



Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

9002nd meeting

Wednesday, 23 March 2022, 5 p.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Nusseibeh (United Arab Emirates)

Members:

Albania	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China	Mr. Zhang Jun
France	Mr. De Rivière
Gabon	Mr. Biang
Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
India	Mr. Raguttahalli
Ireland	Mr. Gallagher
Kenya	Mr. Kimani
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

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2022/231, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to begin by noting that we were encouraged by the initiative proposed by our Mexican and French colleagues, who put forward a draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine in early March. However, that draft was immediately torpedoed by our United States and British colleagues, who asserted that it was unnecessary unless it condemned Russia. Other members of the Western camp were forced to follow suit.

As a result, instead of addressing humanitarian issues, we engaged in politics and mutual accusations. Instead of discussing and drafting a text, the representatives of Western countries stated, without proof, that the Security Council cannot endorse a draft humanitarian resolution on Ukraine submitted by the Russian Federation.

We categorically reject the assertion that the Council cannot adopt a resolution on the Ukrainian humanitarian dossier. Today, we are submitting for a vote a draft resolution, based on the French-

Mexican draft text, that is not politicized in any way. It is analogous to other humanitarian draft resolutions adopted by the Security Council. United Nations humanitarian representatives working on the ground would be very interested in such a document, because any General Assembly humanitarian resolution would make little difference for them.

The choice is now up to my colleagues on the Security Council. Should we continue to build cynical speculations around the issue of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine or adopt a draft resolution in the Security Council that will be an important practical step and an important framework for the efforts of humanitarian workers?

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): Once again, Russia is attempting to use the Council to provide cover for its brutal actions. It really is unconscionable that Russia would have the audacity to put forward a draft resolution asking the international community to solve a humanitarian crisis that Russia alone created.

The United States intends to abstain in the voting on the text because, to state the obvious, Russia does not care about the deteriorating humanitarian conditions or the millions of lives and dreams the war has shattered. If it cared, it would stop the fighting. Russia is the aggressor, the attacker, the invader — the sole party in Ukraine, engaged in a campaign of brutality against the people of Ukraine — and it wants us to adopt a resolution that does not acknowledge its culpability.

We have all seen the pervasive videos of millions of Ukrainian women and children fleeing for their lives. We have seen the images of bloody pregnant women being carried out of the rubble, including a mother and her baby, who died tragically two weeks ago. We have seen the shelling of kindergartens, orphanages and humanitarian quarters; attacks hitting apartment buildings, gas and water pipelines and a nuclear power plant, and shootings of people waiting in breadlines. We have seen cities under siege, corpses in the streets and journalists killed in the crossfire. We have seen shelling by Putin's forces kill a 96-year-old Holocaust survivor in Kharkiv. If we are to believe Russia's disinformation, those are all movie sets with actors. We remain deeply concerned, as we warned for the third time here yesterday (see S/PV.8999), that Russia may be planning to use chemical or biological agents.

Russia alone is to blame for the war in Ukraine. Mark my words — Russia will continue to be held accountable for what it is doing to the people in Ukraine. Russia is trying to make the Council complicit in its flimsy fabrications by putting forward a draft resolution that makes no mention of its role as the sole cause of this crisis. Our vote will show that we will play no part in that.

Russia continues to block the Council from carrying out its mandate. The United States stands with the people of Ukraine. The overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations stand with Ukraine. Our chorus of voices is why Russia's cynical effort to use this institution to spread disinformation and propaganda will not work. As the vote today will show, Russia's disingenuous efforts to deny the truth of its actions will continue to fail.

I would like to thank you, Madam President, for offering a moment of silence for the amazing Madeleine Albright. I will end with a quote from Ms. Albright. Secretary Albright once warned, "Take it from someone who fled the Iron Curtain. I know what happens when you give the Russians a green light". That is what we will do today if we adopt draft resolution S/2022/231.

The President: I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

China, Russian Federation

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Albania, Brazil, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 2 votes in favour, none against and 13 abstentions. The draft resolution has not been adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

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

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): France did not vote in favour of draft resolution S/2022/231, submitted by the Russian Federation, as the text

is a tactic by Moscow to legitimate its aggression against Ukraine.

Russia claims to be concerned about the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, but each day it tramples underfoot the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law. Not satisfied with dragging its people — and the Russian economy — into a war they did not want, Russia seeks to impose an alternative reality and instrumentalize the Council.

Let us be clear. If Russia is so concerned about the civilian population, all it has to do is stop its offensive and withdraw its troops from Ukraine. Instead, Russia hopes to obtain *carte blanche* from the Security Council permission to pursue its war. That manoeuvre is fooling no one. The result of the vote indicates very clearly that the members of the Security Council will not tolerate Russia's attempt to instrumentalize the United Nations and international humanitarian law.

France and Mexico negotiated, in good faith, a draft resolution in the Security Council with the objective of obtaining an immediate cessation of hostilities and to provide a concrete response to the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Ukraine. Given the reality of Russian obstruction, together we decided to take that initiative to the General Assembly, where a transregional group has developed a draft resolution.

The General Assembly must play its role and call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, which is vital in order to protect the civilian population. It must call for an end to the war and demand full respect for international humanitarian law.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): Since Russia invaded Ukraine 27 days ago, 3.5 million refugees have fled the country and another 6.5 million people have fled their homes within Ukraine. Twelve million Ukrainian people now need humanitarian aid.

In Mariupol, Russia first bombed the maternity hospital. Then Russia bombed a theatre where children were sheltering from attack. Over 100,000 people in Mariupol are now under medieval siege. There is no drinking water or food for those trapped in the city.

The United Kingdom is in no doubt that there is a humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. As the Secretary-General said yesterday, the Ukrainian people are enduring a living hell. The United Kingdom's offer of emergency and humanitarian aid to support Ukraine

now totals around £400 million to help deal with the immediate need.

The United Kingdom is in no doubt that Russia's invasion is triggering a wider humanitarian crisis. Worldwide, food, energy and fertilizer prices are skyrocketing, threatening — as the Secretary-General said — to spiral into a global hunger crisis.

As Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn reminded us, it is high time to remember that our first allegiance is to the human race. The United Kingdom will not vote in favour of any draft resolution, whether here or in the General Assembly, that does not recognize that Russia is the sole cause of the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe and is therefore key to ending it.

Russia's draft resolution (S/2022/231) calls for all parties to respect international humanitarian law. It ignores the fact that Russia is committing war crimes. Russia's draft calls for the protection of civilians, including women and children, but it omits the fact that Russia is bombing maternity hospitals, schools and homes. If Russia cared about the humanitarian situation, it would stop bombing children and end its siege tactics — but it has not.

The General Assembly will soon vote on a draft resolution that makes clear that the only way to end the humanitarian crisis is for Russia to end its war. That draft resolution has been submitted not by the aggressor, as has the one we have here, but by the victim. It is high time indeed to remember that our first allegiance is to the human race.

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Tomorrow will mark one month since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine. Since the very first day, that war has been senseless, unjustified, unprovoked and illegal. It must stop. Every second it lasts is one too many, but instead it is becoming deadlier every day. Mariupol, mercilessly pummelled block by block, has become the true face that Russia is presenting to the world — a world that is rejecting it, isolating it and holding it responsible.

We know the cause of the devastating military situation in Ukraine. We know who is responsible. Therefore, we did not believe that Russia needed to propose a draft resolution to the Security Council to call for a ceasefire in an aggression that it itself initiated for no reason and to oblige itself not to bomb civilians, homes, schools and hospitals, as it is doing every hour, not to kill mothers and their babies and

not to force children, girls and women to dramatically leave their homes. We did not fall for such a trap. We did not accept such a mockery. The result of the voting just showed that.

If Russia is worried about protecting civilians in Ukraine — as international humanitarian law firmly obliges it to — it has to abide by the Geneva Conventions. If Russia is the slightest bit concerned by the responsibility to protect, it has to come to its senses, stop its aggression, withdraw its troops, pack up and go home. Instead, the longer it stalls there, the more aggressive it becomes and the deadlier the outcome.

Russia is the sole and unique cause of the terrible humanitarian situation it has created out of its own obsession. It cannot share that responsibility with the victim, Ukraine, or with anyone else. Therefore, because the text, despite its misleading title, is a mountain of hypocrisy and because we consider it spineless and useless, Albania did not vote in favour of it.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Ghana continues to be deeply concerned by the humanitarian situation in Ukraine following the Russian Federation's invasion of the country on 24 February. Accordingly, we remain committed to supporting all genuine efforts to address the suffering of the Ukrainian people throughout the country's entire territory within its internationally recognized borders.

We had to abstain from voting on draft resolution S/2022/231 on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, submitted by the Russian Federation, because we did not believe that it spoke to the position of the international community on the course of the humanitarian catastrophe. Nor did it address the requirement for an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities, which are necessary building blocks to establish a credible framework for humanitarian efforts that can be considered neutral, impartial and independent.

Building consensus on how to tackle the worrying consequences of the war in Ukraine has, unfortunately, eluded the Council, but, as the Secretary-General recently suggested, the United Nations is more than the work done within the Council. Accordingly, we salute the bravery of the gallant men and women of the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies who continue to work in the dangerous environment in Ukraine to bring hope to the many victims of the war. We encourage efforts in these trying times for the evacuation and safe passage of civilians, as well as the

delivery of food, medicine and other essential services to those in critical need who have been caught up in cities under siege.

In conclusion, we urge the parties to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue to resolve their concerns and emphasize that the interests and safety of the Ukrainian people should be prioritized and must be at the forefront of the actions of the Council and all other international actors.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall proceed to explain Mexico's abstention in the voting on draft resolution S/2022/231, submitted by the Russian Federation.

I shall begin by referring to the process itself. For several weeks, France and Mexico conducted consultations in good faith, in a constructive spirit and a transparent manner, on a humanitarian draft resolution that would allow the Council to express its views and assume its responsibility to address the conflict in Ukraine. That process allowed for a frank exchange of positions with the majority of the members of the Security Council, with the aim of arriving at a balanced text that had the necessary support in order for it to be adopted. After those consultations, it was clear to us that we did not have the conditions in place to achieve such agreement.

Interestingly, following the announcement that Mexico and France made on 14 March that we were going to take this initiative to the General Assembly, which had the item under consideration on its agenda pursuant to its resolution 377 (V), which we invoked here in the Council on 27 February (see S/PV.8980), it was then that the Russian Federation decided, without prior warning, to submit an alternative draft text to be voted upon the following day. Such conduct stands in contradiction to the willingness to engage in dialogue with which we led the process from the start.

While the Russian delegation postponed the vote on the draft text — and it postponed and rescheduled on several occasions — the draft text does not take into account any of the positions put forward by Mexico or, in practice, by anyone else. The supposedly revised draft resolution, put in blue on 16 March, changes only the order of two words if one compares it with the original version.

Specifically, with regard to the substantive content of the draft resolution, I would like to clarify that,

although it would seem that it contains some elements of the original draft resolution developed by France and Mexico, it is an edited version that distorts the meaning of several paragraphs. The balance that we were beginning to strike after more than two weeks of negotiations, and which served as a basis for the draft text to be considered by the General Assembly, was excluded.

The draft text in question makes no reference to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, on the prohibition of the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of States. Nor does it make any reference to an unequivocal cessation of hostilities. We feel that both of those are fundamental premises in order to stop the humanitarian crisis that we are seeing in Ukraine. A draft text that is lacking in that regard does not respond to the reality on the ground or the evolving pressing needs of the civilian population.

I conclude by reiterating the willingness of my delegation to maintain our complete readiness for a frank and constructive dialogue with all delegations and in all relevant United Nations forums, with the sole aim of ensuring that the conditions on the ground exist to enable humanitarian assistance to rapidly and safely reach those in need in an unrestricted manner. In full exercise of our sovereignty, the priority for Mexico in this dreadful conflict has been, and will continue to be, humanitarian action, the protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law.

Mr. Gallagher (Ireland): Ireland abstained in this afternoon's voting for a clear and simple reason.

Draft resolution S/2022/231, submitted by the Russian Federation, does nothing to ease the humanitarian suffering of the Ukrainian people. Indeed, the draft resolution before us today failed to call for the very thing that would end civilian deaths, stop the destruction of Ukrainian cities and would facilitate the safe and unhindered evacuation of civilians and humanitarian access — that is this draft resolution failed to call for an immediate end to hostilities. It was simply a cynical abuse of the multilateral system by the aggressor in this war.

If the Russian Federation wishes to take action to relieve the humanitarian suffering of the Ukrainian people, it should end this war now.

Ireland could not vote in favour of a draft resolution that purported to address the humanitarian situation, but which did not recognize the cause of the humanitarian crisis that is engulfing Ukraine — a humanitarian crisis, with global consequences, that is causing food insecurity on other continents.

We remain horrified by the humanitarian suffering being endured by millions of people in Ukraine and the plight of those forced to leave their families and their country. Ireland's priority is to address and alleviate the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine, and we are committed to working constructively with all those who share that goal.

Finally, it is a matter of deep regret that we, members of the Council, have not been able to act collectively to address the suffering of the Ukrainian people. We have been prevented from doing so by the actions of the Russian Federation, the aggressor in this war. It is shameful that a permanent member of the Security Council has acted in this way.

Ms. Juul (Norway): Let me start by restating a fundamental principle. A party to a conflict cannot expect to be perceived as neutral. In the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, it should neither be the author of Council draft resolutions, nor should it take part in voting on the very same conflict to which it is a party. No one can be in doubt as to the Russian Federation's status as a party.

Yet, in meeting after meeting and in numerous letters, Russia expects us to accept its accounts, reports and views as if it were coming from a neutral stance.

For nearly a month now, Russia has continued its reprehensible invasion of Ukraine. Civilians are being attacked, injured and killed, even as they try to flee to safety. Homes, schools and hospitals are being bombed by Russia as we speak. What we have before us today is not a neutral and balanced humanitarian draft resolution S/2022/231. It is a distraction.

Russia's war against a fellow State Member of the United Nations is a clear violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, international law the very principles of the United Nations Charter.

If the Russian Federation cares about the protection of civilians in Ukraine, it can stop this senseless war. That is the way to bring an end to the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukraine. Russia can end this war, and it should do so now.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Brazil remains gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation arising from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Increased reports of civilian casualties, including children, as well as the growing number of refugees and internally displaced people, reveal that the situation continues to deteriorate.

As the main organ for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council should be able to address the humanitarian situation in Ukraine despite different political views. Nonetheless, any humanitarian action taken by the Council must be meaningful and should not reflect partial views of the conflict.

A truly consequential resolution on a humanitarian issue should be able to bring about real impacts on the ground, helping to facilitate agreements, strengthening adherence to international humanitarian law, setting the conditions for the safe passage of civilians and the rapid, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in need, among other elements.

A call for the cessation of hostilities is an integral part of such a humanitarian effort. Equally important, any Council resolution on this matter should be open to an inclusive discussion among its 15 members following a constructive process in which all efforts are made to accommodate the views of Member States in good faith, with true intention to contribute to a lasting solution for the protection of civilians.

The draft resolution proposed today by Russia (S/2022/231) presents many important elements for the protection of civilians. However, it lacks a reference to the cessation of hostilities, which was one of the reasons why Brazil abstained in the voting today. It also fails to recall the principles of distinction, proportionality, necessity and humanity, as well as the general obligation to take all feasible precautions to avoid and minimize injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.

Brazil will continue to engage constructively in any process towards a humanitarian resolution on Ukraine, as long as the initiative proves to be meaningful, inclusive and transparent. Members of the Security Council, no matter how distant their views, have an obligation to negotiate in good faith with each other towards a cessation of hostilities and a durable solution.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis, the continued

deterioration of the humanitarian situation and their increasing spillover effects have triggered widespread concern in the international community. The Security Council has held multiple discussions on the humanitarian issue in Ukraine and it is heart-wrenching to see the reports of increased civilian casualties, rising numbers of refugees and serious shortfalls in humanitarian relief.

Like many other members, China, from the beginning, has been calling for avoiding civilian casualties to the greatest extent and making every effort to ensure basic humanitarian needs. At the same time, we advocate that the Council should fulfil its primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security and play its due role in the humanitarian issue of Ukraine.

China has put forward a six-point initiative on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and has provided several consignments of humanitarian relief supplies to the Ukrainian Red Cross Society. We welcome all initiatives that could help alleviate and resolve the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Over the past few weeks, the Council has had repeated consultations on the draft resolutions proposed, respectively, by France and Mexico and the Russian Federation. China has been actively involved and has been calling on all parties to focus their attention on the humanitarian issue, transcend their political differences and to do their best to seek consensus in addressing the humanitarian crisis. It is regrettable that the Council was unable to reach the broadest possible agreement in the end.

It is the shared wish of the international community to reach an immediate ceasefire. That is also China's strong expectation. We believe that, in addition to promoting a ceasefire and stopping the fighting, the Council should also respond to the humanitarian crisis in a positive, pragmatic and constructive manner.

China's vote in favour of draft resolution S/2022/231 was based on our call for the international community to attach high importance to the humanitarian issue in Ukraine and for the parties concerned to strengthen coordination on humanitarian issues so as to effectively protect the safety of civilians, especially women, children and other vulnerable groups and to facilitate the evacuation of personnel and humanitarian relief operations.

We welcome the coordinating role of the United Nations in humanitarian assistance and support the work of the Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine. We encourage the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies to actively take measures to mobilize the international community to provide humanitarian relief to all those in need, without discrimination, and to help resettle refugees and displaced persons in and around Ukraine. The principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, established by General Assembly resolution 46/182, must be strictly observed in humanitarian relief operations.

China adheres to an independent foreign policy and has always determined our position on relevant issues in a responsible manner, based on the merits of the matter itself. On Ukraine, China has always insisted that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations upheld, the legitimate security concerns of all countries be taken seriously and all efforts conducive to the peaceful resolution of the crisis supported.

The Ukraine crisis poses a serious challenge to the world. The key right now is for the parties concerned to show political will and find a proper solution through negotiations as soon as possible. The international community should create space for peace and leave room for a political settlement. The top priority now is to call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint, avoid civilian casualties and prevent an even larger-scale humanitarian crisis.

The long-term solution, however, lies in abandoning the Cold War mentality, refraining from the bloc confrontations and gradually putting in place a balanced, effective and sustainable global and regional security architecture. China will continue to promote talks for peace, speak out for peace and do its best to bring about peace.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): We took the floor this afternoon in the General Assembly (see A/ES-11/PV.8). We take it again now to make clear and underline our principled position on the humanitarian issue. It will not change because we believe in the values underlying humanitarian issues. We believe that the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their additional protocols are the framework for

humanitarian issues must not be combined with any political posturing — tactical or strategic.

We abstained in the voting on draft resolution S/2022/231 and will always do so when humanitarian issues are dividing humankind. We will abstain in the voting every time we believe that humanitarian issues are being instrumentalized for hidden purposes. We believe that humanitarian issues should be the permanent consensus of the social compact of humankind.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I wish to thank the countries that supported and co-sponsored draft resolution S/2022/231.

The vote that took place has exposed all those for whom politicizing the humanitarian file is more important than helping the United Nations to provide humanitarian aid to Ukrainians in need. We heard today from some delegations, specifically the United States delegation, that they do not wish to engage in any way with the resolution proposed by the Russian Federation. If that is true, why did it abstain in the voting, when it could have voted against it. We all understand perfectly well the true motivations behind the abstention of the United States and its decision to not exercise the veto right, even though it could have done so.

It is interesting that there was an excursus into history as to how the situation developed. We heard from the Mexican representatives, who made it seem as if we suddenly, unexpectedly, put it to a vote, whereas the initial sponsors of the draft — which we supported, on the whole, with the exception of the politicized passages — unexpectedly, without exhaustive consultations with members of the Council and specifically with us, advanced and submitted it to the General Assembly, after which we proposed our draft for the Council's consideration.

Let us look again at what actions and measures prevented our Western colleagues on the Security Council from agreeing to this for political reasons.

Our draft resolution contains such key elements as a call for establishing a ceasefire and humanitarian pauses for the purposes of conducting safe and unhindered evacuation from Ukraine of civilian populations and all those who express a desire to do so, without discrimination on any grounds, a call not to attack any critical infrastructure objects and a call not to place heavy military equipment in residential areas and densely populated areas so as to ensure the protection

of humanitarian medical personnel, due protection for the wounded and the ill, humane treatment of detainees and the protection of civilians, particularly women and children.

For this reason, in this Chamber or at the General Assembly, when my colleagues lament that those provisions are not being implemented, we will remind them that they were before them but they refused to vote in favour of them for political reasons. They had a choice, and they made their choice.

Today once again we heard accusations levelled at the Russian Federation by a number of delegations that we are preparing for the use of chemical and biological weapons in Ukraine. We again heard fake information, which we have repeatedly repudiated, and these were edifying vis-à-vis what transpired in Mariupol with respect to the shelling that took place there, with respect to the murder of people waiting in queue — I will not list all of that. We have repeatedly spoken about this and at length, but unfortunately people choose not to listen to or hear this.

Turning into biological and chemical weapons, I take this opportunity to reiterate the following. This is an unimaginable accusation leveled at the Russian Federation. My colleagues should believe us when we say that we have other means of warfare. We have no use for chemical or biological weapons. Accusing the Russian Federation in this way is simply unworthy of members of the Security Council, especially given the fact that such weapons were destroyed by us long ago.

The absence of a Security Council humanitarian resolution without a doubt significantly complicates the lives of humanitarian representatives on the ground. It will allow the Ukrainian side to continue to ignore demands for the establishment of a ceasefire for the evacuation of people through humanitarian corridors. Kyiv will continue to use civilians as human shields, and, contrary to international humanitarian law, Kyiv will continue to deploy heavy weaponry near hospitals and kindergartens.

Turning to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, we shall endeavour to resolve this issue, as we have done over the past eight years for the people of Donbas, whose suffering the Council prefers to forget. Today we heard the way the United Kingdom representative reminded us that we are all one human race. I agree with that. Unfortunately, many countries, including the United Kingdom, fail to remember other episodes — and

I will not list them; it seems that today is not the appropriate time to single anyone out. All human lives are invaluable. I could have reminded the Council — but today I will not do so — of what the representatives of that country, including those sitting at the table, said vis-à-vis the deaths of civilians, including children, and mass casualties, in the context of other conflicts.

In all territories under the control of Russian military personnel, residents are already receiving basic necessities and food, and we believe fully that as the special military operation's objectives are met, the situation will continue to improve there. We call upon the Security Council not to politicize the humanitarian issue. We regret the fact that the Council was not in a position to adopt the draft resolution contained in document S/2022/231, which would have facilitated the settlement of these issues. Nonetheless, we trust that we and those members of the international community that are genuinely interested in this effort will do everything possible to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and ease the plight of civilians.

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

All of us in this Chamber acknowledge the necessity of addressing the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. In less than a month, more than 3.5 million people fled to such neighbouring countries as Moldova, Romania and Poland, and we must recognize and express appreciation for their generosity. Furthermore, amid the continued fighting within Ukraine's borders, 6.5 million people have been displaced, often without access to basic necessities.

We also recognize the donor community's robust response to the humanitarian appeal by the United Nations, and we were encouraged by the dialogue between the United Nations, Ukraine and the Russian Federation that led to the first humanitarian convoy reaching Sumy in eastern Ukraine on 18 March. It is precisely this kind of coordination that we hope to encourage and see formalized soon so as to help those most in need in a safe manner and in accordance with international humanitarian law.

Nevertheless, we believe there is a crucial role for the Security Council to play in line with its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and to tangibly respond to the crisis. We therefore carefully studied all the products brought to the Security Council

by members, including the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2022/231), which includes substantive responses to the humanitarian needs in the country. We endorse its calls to allow safe passage without discrimination, unhindered access to humanitarian aid, and the demand that international humanitarian law be protected. Ultimately, however, we abstained in the voting because we would have liked to see, one month into this conflict, a call for a nationwide cessation of hostilities and a text that garnered the full support of Council members.

The continued fighting precludes the robust aid operations all of us hope to see in Ukraine, not least of which because it risks the safety of humanitarian workers. We also would have preferred greater clarity on the full application of international humanitarian law and with regard to elements that may be misconstrued to imply a political position that falls outside the scope of a humanitarian resolution.

But meanwhile, building on the dialogue that led to the Sumy convoy, we must encourage agreement on other technical steps to alleviate human suffering, for example, on civilian evacuation, access to aid and windows of silence. Such measures will provide much-needed respite after four weeks of fighting and may also lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive humanitarian response as part of a negotiated settlement.

We believe the Security Council needs to rise to the occasion by adopting a dedicated compromise product that contains elements we can agree on, including a call on the parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including in relation to the wounded and the sick, missing persons and the protection of combatants and non-combatants.

While agreement was not possible today, the Council cannot abrogate its responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. We must work in good faith and try our utmost to help all those in need on the ground today. The United Arab Emirates stands ready to aid those efforts with the full urgency that this work deserves.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): The Russian Permanent Representative asks

why we decided to abstain and not veto. To be honest, it was not necessary to veto, and I do not think the draft resolution put before us (S/2022/231) was worthy of the United States using its precious veto power. Thirteen members of the Security Council abstained, and that was all that was required to defeat this draft resolution.

In addition, I want to add that we do not need this farcical draft resolution to provide humanitarian assistance. The United States has provided more than \$600 million in humanitarian assistance to the Ukrainian people, and we will continue to provide as much assistance as is required both to Ukraine and to the neighbouring countries, which are generously hosting and supporting the Ukrainian people.

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

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): As the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation made a direct reference to my delegation, I reiterate that we are open to a constructive and frank dialogue that will enable us to find common solutions and the best way for the Security Council to support the protection of civilians and to ensure humanitarian assistance for those who need it most.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.