the displacement of thousands of Ukrainians in search of a safe haven in neighbouring countries presents an additional challenge to the complex global crisis already posed by

the pandemic. For this reason, the countries of Latin America, including the members of the Alliance, have undertaken joint efforts to facilitate the safe transit of our nationals crossing the Ukrainian border.

Dialogue and negotiation, accompanied by respect for the letter and spirit of the United Nations Charter, the resolutions of the General Assembly and international law, are the only guarantee for a lasting solution to the conflict currently afflicting Eastern Europe. Accordingly, we strongly call for the parties to return to the paths of negotiation and diplomatic dialogue and that actions at this junction focus on promoting peace and respect for multilateralism.

**Mr. Zhang Jun** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The situation in Ukraine is changing sharply. China is closely following the developments. The situation has evolved to a point that China does not wish to see. It is not in the interests of any party.

The immediate priority is for all parties to exercise restraint and prevent a further worsening of the situation, while stepping up diplomatic efforts with the aim of finding a political solution. China welcomes the start of direct talks between Russia and Ukraine.

Ukraine should serve as a bridge of communication between East and West rather than the front line in a rivalry between major Powers. We call for efforts to create an atmosphere under conditions conducive to direct talks between the parties concerned, as this is the fundamental way to resolve the issue.

All action taken by the United Nations and the relevant parties of the international community should prioritize peace and stability in the region and universal security for all and should help de-escalate tensions and facilitate a diplomatic settlement. China does not approve of any approach that may exacerbate tensions.

China supports the continued work of relevant United Nations agencies on humanitarian aid in Ukraine. We believe that the safety of life and property of civilians, as well as their humanitarian needs, should be effectively guaranteed.

As a permanent member of the Security Council, China always conscientiously fulfils its responsibility towards the maintenance of international peace and security. It is our consistent and unequivocal position that all countries' sovereignty and territory integrity should be respected, and the purposes and principles of

the United Nations Charter upheld. China will continue to play a constructive role in the pursuit of peace.

The cold war has long ended; the cold war mentality of bloc confrontation must now be abandoned. Nothing can be gained by stirring up a new cold war, as everyone will stand to lose. One country's security should not come at the expense of other countries' security. Still less can regional security be guaranteed by reinforcing or even expanding military blocs.

China supports the European Union, NATO and Russia resuming dialogue, keeping in mind the notion of indivisible security, properly addressing the legitimate security concerns of all parties, including Russia, striving to forge a balanced, effective and sustainable European security mechanism so as to achieve lasting peace and stability for the European continent.

**Ms. Stoeva** (Bulgaria): Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer. I would like to highlight a few points in my national capacity.

We have gathered in this Hall today under extraordinary circumstances — circumstances that defy reason but unfortunately are our reality, and that reality is that the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, is executing an act of aggression against Ukraine, a founding member of the United Nations.

Bulgaria condemns in the strongest possible terms this unprovoked and unjustified military aggression, which is in gross violation of international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The illegal military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine not only undermines global security and stability, but also puts the international rules-based order in jeopardy.

It is deplorable that the Russian Federation used its veto power to prevent the Security Council from exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security (see S/PV.8979). However, the decision of the Security Council to urgently refer the matter to the General Assembly by calling an emergency special session of the Assembly demonstrates the resolve of the rest of the Council to do everything possible to address this serious act of aggression. The fact that for the first time in 40 years the Security Council has taken such a decision speaks of the gravity of the situation.

We commend the decision by the Security Council, and now it is incumbent upon all of us to live up to the responsibility to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law and to send a strong and unequivocal message by condemning the act of aggression and illegal actions by the Kremlin. Bulgaria demands that the Russian Federation immediately cease its military actions, unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders.

The use of force and coercion to change borders has no place in the twenty-first century. Tensions and conflicts should be resolved exclusively through dialogue and diplomacy.

We strongly condemn the involvement of Belarus in this aggression, including by letting its territory be used as a launching ground for aggression and call on it to refrain from such action and abide by its international obligations.

The reports of civilian casualties, including children, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including critical infrastructure, are deeply concerning. We are particularly outraged about the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects in residential areas and against the civilian population. That is unacceptable and must stop immediately. We call on the Russian Federation to fully respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access and assistance to all persons in need.

The Russian Federation bears full responsibility for that aggression and all the destruction and loss of life, and the leadership of the Russian Federation should and will be held accountable, in accordance with international law.

It is our duty to do the right thing. We need to stand together against any act of aggression and against any violation of the United Nations Charter. We need to fiercely defend the principles of the Charter, international law and the rules-based order because they are our only guarantees for peace. We cannot turn a blind eye when a blatant act of aggression is being carried out against a sovereign peace-loving nation. Today it is against Ukraine, tomorrow it could be against any one of us.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Bulgaria's unwavering support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. I would also like to thank the Ukraine people for their extraordinary courage and resilience. You are not alone.

**Mr. Massari** (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union (EU) and wishes to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the convening of this special emergency session. Following the inability of the Security Council to discharge its duties and adopt a resolution on the matter due to the veto of the Russian Federation (see S/PV.8979), the General Assembly had an obligation to make its voice heard in the face of such a grave threat to international peace and security. We are thankful to the members of the Security Council that made this possible.

Together with its EU partners and allies, Italy has made its position clear throughout this crisis in statements and consistent acts, standing firmly in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine and in full solidarity with the Ukrainian people. The unprovoked aggression decided by the Russian leadership is a blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and must therefore be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The involvement of Belarus as facilitator of the Russian aggression is also to be condemned.

In close coordination with our EU partners and allies, we have implemented unprecedented economic and financial sanctions, including on Belarus. Further steps will have to be taken if the assault against Ukraine continues. We call upon the Russian Federation to immediately stop its actions and withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to territorial waters. We urge the Russian Federation to respect the principles set forth in the United Nations Charter and in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to abide by the Minsk agreements and to urgently redirect its action towards a peaceful solution. We trust that, through the adoption of the proposed draft resolution, the General Assembly will show cohesion and determination in dealing with a

situation that is threatening the existence of a Member State, causing a growing number of casualties, including civilians and children, and ultimately undermining the very essence of multilateral relations.

Russia's actions are causing enormous human suffering and triggering a humanitarian disaster. We express our heartfelt solidarity with Ukraine and its people and we mourn all the victims of this senseless war. Together with our partners and building on the support provided since 2014, Italy is scaling up its financial and material support in order to strengthen the capabilities and resilience of Ukraine — with an amount of around €110 million in aid, credit and grants, as well as additional contributions.

We are also determined to provide increased humanitarian support in order to support the people of Ukraine in these dramatic circumstances. In that context, international humanitarian law must be upheld. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access must be granted. The humanitarian staff must be protected. We welcome the convening of a meeting on the humanitarian dimension of this crisis later today, and we hope that the discussions will lead to the adoption of a concrete deliverable.

Lastly, we acknowledge and support the statements of the Secretary-General in defence of the principles of the United Nations Charter, as well as his action in support of the humanitarian needs in Ukraine. Italy will remain actively engaged, in close coordination with its European partners and allies, in reaching out to the broader United Nations membership in favour of the immediate halt of this aggression and in support for the urgent return to a peaceful path.

**Mr. Costa Filho** (Brazil): This is a defining moment for our Organization and for the world. When the drafters of the Charter of the United Nations envisaged our current collective security system back in 1945, they probably thought that they had seen the worst of tragedy and human suffering. If they were here today, they would doubt that assessment. We are seeing a swift escalation of tensions that could put all of humankind at risk, but we still have time to stop it.

Brazil voted in favour of draft resolution (S/2022/155) before the Security Council on the situation in Ukraine. We regret that the draft was not adopted (see S/PV.8979), but firmly believe that the Security Council has not yet exhausted the instruments at its



disposal to contribute to a negotiated and diplomatic solution towards peace.

The urgency of the situation convinced us of the need to add the voice of the General Assembly to that of the Security Council in seeking solutions to the crisis in and around Ukraine. No one can deny the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, nor the complementary role that the Assembly can play to that end.

Brazil welcomes the engagement of the Secretary-General in attempting to de-escalate the growing tensions. It also notes that Ukraine has initiated a case in the International Court of Justice based on the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This is the moment for the principal organs of the United Nations to work together in pursuing one of the Organization's main objectives — to save us from the scourge of war.

For that, we need to be exceedingly cautious in moving forward, both in the General Assembly and elsewhere. We are currently witnessing a succession of events that if not contained soon will lead to a much broader confrontation. Everyone will suffer, not just those who are fighting. Those who have repeatedly pleaded for de-escalation will also bear the costs of the power play between NATO and Russia that we are currently witnessing.

In recent years, we have seen the progressive deterioration of the security situation and the balance of power in eastern Europe. The undermining of the Minsk agreements by all parties and the discrediting of the security concerns voiced by Russia prepared the ground for the crisis we are all witnessing.

Let me be clear, however — that situation in no way justifies the use of force against the territorial integrity and sovereignty of any Member State, which is against the most basic norms and principles we all abide by and a clear breach of the Charter of the United Nations. It is in our collective interest to jointly do all we can to stop and reverse the belligerent actions before it is too late. Brazil reiterates its calls for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, as well as for full respect for international humanitarian law.

Equally important, we call on all actors involved to reassess their decisions concerning the supply of weapons, the recourse to cyberattacks and the

application of selective sanctions, particularly those that could affect the global economy, including the critical area of food security. At this moment, we need constructive solutions, not actions that will only prolong hostilities and spread the conflict, with rippling effects on the world's economy and security.

As we speak, hundreds of thousands of civilians have already fled Ukraine. Many more will certainly follow — millions perhaps. The destruction of infrastructure has left people without electricity and water.

Damage to essential infrastructure; the interruption of basic services, including transportation and access to basic supplies; and the danger to persons with disabilities, the elderly and children are causes of grave concern. There are pressing humanitarian needs for medical services, medicines, health equipment, shelter and protection. The prospect of hostilities conducted in populated areas, compounded by the possible use of explosive weapons and the direct participation of civilians, is also extremely worrisome. We urge all parties to avoid that scenario at all costs, bearing in mind the grave risks it poses to the civilian population.

We call on all parties to adopt measures to ensure the protection of civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, as well as to ensure unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need and the protection of refugees and displaced persons.

We also reiterate our appeal to Ukraine and Russia to facilitate the withdrawal of all persons who want to leave Ukrainian territory. Brazil expresses its gratitude to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania and others who are facilitating the exit of people fleeing the conflict, including Brazilians and Latin Americans.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our solidarity with all families who have lost someone in this war; to all people left without a home, water and electricity; to those who are fleeing in fear, sometimes with nowhere to go; and to everyone who is now trapped in a conflict zone, desperately attempting to find refuge.

I wish to commend all personnel who are now in Ukraine trying to alleviate the suffering of the population. We know that they are doing their best in very challenging circumstances and we know that more could be done to assist them in their efforts.

Rarely has the General Assembly been convened under resolution 377 A (V), the “Uniting for peace” resolution. By meeting today, the international community shows its unwavering determination to reach a diplomatic solution to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

A peaceful settlement of the crisis is not only about the cessation of hostilities but also about creating the conditions for a greater sense of security among all involved. It is about rebuilding bridges and regaining trust. And it is about respect — respect for each other’s legitimate security concerns, for civilian lives, for all countries that do not want a war, for international law and for the most basic principles that have guided this Organization since its inception.

**Mr. Rae** (Canada) (*spoke in French*): We are meeting at a critical moment. The Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, has launched an illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of another United Nations Member State, Ukraine.

Russia’s actions are a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles — the sovereign equality of all States, the right of all peoples to self-determination, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the prohibition of the use of force.

By launching this war, Russia seeks to destroy the freedom of a people and a sovereign, independent and integral nation.

It is a war fuelled by President Putin’s desire to restore colonial imperialism. These are the very days that Members of the United Nations have been fighting against for generations.

Russia has again prevented the Security Council from fulfilling its fundamental duty: to protect world peace and security. We are here because Russia has once again used its veto power in a manner we continue to deem illegitimate, as it has done on many other occasions.

Russia is now threatening Ukraine, Europe and the entire world with the use of nuclear weapons, in direct violation of the joint statement made in January by the leaders of the five permanent members (P-5) of the Council.

(*spoke in English*)

It was in January of this year that members of the P-5 agreed that a recourse to the nuclear option — to the nuclear threat, to the nuclear possibility — was wrong. They admitted that no one could win this kind of confrontation. Just a few days later, President Putin announced that he was going to resort to that threat — directly contrary to what he had promised, signed, sealed and delivered six weeks before.

So here we are, with a war that is a threat to each and every one of us. Through this draft resolution before us today, we, as members of the United Nations, have the chance to stand up in defence of a free people and to rebuke the evil notion that might makes right. Now we must all step up and stand up. Canada urges all Member States of the United Nations to unequivocally condemn Russia’s actions and to vote in favour of the text that is now before the Assembly.

Russia has not been alone in undermining these foundational norms and rules. Belarus has also violated its obligations under the United Nations Charter and international law. By allowing Russia to use its territory to invade and launch attacks against, Ukraine, Belarus is aiding and abetting Russia’s illegal war of aggression. The decision of Belarus to send its forces into Ukraine and to revoke its non-nuclear status are completely unacceptable to us and completely incompatible with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. There must be accountability for those actions.

As Russia has escalated its unjustifiable attack on Ukraine, its forces have encircled and shelled Ukrainian cities, targeting, killing and maiming innocent Ukrainian civilians, children, women and men. They are bombing civilian objects: hospitals, schools, kindergartens, apartments and homes. They are looting and forcibly displacing civilians; many hundreds of thousands have fled, in freezing temperatures, seeking shelter across Ukraine’s borders. There are credible reports that Russian forces are using prohibited weapons, including cluster bombs, and imposing siege warfare on Ukrainian cities. This is not news that came in last week, but news that came in this morning — pictures one can see visibly on social media as to what is taking place. This is very different from the wars that have been waged in the past. We know what is happening in real time, and it is completely abhorrent.

Let me be very clear — these are violations of international law, and they are acts that could amount

to war crimes under international humanitarian law. Those acts flow directly from decisions made by President Putin and his inner circle. They were enabled by Belarus and its leaders and carried out by Russia's armed forces and its proxies. These crimes began with an idea. What was that idea? We do not have to invent it; all we have to do is read President Putin's speeches and watch his declarations. The idea is that a group of people are lesser, unequal and unworthy of the protection of the law. The idea is that a people, in fact, does not exist as a people — that they have no right to be themselves or a right to their own nation or their own country. The idea is that they have no right to the protection of the Charter.

The way Vladimir Putin describes the Ukrainian nation and its supporters over many generations fits the description of the idea that I have described. And it is that idea that lies at the heart of the acts that follow, because actions do not come out of the blue; they do not come out of nothing. It all starts with an idea. And yet, with a terrible sense of irony, President Putin has perverted the very notion of genocide by alleging that genocide has been committed in Ukraine.

I must stress — there has been no such finding substantiated by any United Nations or independent organization. As my colleague from Brazil, who spoke before me, said just now — if there are complaints, and obviously there have been in this chamber and in the Security Council, with respect to the treatment of the Russian minority in Ukraine, even if those complaints are fully justified, they are not an excuse for war and they are not an excuse for the aggression that we have seen. Ukraine has filed its own application to the International Court of Justice under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Canada takes the allegations filed by Ukraine with the greatest seriousness, as it does the decision of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to begin an investigation into potential crimes against humanity. Those decisions are not taken lightly, and they have the most serious of consequences.

But I want to stress that it is the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court that are the place for those allegations to be dealt with, not the battlefield, and never by unilateral aggression. That is why we signed up to the Charter — because we agreed that we would subject our disputes to processes created by us over many arduous years and debates, what would be done in the event of a profound difference

of opinion between States. We do not go to war; we go to the negotiating table; we go to court; we go to mediators. That is how we resolve disputes. The other way lies madness.

Canada and the international community will spare no effort to ensure that violations of international law in Ukraine are, in fact, investigated, that evidence is gathered and that the perpetrators are held to account. We do so not only out of our conviction that the arc of history tends towards justice. We do so because it is what Ukrainians are being subjected to is horrific and they deserve better. They deserve more.

I would like to speak directly to the brave people and the Government of Ukraine: we are — quite simply — inspired by them, we are standing with them and they are not alone. Our support for Ukraine, their country, their Ukrainian democracy and their right to choose their own future in Ukraine remains unwavering, steadfast and resolute. Canada will do everything in its power to help them as they hold strong and defend their homeland against this terrible Russian aggression. Together with our partners, we will ensure that President Putin and those who ordered, implemented and enabled this reckless war will continue to face significant costs and be held accountable for their actions. Their struggle is now our struggle, and we are with them.

I would also like to speak directly to the people of Russia — to the Russian protesters bravely demonstrating against the war, who have been met with brutal force and arbitrary arrests by riot police; to the thousands of Russian citizens who have written letters, and had the courage to put their name on those letters, to the President of Russia, condemning his reckless decision; to all those Russians at home and abroad who are opposed to this senseless war, and they are in the millions— Canada and the world see them and hear them.

Their President, Vladimir Putin, has sorely miscalculated. He has ignored the democratic and law-abiding spirit of the Russian people. He has underestimated the brave Ukrainians — with whom he has no cause for war, hatred or violence — defending their country from aggression. And he has severely misjudged the resolve of the world to stand against him. Whatever lies are spoken here today trying to justify the unjustifiable or to explain the inexplicable, it is President Putin's war of choice that is making their lives much more difficult.

But there is always time for de-escalation and dialogue. Their President must choose this path. Should he not, I believe it will show just how much contempt he has for them and for the future of their country and the planet that we live on and share, together.

Together, we must tell President Putin to stop this war before there is more death, more pain and more hardship. We tell him to stop the use of threats, to take his finger away from the nuclear button and never put it back for as long as he lives, and to come to grips with the reality of our time, as he has done in more serious and rational moments. It is never too late to stop; it is never too late to make a turn to diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation. The alternative cannot happen.

It now falls to all of us, as equal members of the United Nations, whose equality and sovereignty, as I said before, is what we signed up to when we became members of the Organization. We need to stand up for the purposes and principles of the Charter and to heal the hurt and pain caused by this terrible war of aggression. This responsibility belongs to us and to no others. We sit here and have to make decisions. We have to take every step we can — human footsteps to peace, reconciliation and justice. That is now our job in the General Assembly, and we must seize this moment of accountability, justice and democracy. And we must seize it, together.

**Mr. Gafoor** (Singapore): We are meeting today in a historic emergency special session because the Security Council was, unfortunately, unable to discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security as a result of the veto cast by the Russian Federation, which is regrettable.

We welcome the convening of this emergency special session, as it allows all countries, especially the small countries, to raise their voice, state their views and to register their concerns in this universal organ of the United Nations. Singapore has always taken a consistent position on the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries. Singapore is a staunch supporter of the rules-based multilateral system and of the United Nations.

The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is a clear and gross violation of the fundamental norms of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits the use of force and acts of aggression against another sovereign State. This is a matter of principle for all small States

and a matter of fundamental importance to all members of the General Assembly.

For a tiny city-State like Singapore, this is an existential issue. A world order where might makes right or the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must would be profoundly inimical to the security and survival of small States. We cannot accept one country attacking another without justification, arguing that its independence was a result of “historical errors and crazy decisions”. We simply cannot accept such an argument. Such an argument and rationale would go against the internationally recognized legitimacy and territorial integrity of many countries, including Singapore.

That is why Singapore condemns, in the strongest terms possible, any unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country, under any pretext. We deplore the Russian Federation’s special military operation against Ukraine — both its operation in the Donbas region and the broader land, air and sea attacks across Ukraine, including on Kyiv, the capital city.

We also note with great sadness and regret reports of the growing number of casualties and the loss of many innocent lives as a result of this unjustified attack and act of war. We took note of the United Nations Humanitarian and Emergency Relief Coordinator’s comments about the scale of humanitarian assistance required to help those affected. We call for safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and all those in need.

We reiterate that the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries, including Ukraine, must be respected within its internationally recognized borders.

The Secretary-General has stated that he considers the actions of the Russian Federation to be a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and inconsistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We fully agree with the Secretary-General, and we support his call for the Russian Federation to withdraw all its troops from the territory of Ukraine and for the actors responsible to immediately cease all hostilities and prioritize diplomacy in order to address all issues peacefully, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law. We also support the good offices of the Secretary-General to be deployed in any way possible in order to facilitate diplomatic contacts and negotiations.

Let me conclude by saying that the world is watching us as we meet today in the General Assembly. As members of the General Assembly, we have to act swiftly, firmly and with unity of purpose. Singapore is one of the main co-sponsors of the draft resolution submitted for adoption in the General Assembly.

Singapore will not hesitate to vote yes on this draft resolution. Singapore will always vote to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and to uphold international law, and I would like to urge all members of the General Assembly to vote yes on this text. This draft resolution is not about taking sides. It is about upholding international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The United Nations is being tested today. It is important that all countries, especially small States, send a clear signal that we are united for

peace, we are united to defend the principles of the Charter and we are united to uphold international law.

**The President:** We have heard the last speaker on the list of speakers in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers this afternoon. I would like to inform members that at 3.00 p.m. today, the General Assembly will first hold the sixtieth plenary meeting of the seventy-sixth regular session, as announced in the United Nations Journal. That will be followed by the second plenary meeting of the eleventh emergency special session, at which the debate on agenda item 5 will continue.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 5.

*The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.*