



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

8999th meeting
Friday, 18 March 2022, 10 a.m.
New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. Costa Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Nanga
Ghana	Mrs. Hackman
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
Kenya	Ms. Muigai
Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
Norway	Ms. Juul
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

*Reissued for technical reasons 30 March 2022.

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mrs. Nakamitsu.

Mrs. Nakamitsu: I am aware that the Russian Federation has submitted documents regarding allegations of biological weapons programmes in Ukraine. As I informed the Council last Friday (see S/PV.8991), the United Nations is not aware of any such biological weapons programmes.

I would also like to note that the United Nations currently has neither the mandate nor the technical or operational capacity to investigate that information.

As I previously informed the Council, the relevant instrument of international law is the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. The Russian Federation and Ukraine are both States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

The Biological Weapons Convention contains several measures to which concerned States parties can have recourse in order to address situations in which they have concerns or suspicions about the activities of their peers. Pursuant to article V of the Convention, its States parties undertake to consult one another and to cooperate in solving any problems.

Such consultation and cooperation can take place on a bilateral basis between the concerned States parties, or it can be undertaken through appropriate international procedures. One such international procedure that has been elaborated within the framework of the Biological Weapons Convention is the convening of a consultative meeting. Other possibilities for addressing concerns between States parties also exist under article V of the Convention, as well as under article VI.

As I mentioned last week, the BWC needs to be operationalized and institutionalized to ensure that it is properly equipped and resourced to face future challenges. The Convention's upcoming ninth review conference presents the ideal opportunity for its States parties to comprehensively strengthen the Convention. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs stands ready to support any procedures under the Biological Weapons Convention that States parties may decide to use.

Turning to the issue of the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear power facilities, the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has reported that, according to the Ukrainian authorities, all safety systems at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant remained fully functional as of yesterday, following the site's loss of connection to a third external power line linking it to the national electricity grid. Although officials from Russia's State nuclear power company were present at the facilities in southern Ukraine, Ukrainian staff continue to operate the plant.

The Chernobyl power plant remains connected to the national electricity grid, following reconnection on 14 March. However, Ukrainian operators and guards have not been able to rotate for three weeks now.

The IAEA has reported that, according to the Ukrainian authorities, 8 of the country's 15 reactors remained operating. I understand that, with regard to nuclear safeguards, the IAEA is still not receiving remote data transmission from its monitoring systems installed at Chernobyl, but such data was being transferred to IAEA headquarters from the other nuclear power plants in Ukraine. I take this opportunity to reiterate the Secretary-General's support for efforts by the IAEA to establish a framework on the safety and security of Ukraine's nuclear facilities and urge all parties to work towards this end.

I also wish to highlight the terrible toll this conflict is having on civilians. The civilian casualties continue to rise: as of 16 March, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had recorded 2,032 civilian casualties, including 780 killed, of whom 58 were children. The actual number of casualties is believed to be much higher. Most of these casualties are caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area. These include attacks using heavy artillery, multiple-launch rocket systems, ballistic and

cruise missiles and air strikes. I also want to reiterate that attacks directed at civilians are prohibited by international humanitarian law.

We must find a diplomatic solution to this war to put an end to the violence. As Secretary-General Guterres said:

“We need an immediate cessation of hostilities and serious negotiations based on the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. We need peace — peace for the people of Ukraine, peace for our world. We need peace now.”

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, allow me to express our deep and sincere condolences to the Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason, and all of the Irish Mission following the sudden passing of Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland Mr. Jim Kelly. This is obviously a loss to the Irish Mission and for all of us, so I would ask that they accept our condolences.

We have already said that, during Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine, information was discovered about the implementation, by the Ukrainian authorities and with the support and direct supervision of the United States Department of Defence, of dangerous projects as part of their military biological programme. This activity was carried out on the territory of Ukraine, in the centre of Eastern Europe and on the western borders of Russia, which has created a real threat to the biosecurity of our country and the whole region.

A week ago, at the request of the Russian Federation, there was a first Security Council meeting held on this topic (see S/PV.8991). In that meeting, we asked our Western colleagues a series of questions, to which they have not yet responded. The representative of the United States was unable to explain how the official American statements asserting that there are no United States-controlled biological laboratories in Ukraine tally with the proffered documentary proof of such cooperation between Kyiv and Washington.

I recall in this context that we are talking about an agreement signed in 2005 between the United States

Department of Defence and the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, in which the Pentagon fully supports engaging in joint biological research involving dangerous pathogens located in facilities on Ukrainian territory. Although the American delegation cannot and does not want to respond to our questions, the Russian Defence Ministry is studying the materials it received from Ukrainian laboratories to understand the military biological programme the United States and its NATO allies have been engaging in on Ukrainian territory.

Over the last week, new details have come to light which allow us to state that components for biological weapons were being created on the territory of Ukraine. The implementation of the aforementioned 2005 American-Ukrainian agreement — about which we are still waiting for comment from the United States Mission, has been going full steam for all these years. However, notwithstanding the document, it is clear that our American colleagues were not helping the Ukrainian Ministry of Health, as they claimed, but rather the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence.

It can be seen in the document that we distributed in the Security Council this morning the so-called technical assistance plan for certain recipients of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence. I recommend that members look at this document very carefully. It confirms the Pentagon and its Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme’s direct funding of and supervision over of military and biological projects in Ukraine.

The overall quantity of the funding was \$32 million, and the money went directly to the following laboratories affiliated with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence: in Kyiv, the 10th Regional Health Epidemiological Department of the Central Health Epidemiological Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence; in Odesa, the 27th Regional Health Epidemiological Department of the Central Epidemiological Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence; in Lviv, the 28th Regional Health Epidemiological Department of the Central Epidemiological Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence; in Kharkiv, the 108th Regional Health Epidemiological Department of the Central Epidemiological Department of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence.

I would also like to draw the Council’s attention to another vitally important point. The representatives of the United States Department of State cannot get their story straight and assert that the United States allegedly

does not operate in any biological laboratories in the territory of Ukraine, but the facts show otherwise. According to the technical assistance plan that I mentioned, the donor — the United States Department of Defense — was funding the projects, establishes the tasks and the workload undertaken on Ukrainian territory, provided a list of the necessary equipment, and delegates significant authority to an affiliated contractor company Black & Veatch in cooperation with Ukrainian authority.

The recipient of United States assistance — the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence — was obligated to provide timely access for Pentagon personnel and its contractor staff to laboratories in Ukraine to carry out their work within the framework of those projects, as well as to provide access to the facilities, together with Pentagon employees, to foreign scientists. The projects themselves were intended to be implemented not by Ukrainian scientists, but with their participation. Simply put, the Ukrainian authorities gave the Pentagon *carte blanche* on Ukrainian territory and allowed them to conduct dangerous biological experiments there independently. The United States contractor was exempt from taxes of all kind under Ukrainian law.

What did Ukrainian scientists — that is the Ukrainian people — get in return under this plan? They received full compensation for travel to international conferences, based on food and accommodation expenses as per the rules for business trips by United States Government officials, which is compensation for conducting the most dangerous kind of biological research on the side. That is not the noble aid to Ukraine that the United States representatives continue to talk about. It is the cynical use of its territory and population for dangerous research that Washington does not want to conduct on its territory so as not to expose its own population to the related risks.

It would not surprise us if similar facts about the activities of United States-supervised laboratories in other parts of the world came to light. We urge countries that have made their territory available for such Pentagon experiments to carefully examine their contractual obligations with regard to their cooperation with the United States in the biological arena. We fully support China's demand that the United States disclose the data on the activities of the 360 laboratories under United States control throughout the world.

With regard to Ukraine, the biological laboratories mentioned earlier, in Kyiv, Odesa, Lviv and Kharkiv were selected by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency of the United States Department of Defense for a reason. These laboratories were the same ones that carried out the UP-8 project to study Crimean-Congo fever, leptospirosis and hantavirus pathogens. We believe that the interest of the United States military biologists in those particular pathogens is related to the fact that they are naturally present in both Ukraine and Russia so that their spread could be disguised as a natural outbreak. At the Kharkiv laboratory, the P-781 project to study the pathways of disease transmission to humans through bats was also carried out. Work on that project was carried out in collaboration with the infamous Lugar Research Center in Tbilisi.

In that context, the contractor Black & Veatch, which was chosen by the Pentagon to carry out work in Ukraine, deserves special attention. It is far from being an ordinary company. It has been working for the United States military for more than a century. It has built military bases for it, including the laboratories at Los Alamos, where nuclear weapons were developed. Research in the area of the transmission of diseases to humans through bats in Ukrainian biolaboratories has been systematic and has been conducted for at least 13 years under the direct supervision of United States specialists. In the course of those projects, six families of viruses were isolated, including coronaviruses and three types of pathogenic bacteria: plague, brucellosis and leptospirosis pathogens. Those are the most attractive pathogens for use as infectious agents, given their resistance to drugs and rapid rate of contagion from animals to humans.

As part of the Flu Fly Away project, the Kharkiv Institute of Veterinary Medicine carried out research on wild birds as a vector for the transmission of avian influenza. At the same time, the conditions under which transmission processes could become uncontrollable, cause economic damage and create risks to food safety were assessed. Documents show the involvement of the Kharkiv Institute in the collection of strains of avian influenza viruses with high epidemic potential and the possible ability to spread from one species to another.

The Russian Ministry of Defence continues to receive an increasing number of new documents concerning the transfer of blood serum samples from Ukrainian citizens to third countries, including Great Britain, Georgia and Germany. Our analysis of the data

justifies our assertion that Ukrainian specialists are unaware of the potential risks involved in transferring biomaterials, are essentially kept in the dark and have no real idea of the true purpose of the research carried out. That is not surprising, given that, in accordance with the contractual documentation that I mentioned earlier, they were delegated to a strictly subordinate role.

There is also new evidence of attempts to destroy biomaterials and documentation in Ukrainian laboratories in order to hastily cover up the tracks of the implementation of the military biological programme. We know that during the liquidation measures at the veterinary medicine laboratory in the village of Khlebodarskoye, its staff members — citizens of Ukraine — were not even allowed into the building. The laboratory works in collaboration with the Mechnikov Anti-Plague Research Institute in Odesa, which conducts research with plague, anthrax, cholera and tularemia pathogens.

In an attempt to cover up biological waste from the laboratory in Khlebodarskoye, it was moved 120 kilometres away towards the western border near Tarutino and Berezino. The Russian Ministry of Defence has recorded all of that information with a view to investigating its legal ramifications at a later date.

Documents were expeditiously destroyed in the Kherson biolaboratory. We believe that the reason for such haste was the desire to hide from Russian experts the information about the outbreak of dirofilariasis in Kherson in 2019 — a disease that is transmitted by mosquitoes. Four cases of the disease were detected in February, which is unusual given the life cycle of those insects, even while taking into account the incubation period of the disease. At the same time, we know that, in April 2019, representatives of the Pentagon visited local health facilities, where they reviewed the results of the epidemiological research and made copies of medical records.

While they stand at the ready to use the fakes supplied by the Ukrainian authorities with the support of their Western patrons, the Western media express their doubts about the reliability of the materials published by the Russian Ministry of Defence.

I would like to draw attention to the following fact. The documents we have published include the authentic signatures of United States officials. In particular, many of them are signed by Joanna Wintrall, head of the Ukraine division of the Defense Threat

Reduction Agency. That Pentagon official is well known in non-proliferation circles. Before Ukraine, she supervised the destruction of chemical weapons in Libya. If journalists are truly interested in the authenticity of the documents that we have provided, I suggest that they ask her directly if that is her signature.

I want to stress once again that we are not just talking about the violation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) by Ukraine and the United States. I am talking about the fact that there is increasing evidence that, until very recently, dangerous military and biological activities were taking place at the heart of Eastern Europe, the consequences of which could at any time have spilled over the borders of the country and even the region. In such a scenario, it is difficult to imagine the scope of casualties, including among the populations of European countries; perhaps even the coronavirus epidemic would have faded into the background.

There are already alarming signs of such a threat. For example, in 2018, the number of cases of tuberculosis among citizens living in the Luhansk and Donetsk Peoples Republics rose sharply, as a result of a new multidrug-resistant strain. During the mass outbreak recorded near Peski, more than 70 cases of the disease were detected and quickly led to fatalities. That does not appear to be an accident.

In conclusion, I would like to comment on the statements made by representatives of the Secretariat that it has no evidence of the implementation of military biological programmes on the territory of Ukraine. In accordance with the BWC, its States parties provide information to the United Nations on facilities and ongoing biological activities. Those are confidence-building measures, which are published in order to monitor the implementation of the Convention. Since 2016, when the projects I mentioned earlier began, including UP-4, UP-8 and R-781, the United States and Ukraine have deliberately remained silent about them in their reporting, despite their clear military biological orientation. That is why, for many years, Russia has called for the regime of the Biological Weapons Convention to be strengthened and for the adoption of a legally binding protocol to the Convention that would allow for the creation of an effective mechanism of verification and include in the

reporting from States parties information on biological military activities conducted abroad.

For almost 20 years, the United States has blocked efforts of that kind, while refusing to provide such information. Indeed, that is yet another issue that the representatives of the United States have time and again refused to address. The other issues I again mentioned on 11 March (see S/PV.8991) are just the tip of the iceberg. Our Ministry of Defence continues to receive additional material, which it is analysing. We will continue to keep the international community informed about the unlawful activity carried out by the Pentagon on Ukrainian territory.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me express our shock over the sudden death of our colleague, Ambassador Jim Kelly, Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland and a seasoned diplomat. We convey to our Irish colleagues and to Mr. Kelly's family our most heartfelt condolences on this terrible loss.

We thank High Representative Nakamitsu for providing us with the same information as last Friday (see S/PV.8991) on the matter. We have heard nothing new from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs because there is nothing new. We take issues of weapons of mass destruction extremely seriously, but there needs to be an issue.

We heard last Friday, and it was repeated here today, that the United Nations is not aware of any alleged programme in Ukraine that is inconsistent with international treaty obligations, including on chemical or biological weapons. So what are we doing this morning? What are we talking about here? Are we talking about non-existent chemical weapons programmes in Ukraine, developed in non-existent laboratories and financed by non-existent programmes?

Russian claims — and we listened to the statement by its delegation — remain unverified, unsubstantiated, uncorroborated and not independently verified. In a word, they are not credible. It is hard not to believe that today's meeting comes as a last-minute replacement plucked from a drawer and is therefore a waste of time and an abuse of the Council.

I am afraid that we find ourselves, in the best-case scenario, with an attempt by Russia to shift attention from its crimes and prolong the invasion by sowing fear of the dreadful prospect of chemical warfare; or, at the worst, given Russia's track record of accusing others

of the very crimes that it has perpetrated, including attempted assassinations and poisoning of its own citizens, Russia intends to use disinformation tactics as a pretext for further escalation and possible use of chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine. We have seen that the longer the invasion is stalled, the deadlier the missile attacks and bombardments become. That is the real issue, and it is a serious one.

Let us recall that Russia has been saying one thing and doing the opposite, and that Russia is blatantly breaking international law. Whenever its representatives speak about Ukraine, they just distort reality. Claims need to be properly and fully investigated. We know how that is and can be done. Russia should first agree to an immediate ceasefire throughout the territory of Ukraine. It should withdraw all military forces from within a radius of 40 kilometres of suspected locations and ask United Nations security forces to secure a 40-kilometre radius to allow diagnostic research teams to conduct proper investigations. Instead, we are of the impression that Russia is talking to itself.

With the sole exception of Russia, everyone around this table — everyone without exception — as well as 140 members of the General Assembly, have been clear on the absolute need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, stop the war, protect civilians and deal with issues and concerns, not by bombarding indiscriminately; not by killing innocent people; not by destroying a country; not by wreaking economic havoc on the entire world, but through negotiation and diplomatic channels and mechanisms. That is what needs to be done. That is what Russia should be doing, not abusing the Council with pop-up subjects of convenience, trying to create the illusion of truth out of repeated lies. In the words of Beaumarchais, "Calumniate, calumniate; there will always be something that sticks."

The world looks to the Security Council and for good reason. It looks to it for hope and solutions as the body responsible for peace and security. It should not be abused for propaganda and irrationality.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for joining us today to repeat exactly what she gave us last week (see S/PV.8991).

Last week, we heard a tirade of bizarre conspiracy theories from the Russian representative. This week, we are hearing a whole lot more where that came

from — things that sound like they were forwarded to him on a chain email from some dark corner of the Internet. President Biden has a word for that kind of talk — malarkey.

As I said one week ago, Ukraine does not have a biological weapons programme. There are no Ukrainian biological weapons laboratories — not near Russia's border, not anywhere. There are only public health facilities, proudly — and I say proudly — supported and recognized by the United States Government, the World Health Organization and other Governments and international institutions.

In fact, it is Russia that has long maintained a biological weapons programme, in violation of international law. It is Russia that has a well-documented history of using chemical weapons. It is Russia that is the aggressor here. It was Russian operatives who poisoned Alexei Navalny and Sergei and Yulia Skripal with nerve agents. It is Russia that continues to support the Al-Assad regime in Syria and shield it from accountability when the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have confirmed that Al-Assad has used chemical weapons over the past several years.

Let us not forget why we are really here today. We are here because Russia knew that its cynical ploy to adopt an exculpatory resolution had failed. Today's meeting is the result of its isolation in the Council and on the world stage. We are not buying what it is selling, literally or figuratively.

I will reiterate the United States deep and serious concern about the fact that Russia's calling of today's meeting is a potential false-flag effort in action. Russia has repeatedly accused other countries of the very violations it plans to perpetrate. We continue to believe that it is possible that Russia may be planning to use chemical or biological agents against the Ukrainian people.

We will not dignify Russia's disinformation or conspiracy theories, but we will continue to sound the alarm and tell the world where we think Russia is headed. We will remind the world that Russia has repeatedly lied to the Council over recent weeks. Despite all the evidence we could see with our own eyes, Russia told us that it would not invade Ukraine; that it was engaged in war games; that it was interested in diplomacy. I asked the Russian Permanent Representative: Where are the 100,000 troops who were sitting on the Russian side of

the border now? Sadly, I believe that many of them have given their lives in this senseless, unconscionable war against the Ukrainian people.

Russia has also lied to its own people, while shutting down media to try and hide the truth. I will not repeat the slurs and false accusations that Russia has hurled against the Ukrainian people and the United States repeatedly at this table.

We know that Russia's disinformation is a sign of its desperation. That is the truth, and we will continue to ensure that the world sees and hears it.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I want to say at the beginning how much the Irish delegation appreciates the messages of condolence we have received on the sudden loss of an outstanding Irish diplomat, colleague and friend. May he rest in peace.

I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Ireland deeply regrets the decision of the Russian Federation to call for today's meeting. It has done so yet again for no other reason than to promote its spurious claims against Ukraine and others. It is deeply troubling to hear the Russian Federation spreading unsubstantiated, unfounded allegations. The only so-called proof provided is to point to transparent projects necessary for biosecurity and for human or animal health. That kind of research is carried out by many countries to advance global health, benefiting humankind.

I urge the Russian Federation to cease its campaigns of disinformation and attempts to distract from what is really happening because of its war in Ukraine. That behaviour is disturbingly consistent with the Russian Federation's own track record of using disinformation in multiple multilateral forums to dissemble and deny its activities.

Russian military forces in Ukraine have already demonstrated reckless disregard for nuclear safety and security since the start of their invasion. That pattern of recklessness raises real fears of a significant radiological, chemical or biological accident.

It is unacceptable to make unfounded accusations against Ukraine, a State party in good standing to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention.

The use of chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine would inflict untold additional suffering on the Ukrainian people, who have already suffered so much from the actions of the Russian Federation. The use of those heinous weapons is immoral and illegal in any circumstance. There will be no impunity for those who use them.

We urge the Russian Federation not to violate or undermine the essential multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation instruments upon which our collective security depends.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to extend my condolences to the Irish Mission and to the family of Jim Kelly, who was an exceptional colleague. The French delegation wishes to express its solidarity with its Irish friends.

I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her intervention.

I will be very brief, given that everything has already been said last week. Indeed, I have heard no new information this morning — at least, no credible new information. Russia is indeed mounting a disinformation campaign. Today's meeting is not based on any facts. Ukraine does not possess any biological weapons programmes. It complies with its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention. The United Nations made it clear last week and again this morning that it has no knowledge of the existence of such programmes.

Russia, on the other hand, has used chemical weapons repeatedly in recent years. It has supported the Syrian regime and has itself used such weapons in the United Kingdom and on its own territory in targeted assassination attempts. By inventing an alternative reality, Russia seeks to hide its responsibility and cover up its own crimes.

France is very concerned that the disinformation campaign may be a prelude to the use of a chemical or biological weapon in Ukraine. If such attacks were to take place, there would be only one party responsible, namely Russia. The use of such weapons, prohibited under international law, would constitute an intolerable escalation of the conflict. The French Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Jean-Yves Le Drian, has stated unambiguously that such attacks would lead to even more severe economic sanctions in response.

Finally, I regret that the Security Council is being used by one of its permanent members as a propaganda platform.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I wish to join others in expressing our deep condolences to the Irish Mission and to the family of Jim Kelly. He was an exceptional and very well-loved colleague. We will miss him.

I also thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing today.

Only yesterday, the Council discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine (see S/PV.8998). We heard from United Nations briefers about the devastating impacts on Ukraine, its people and its cities; on the region, to which 3 million refugees have fled; and on the wider international community, facing higher economic prices, as well as the consequences for countries in need of the Council's attention.

Today, however, we have had a rehash of amateurish disinformation that we discussed and debunked last Friday (see S/PV.8991). It was nonsense then and it is nonsense now. As I said then, laboratories in Ukraine carrying out research on public health hazards are not a threat to international peace and security.

By contrast, President Putin's illegal and inhumane invasion of Ukraine is the most significant threat to international peace and security we face today. Today's charade is really not worthy of a permanent member of the Security Council. The only thing the Council needs to hear from the Russian Federation — and we did not hear it yesterday, nor have we heard it today — is that Russia's troops are leaving Ukraine.

Ukraine does not want war. Russians and Ukrainians, soldiers and civilians, mothers and children are dying. Russia is isolated diplomatically, isolated economically and bogged down in Ukraine. We therefore urge Russia to stop the invasion now, before any more damage is done to Ukraine and to Russia itself.

Mrs. Hackman (Ghana): My delegation would also like to convey its sincere condolences to the Irish Mission and to Jim Kelly's family on the sad occasion of his passing.

My delegation is grateful to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her briefing to the Council.

We have taken note of the information provided to the Council. Once again, we reaffirm our belief that

a conclusive determination of Ukraine's biological programmes can be made only after due assessments by the relevant internationally accredited bodies. As we have previously stated, the weaponization of chemical or biological agents in the war in Ukraine — or anywhere else — would be unconscionable and should not be contemplated by any party.

The international community must forge consensus towards the establishment of a verification regime for the Biological Weapons Convention in view of the recent global developments, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We maintain that the possession or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons, does not assure either international peace or national security. We must work collectively to ensure the elimination of all such weapons.

What is pressing is the urgent need for the cessation of hostilities and the unconditional and immediate withdrawal by the Russian Federation of all its invading troops from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

Increasingly, this conflict is having ramifications beyond the borders of Ukraine. The consequent price hikes in food and gas are impacting in a negative way the already fragile global economy, which is yet to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The lives of many across the world have been put in peril by this unjustified war. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's intention to mobilize global action to mitigate the impact of the war and support all efforts to enhance international solidarity.

We bemoan the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and call on the warring parties to respect, and comply with, their commitments and obligations under international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Civilians must be protected from harm. Civilian infrastructure must not be the target of military bombardments. Safe passage must be provided for the people who are fleeing to safety. We call for an immediate end to the attacks on medical and other critical facilities and for the protection of humanitarian and medical personnel.

We encourage the sustenance of the ongoing talks between the negotiators of the two sides and hope that they will yield an early breakthrough for the peaceful settlement of this conflict.

Mr. Costa Filho (Brazil): Like other speakers, let me begin in conveying to our friends at the Permanent Mission of Ireland our very deep condolences for the premature loss of Ambassador Jim Kelly. I would kindly ask the delegation to convey to Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, to all the Mission and to the family of Jim Kelly our deepest condolences.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

Before beginning my statement, let me kindly request other members of the Council to kindly refrain from attempting to interpret Brazil's position on an issue on which Brazil is perfectly capable of presenting its own views in this organ and in other bodies of the United Nations.

Fifty years ago, we adopted the Biological Weapons Convention, determined, for the sake of humanity, to completely exclude the possibility of biological agents and toxins being used as weapons. We took that important step, and I quote the Convention:

“Convinced that such use would be repugnant to the conscience of humankind and that no effort should be spared to minimize this risk”.

Today, for the second time in a week, we gather here to once again discuss extremely serious allegations regarding the development, production and stockpiling of such abhorrent weapons. As we stated last Friday (see S/PV.8991), Brazil believes that accusations of such gravity must be thoroughly substantiated by solid evidence, which must be presented to, and confirmed by, an independent and impartial authority, as foreseen in article VI of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Brazil has long favoured the negotiation of a multilateral verification protocol as a complement to the Convention, with additional measures to guarantee protection and security against emerging biological threats. The situation before the Council today only reinforces the urgency and the necessity to establish such a mechanism.

Brazil looks forward to the convening of the ninth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. We need to restart negotiations on strengthening the regime, including by establishing a verification protocol. That will also be an opportunity to deepen discussions on biosafety and biosecurity.

Brazil is of the view that legitimate scientific and technological research should be kept distinct and separate from possible violations of the prohibition against the development and production of biological weapons if we wish to preserve the Biological Weapons Convention regime. Research into new and dangerous pathogens should be subject to strict transparency mechanisms.

Finally, I would like to reiterate what we said last week. Brazil condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use or threat of use of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons, anywhere, by anyone, under any circumstances.

Ms. Muigai (Kenya): We join other speakers in expressing our deepest condolences to the Permanent Mission of Ireland and the family of Ambassador Jim Kelly over his shocking demise.

I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

It is regrettable that the armed conflict in Ukraine rages on at an intolerable cost to the people of Ukraine and, increasingly, to the entire world, especially the global South, as the prices of essential commodities rise sharply because of shortages and the impacts of sanctions.

We are gravely concerned by the sustained targeting of civilians and objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, including residential homes, health facilities and shelters, as well as power and water infrastructure, in violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

At this point, the Council should be focused on getting a cessation of the military campaign in Ukraine. We appeal to those concerned to do so immediately so as to allow humanitarian action and facilitate a much-needed dialogue towards a sustainable political solution.

Any allegation of the development of biological weapons in contravention of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction must not be taken lightly. We call on all States parties to the Convention to make use of the established mechanisms so that any concern or suspicion of the presence of those extremely dangerous weapons can be verified. In situations of armed conflict, we must point out that

such verifications demand a cessation of the conflict for them to be carried out.

We urge States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons to seize the opportunity of the ninth Review Conference later this year to strengthen the biological weapons regime.

In conclusion, Kenya reaffirms its recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me also express our deepest condolences to the Irish Mission for the very sad passing of our dear colleague Jim Kelly.

At the outset, I would like to thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing.

We were called here today at the request of the Russian delegation to again discuss claims of a biological weapons programme in Ukraine. Yet we heard from the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs last week, and it was repeated today: “The United Nations is not aware of any biological weapons programmes [in Ukraine].” (*S/PV.8991, p.3*) Russia has failed to offer any credible evidence for its claims, providing us instead with unsubstantiated information, allegations and interpretations.

We have trouble understanding the rationale behind the last-minute call to have further discussions today. We find it unacceptable that Russia continues to repeat its unsupported claim that Ukraine is preparing to use biological weapons. It is becoming quite clear that that is just another smokescreen tactic to draw attention away from Russia’s role as an aggressor in this illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Norway remains a firm supporter of the Biological Weapons Convention and we are determined, together with our partners in the international community, to uphold a total ban against biological weapons. Norway condemns any use of such weapons. They cannot and must not be used under any circumstances. That would constitute a clear violation of international law.

We deeply regret that Russia, by calling these meetings, seeks to undermine the Council and its vital role in peace diplomacy. Exactly eight years ago, we were shocked by the Russian illegal annexation of Crimea. And now, Russia is waging an unlawful war against another Member State, with devastating

humanitarian consequences. The sole responsibility for the war falls on Russia. Russia must end it now.

Mr. Nanga (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation expresses its condolences to the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations.

I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

In the absence of new developments since our most recent meeting on the same topic last Friday (see S/PV.8991), let me reiterate the essence of my country's statement then with regard to the grave mutual accusations regarding the lingering risk of the use of chemical weapons in the war in Ukraine.

My country calls on the parties to abide by the relevant positions of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which strictly prohibits the use of broad-spectrum weapons as well as their development, production and stockpiling.

As a State party to the BWC, my country reaffirms its opposition to the use of any form of biological weapon and calls on the warring parties to abstain from the use of such weapons and to respect international law. Gabon reiterates its commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes among the States Members of the United Nations and we continue to call on the parties to the conflict to de-escalate and to commit, in good faith, to the negotiations under way in order to put an end to this war, whose consequences can already be seen beyond the territory of Ukraine.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): We express our deepest condolences to the family of Ambassador Jim Kelly and to the members of the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing. We have carefully noted the points she made regarding biological activities relating to Ukraine.

India attaches high importance to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as a key instrument for global and non-discriminatory disarmament, as it prohibits an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It is important to ensure the full and effective implementation of the BTWC, in letter and spirit.

We also believe that any matter relating to obligations under the Convention should be addressed pursuant to its provisions and through consultation and cooperation between the parties concerned.

As outlined yesterday, India remains deeply concerned about the progressively deteriorating situation in Ukraine. We welcome the latest round of diplomatic talks between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. We believe that an immediate cessation of hostilities and the diligent pursuit of the path of dialogue and diplomacy is the only way forward. It is important to undertake that engagement keeping in mind the need to respect the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of all of the members of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, I wish to express our deep sadness at the passing of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ambassador Jim Kelly, and extend our sincere condolences to his family and to our colleagues in the Permanent Mission of Ireland.

China has stated its position on the Ukraine issue many times. Under the current circumstances, it is the shared desire of the international community to achieve a ceasefire as soon as possible in order to avoid further civilian casualties and prevent a massive humanitarian crisis. That is also China's wish.

Direct negotiations between the parties concerned are the fundamental way to solve the problem. Russia and Ukraine have held four rounds of negotiations and are maintaining an open line of communication. With negotiations continuing, there is hope for a ceasefire and a peaceful future. China will continue to facilitate dialogue for peace. We support the United Nations and all parties in ramping up mediation efforts and hope that all parties can take actions to promote peace talks rather than adding fuel to the fire.

Behind the Ukraine crisis is the issue of European security. It is our hope that the United States, the European Union and NATO can sit down with Russia for in-depth and comprehensive dialogue in order to explore ways to put in place a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture, based on the principle of indivisible security, so as to achieve lasting peace and stability in Europe.

China's position on weapons of mass destruction and biological security is clear and consistent. China stands for the complete prohibition and total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, including biological and chemical weapons. China resolutely opposes the development, possession or use of biological or chemical

weapons by any country, under any circumstance, and urges countries that have not yet done so, to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles as soon as possible. Complying with the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) is the obligation of all States parties. We call for early negotiations on the establishment of a BWC verification regime, which will help improve global biosecurity.

China was once a victim of chemical and biological weapons. China believes that any information or leads on biological-military activities should trigger the heightened concern and attention of the international community in order to prevent irreparable harm. In that regard, the relevant parties should take a responsible approach.

Russia has further revealed newly discovered relevant documents in that regard. The party concerned should respond to questions and offer timely and comprehensive clarifications so as to remove the doubts of the international community. We do not consider it too much to ask. No double standards should be applied on this issue.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, let me join my colleagues in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of Ireland for this irreparable loss.

We appreciate High Representative Nakamitsu's briefing and take note of the information she shared with us, especially her renewed confirmation that the United Nations has no knowledge of biological weapons programmes in Ukraine.

As we mentioned in a previous meeting, Mexico considers the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction to be the fundamental instrument of the multilateral disarmament regime. The Convention contains mechanisms for the settlement of disputes through consultations and cooperation, which must be used when any State party deems it necessary. If there are so many doubts or so much new information, as has been suggested, why can we not proceed in accordance with the terms of the Convention?

The Security Council cannot be held hostage to contradictory signals. One day one matter is raised; the next day it is postponed; the next day it is substituted for something else. Mexico will remain open to dialogue

and to constructive negotiation. However, in order to make progress, reciprocity is needed in this effective commitment to dialogue.

Less than 24 hours have passed since the most recent Council meeting on Ukraine (see S/PV.8998), and the humanitarian needs continue to grow. What is urgently needed is a cessation of hostilities to ensure the unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance to whoever needs it, without restrictions or exclusions.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Arab Emirates.

At the outset, I offer our sincere and deepest condolences to the Mission of Ireland and its staff over the passing of Deputy Permanent Representative Mr. Jim Kelly. We also express our condolences to his family.

I thank Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The use of biological weapons or any type of weapons of mass destruction by anyone and under any circumstances cannot be justified at all. It is an aggression on humankind as a whole. The use of these prohibited weapons demands an international response. Those responsible for the use of such weapons must be held accountable, as it constitutes a grave violation of international law.

The prohibition of these weapons, including through the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, is one of the most important achievements of the international community. Therefore, maintaining the consensus on which this prohibition was established is part of our responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reiterates its call for all diplomatic means to be used to alleviate the suffering of civilians and to stop the hostilities. That would allow this conflict to be resolved peacefully, in accordance with international law and international humanitarian law.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Propaganda, disinformation, amateurism, unfounded imaginings and false-flag operations are what we have heard today. Some representatives have literally repeated their statements from our meeting on 11 March (see S/PV.8991). If representatives have heard nothing new in our statement today, it is because they were not listening to us.

We did not provide fiction based on conspiracy theories and found on the dark web, but rather new material and documents, which we have distributed. These documents have signatures and were prepared on the basis of cooperation between Ukraine and the United States in the biological field. I ask members to take a look these documents. I believe that anyone who needs to see this information will do so. If Council members can refute it, they should do so. They should not make unfounded accusations of Russian propaganda, but instead should reply to the questions that we asked. Representatives have refused to reply simply because they have nothing to say. Instead, they are trying to accuse us of intentions to deploy biological and chemical weapons against Ukraine. That is true cynicism. We have already officially warned that we know and have information about Ukrainian nationalists bringing chemical agents to some regions to create a provocation and then blame Russia for it. That is a false-flag operation.

Council members, in particular the representative of the United States, did not listen to us properly. We did not say, as the representative of the United States claimed, that Ukraine itself had a military biological programme. The programme, we said, based on the documents that we have, is run by the United States, not Ukraine. In this case, Ukraine is being kept in the dark. We already provided the Security Council with facts, and talked Council members through them, about the spike in dangerous lethal diseases in Ukraine, for which there is no explanation based on the usual factors. However, the spike could be linked to this kind of activity.

Today again, we have heard heard that the most powerful argument to prove that no biological activity has taken place in Ukraine is the view of the Secretariat. I have already stated that the United Nations cannot know about these secret military biological programmes, as those who carry them out do not share this information with the United Nations or with anyone else.

As I have said before, we will keep this item on the agenda as new facts emerge. We will keep the Security Council and the international community abreast of these facts, which I am sure will be come to light in the near future.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.