



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9657th meeting

Friday, 14 June 2024, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

President: Mr. Hwang. (Republic of Korea)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Bendjama
China	Mr. Fu Cong
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Ms. Laurens
Guyana	Mrs. Edwards
Japan	Mrs. Shino
Malta	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Russian Federation.	Ms. Zabolotskaya
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Ms. Jurečko
Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
United States of America.	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Ms. Nderitu.

Ms. Nderitu: In accordance with paragraph 16 of resolution 2686 (2023), I am here today to present an oral briefing on the implementation of the resolution in the context of various situations under the agenda item "Maintenance of international peace and security".

As requested by the resolution, my briefing will utilize information from available United Nations sources, including country teams, peacekeeping operations and other United Nations personnel. That information will be used to highlight potential threats to international peace and security, which aligns with the Council's expressed intention to give full attention to such information. I am thankful to the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for the support provided in preparing this briefing.

Resolution 2686 (2023) of 14 June 2023 on tolerance and international peace and security underlines and recognizes the importance of addressing a range of concerns that remain central to combating intolerance, discrimination and incitement to violence, which are too often targeted on the basis of identity. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to provide an oral briefing to the Council on its implementation. It also urges and encourages Member States to undertake a number of actions, which can contribute directly to mitigating such dynamics. Promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, advancing human rights, promoting women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership at all levels of decision-making, strengthening education for peace and addressing and countering hate speech are central to that work.

The latter is present in different paragraphs of the resolution, which speaks to the importance of addressing hate speech to promote tolerance and international peace and security. Resolution 2686 (2023) expresses in particular deep concern regarding instances of discrimination, intolerance and extremism manifesting in the form of hate speech and regarding instances of violence fuelled by hate speech, recognizes hate speech, among other dynamics of concern, as a contributor to driving the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict, encourages all relevant stakeholders to speak out against hate speech and recognizes that efforts to address hate speech, intolerance and extremism can contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights. That constitutes a solid recognition that hate speech is often at the core of the dynamics about which the resolution expresses concern and which the resolution deplores and condemns, despite hate speech being underreported in situations on the agenda of the Security Council.

Violence does not start when physical attacks are launched. Violence often starts with words. Words of hatred spread intolerance, divide societies, promote and endorse discrimination and incite men to violence. All United Nations agencies that have contributed to this briefing consider hate speech to be a common, thematic thread underpinning the content of this important resolution.

Around the world, we continue to see the negative impact of hate speech. Hate speech can trigger violence and contribute to the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict. Often targeting the most vulnerable in society, including ethnic, religious, racial and national minorities, which at times intersect with other vulnerable groups, such as women, refugees and migrants, hate speech reinforces discrimination, stigma, dehumanization and marginalization. In situations of ongoing crisis or conflict, hate speech is especially dangerous, as it can intensify existing tensions and vulnerabilities. Often coinciding with disinformation, hate speech can also entrench divisions and pose a direct threat to civilians in contexts that are already navigating a difficult road to peace. In the most serious situations, hate speech may also be an indicator of risk and a potential trigger of serious crimes, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Hate speech is not a new phenomenon. It has been employed to trigger violence, conflicts, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity throughout

history. However, today the widespread use of social media — based on business models that often incentivize divisive, misleading, hateful and violent narratives, while limiting exposure to other sources of information that may counter such narratives — is allowing hate speech to be employed by anyone, reaching distant audiences more quickly and hence increasing the potential for offline harm. Minorities are particularly targeted, and so are women, especially those in public spaces.

In the United Nations, we remain committed to raising awareness about the dangers of hate speech and working to address and counter its impacts, drivers and root causes. However, efforts tackling hate speech should never be used to stifle freedom of expression. Blanket restrictions, bans and Internet shutdowns are not the solution and may violate human rights, including freedom of expression. They may also silence the actors working to stand up against hate speech, including civil society, human rights defenders and journalists.

The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech provides a comprehensive framework for tackling hate speech, in line with international human rights standards. It emphasizes a multifaceted approach to addressing hate speech utilizing all the tools in our toolbox from dialogue and outreach, education and promoting social cohesion, non-discrimination and peace. The Strategy is being employed across the system, especially in the field, to support national actors, including Member States, who have the primary responsibility in addressing hate speech.

As United Nations focal point on implementing and coordinating the Secretary-General's Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, I lead a working group of principals comprising relevant United Nations entities, departments, funds and programmes, and I coordinate efforts to implement the Strategy. Through my Office, more than 20 United Nations country teams and peace operations have been supported in developing their own context-specific action plans on tackling hate speech, working with national partners and implementing the Strategy.

Some Member States have also begun developing and adopting their own national action plans on tackling hate speech. In partnership with the Working Group on Hate Speech, my Office has also provided comprehensive policy and technical guidance on the wide-ranging tools available to tackle hate speech,

including on the role of education, the private sector, women, religious and traditional leaders, sports, actors and others.

The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech has also been a vehicle for engagement with technology and social media companies, for them to do more to respond to hate speech online before it has the potential to have real world consequences offline. Last year, my Office issued policy guidance with specific recommendations addressed to technology and social media companies. That is complemented by ongoing efforts under the Secretary-General's policy brief 8 on Our Common Agenda and the upcoming global digital compact.

As Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, I have also consistently raised concern over trends of hate speech through my statements and briefings, including to this body and to the Human Rights Council. I welcome the Council's consideration of the issue of hate speech and incitement to violence, including through the adoption of resolution 2686 (2023) in June 2023. Since its adoption, the Council has also addressed the issue in seven resolutions in connection with the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and the Middle East. Since the adoption of that resolution, various special political missions and peacekeeping operations have been monitoring hate speech, including gender-based hate speech, within the scope of their mandates. Based on such monitoring, many have taken actions to address the phenomenon around the world.

For example, the efforts of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to monitor hate speech, racism and acts of extremism span from monitoring hate speech and associated violations across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to developing tools to track allegations of human rights violations and utilizing that information for reporting, advocacy and awareness-raising activities. MONUSCO has conducted capacity-building sessions for State partners, civil society actors, community and religious leaders and the media, emphasizing the importance of countering hate speech, particularly during election periods. The Mission also emphasizes advocacy and strategic partnerships with the National Human Rights Commission, other United Nations agencies and international organizations. In the context of the intensified hostilities in the eastern Democratic

Republic of the Congo and the heightened risk of ethnically targeted hate speech, the Security Council has recognized the importance of leveraging the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to help prevent and address hate speech. MONUSCO also employs its good offices and technical expertise to support Congolese authorities and build the capacity of judicial bodies and other civil society actors.

MONUSCO has produced various multimedia products and conducted sensitization workshops and trainings involving youth, civil society, political parties and the public administration. The mission's Radio Okapi collaborates with a non-governmental organization to air a weekly programme addressing hate speech through humorous theatre sketches tailored to radio format, focusing on community conflict and political intolerance.

The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) also monitors and reports on hate speech and incitement to violence during conflict, advocating accountability. In recent months, UNMISS has established a working group on information integrity to proactively monitor, assess and recommend prevention and response measures to misinformation, disinformation, malinformation and hate speech targeting the wider community, in addition to that specifically aimed at the Mission. UNMISS is developing an internal strategy on monitoring human rights in the context of elections, which will provide guidance on monitoring and responding to hate speech based on the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech.

In Abyei, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) employs diverse strategies to monitor misinformation and hate speech in an environment with limited mass media and Internet penetration. That includes daily online media monitoring to identify hate speech on social media and equipping key community leaders with VHF radios for early warning. UNISFA also engages in regular offline monitoring through in-person community engagements and trains local media practitioners and influencers to support warning efforts. In collaboration with the Department of Peace Operations, the Mission is establishing a working group to report, monitor, analyse, evaluate and implement preventive and responsive action related to harmful information.

The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) addresses misinformation and disinformation on several communication priorities. Those include tracking and responding to mis- and disinformation in real time, promoting UNFICYP's mandate and achievements, conducting regular communications campaigns to highlight the negative impact of harmful information and protecting the Mission's reputation through strong relationships with the media. UNFICYP also leverages political and communication support from United Nations Headquarters and the diplomatic community as required.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) continues to address misinformation and disinformation in accordance with its strategy, adopted in February 2023, and as requested by the Security Council. Amid the exchanges of fire across the Blue Line since October 2023, UNIFIL has actively responded to numerous media reports to correct inaccuracies regarding its mandate. It is crucial for host authorities to publicly clarify the mandates of United Nations entities, thereby ensuring the safety and security of United Nations personnel, including peacekeepers. Additionally, countering misinformation and disinformation requires consistent support from the international community.

In the Horn of Africa, with the support of my Office, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, coordinating with other United Nations and non-United Nations entities, launched the United Nations Horn of Africa strategy on hate speech in November 2023. The strategy strengthens the capacities of United Nations staff and national partners to monitor, analyse and document hate speech.

As part of his good offices work in the Great Lakes region, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region of Africa has engaged countries in the region on the need to curb inflammatory divisive rhetoric that contributes to the rising tensions between countries, notably between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda and between Burundi and Rwanda. Working in close collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as my Office, Special Envoy Xia Huang has called on all stakeholders to urgently address hate speech and

incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence that significantly harm the peaceful coexistence of communities and States in the region.

In Central Africa, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) has been taking the lead, in coordination with other United Nations entities, to support the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and the Economic Community of Central African States in developing a regional strategy and action plan to prevent and address hate speech and incitement to violence in the region. Furthermore, the Mission has been providing tailored support to the countries in the region. In the lead-up to the general elections in Gabon on 26 August 2023, UNOCA, along with the Office of the Resident Coordinator, launched a campaign to support the efforts of authorities to curb the dissemination of prejudiced and xenophobic messages. In Equatorial Guinea, UNOCA has supported a project, jointly implemented by the Office of the Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Development Programme, to enhance the conflict-resolution capacities of youth. The training equipped youth to identify, manage and resolve tensions in their communities, families and workplaces and promoted the meaningful participation of women in conflict resolution.

In Libya, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya continues to support the crucial role of Libyan women in peacebuilding and their full participation in political processes and decision-making as a part of efforts to overcome political obstacles for the holding of transparent and inclusive presidential and legislative elections. The Mission works closely with media outlets and social media platforms to alert and counter hate speech in the context of women, activists and civil society actors having been the targets of incendiary rhetoric and hate speech.

In the Middle East, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) continued its quarterly reporting on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). Through its strategic engagement and public messaging with local partners, UNSCO continued to raise awareness about the dangers of hate speech, its impact on peace and stability in the region and the need to address its root causes. Moreover, UNSCO continued to amplify the voices of local civil society organizations that are working on building

resilient societies in Palestine and Israel based on respect, dignity and coexistence. Since October 2023, the Special Coordinator has conducted intensive engagements with all stakeholders, including in the region and internationally, to support efforts towards reaching a deal that will establish a ceasefire and secure the release of all hostages. Special Coordinator Wennesland also continued to use his good offices to support de-escalation efforts across the occupied Palestinian territories and in the region.

In Iraq, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) has been supporting the Government's initiative to draft a national strategy to counter hate speech upon their request. UNAMI has also organized a dialogue on the role of the media in countering hate speech, focusing on a range of topics, including gender and minority perspectives on hate speech and social cohesion, as well as strengthening partnerships with media outlets and social media companies to address the issue of hate speech.

In Yemen, the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement developed a communications strategy placing an impetus on tracking hate speech and countering mis- and disinformation. Through its monitoring, the Mission has identified trends and conducted sentiment analysis by using digital technologies.

The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar has been closely monitoring hate speech and racism that negatively affect peace and security in the country. As the conflict in Rakhine state intensifies, both Rakhine and Rohingya communities have been caught between not only the frontlines but also the military's race card that plays on old prejudices, as radical members of each community have been instrumentalized to fuel intercommunal tensions and violence. The ongoing deterioration of intercommunal relations in Rakhine is underlining the importance of early warning and prevention, and the United Nations continues to draw attention to the threats hate speech poses to the social fabric of communities in Myanmar.

In both mission and non-mission settings, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has been providing targeted funding to United Nations teams in different countries to respond to hate speech as a trigger and amplifier of violence and grievances. For instance, in Mali, the Peacebuilding Fund has supported activities addressing narratives and hate speech linked with

violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, while also supporting youth bloggers and community discussions around hate speech and its effects.

In Mauritania, the PBF is supporting projects addressing hate speech and promoting religious dialogue and social cohesion, through which a network of women, religious guides and community leaders have been especially effective in fostering alternative discourses to extremism at the community level. Last year, the Fund approved more than \$9 million towards efforts to counter hate speech through seven projects in Africa, the Americas and Europe.

Tackling hate speech is complex and requires dedicated attention and support. The efforts already implemented across the United Nations system are important steps that need further support, including through dedicated funding. They also need the political commitment and support of the Security Council, which is central to the implementation of resolution 2686 (2023). I therefore encourage the Council to continue to consider this topic, including by requesting more regular briefings on the topic by relevant United Nations entities, including my Office, as the United Nations global focal point on hate speech and on implementing the Secretary-General's United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. I also encourage the Council to continue its engagement with tech and social media companies in order to emphasize their roles and responsibilities in tackling online hate speech and to continue supporting the inclusion of women in peace and security agendas, including on issues related to countering hate speech against women.

Finally, since Member States play the primary role in this area, I encourage them to consider developing national action plans for countering hate speech. With my support as the focal point on hate speech, such action plans should be rooted in human rights and the protection of civilians, and should focus on addressing hate speech holistically, covering both its effects and its root causes and drivers. The United Nations will continue to prioritize efforts to counter and address hate speech, in line with Security Council resolutions and the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. Coordinating the Strategy's implementation globally requires enormous effort and capacities, and achieving that ambitious objective demands significant investment both in resources and expertise. In order to ensure that my Office carries out that task successfully, I urge all Member States to consider increasing their

contributions through both the regular budget and voluntary channels.

I would like to conclude by sharing the information that on 18 June, just a few days from now, we will be celebrating the third International Day for Countering Hate Speech here at United Nations Headquarters, with an event that my Office is organizing in the Economic and Social Council Chamber in partnership with the Kingdom of Morocco, on the importance of investing in the power and voice of youth to counter hate speech. Their voices matter, and it is important to take them into account, especially when implementing actions aimed at preventing violence, conflict, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, because only when young people are included can prevention be forward-looking and sustainable. I invite everyone to join us at that important event.

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

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

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I thank Special Adviser Nderitu for her briefing.

We were very pleased to be the co-penholder for this landmark resolution (resolution 2686 (2023)) with the United Arab Emirates during its term on the Security Council, and we were also pleased that the League of Arab States welcomed the resolution. I would like to make three points.

The first is about the basis of the resolution. Resolution 2686 (2023) is underpinned by principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression and the promotion of gender equality. Those rights are interdependent, mutually reinforcing and all play a role in promoting peace and security. As a Council, it is important that we acknowledge that respect for human rights is vital to our work in preventing and addressing conflict.

Secondly, with regard to the relevance of the resolution, as we have seen, religious minorities in conflict situations too often face persecution and intolerance, as experienced by the Yazidis in Iraq and the Baha'i in Yemen. Religious intolerance and persecution fuel instability, affecting both the prevention and resolution of conflict. However, when freedom of religion or belief is respected and interreligious dialogue promoted, we can build trust

and understanding between communities, helping to secure sustainable peace. For example, the United Kingdom's Strengthening Peace and Resilience in Nigeria programme is aimed at increasing the safety of 1.5 million citizens by supporting national efforts to tackle the root causes of intercommunal conflict in a manner that promotes tolerance and is sensitive to the religious identities of local communities.

Thirdly, on the role of women, while we know that women's participation is crucial to sustainable peace, we also know that women continue to face constant threats and violence. The Secretary-General's most recent report on women and peace and security (S/2023/725) states that between May 2021 and April 2022, 172 women human rights defenders were subjected to reprisals for engaging with the United Nations. That is unacceptable. I welcome the Special Adviser's reference to women, and we should all follow up on the call to Member States in resolution 2686 (2023) to promote women's safe participation, acknowledging that the risk of reprisals is a major barrier to their engagement in political life.

In conclusion, we are committed to defending freedom of religion and belief alongside freedom of expression and gender equality. To overcome the forces of division that we are facing today that can lead to the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict, the international community must implement the resolution's ideals, helping to promote and uphold all human rights.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): I thank the Republic of Korea's presidency of the Council for convening this meeting on the vital issue of promoting tolerance worldwide. We are also grateful to Ms. Alice Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for sharing her important insights and information.

Last year's adoption of resolution 2686 (2023) marked a defining moment in the international community through its effort to address key, insidious drivers of conflicts, including incitement to hatred, racism, xenophobia, gender discrimination, acts of extremism and other forms of intolerant ideologies. The resolution represents a significant step towards promoting coexistence and addressing those critical issues on a global scale. Mozambique supported the resolution wholeheartedly, based on our unwavering commitment and belief in tolerance as the binding

force uniting our multicultural, multi-ethnic and multireligious society. That belief is embodied in the slogan of "National Unity" that we adopted at the inception of our statehood, and the foundation on which Mozambique has built that statehood. We therefore advocate for and encourage relevant stakeholders to share good practices in promoting tolerance, interreligious and intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

Maintaining vigilance against intolerance remains a crucial responsibility for the international community. The implementation of resolution 2686 (2023) goes hand in hand with strengthening institutions and upholding international human rights law, given the tensions that can arise from the need to safeguard individual freedoms and rights. In our interconnected world, where information spreads rapidly through social media, combating bigotry and fostering understanding are essential. Multilateralism, grounded in cooperation and collective action, is a binding force that unites nations in addressing global challenges.

Mozambique remains deeply concerned about the marginalization and stigmatization of women and about cultural discrimination and fanatical views against them, including by denying them access to education. Such issues can delay or undermine countries' ability to achieve durable and sustainable peace, security and reconciliation. We welcome the attention being paid to increasing the diversity of United Nations peacekeeping personnel, including the visibility given to women. For young people, and especially young women and girls, relatability is a potent agent of change and a source of tolerance.

In conclusion, Mozambique would like to emphasize the continued relevance of resolution 2686 (2023) to a culture of peace, particularly in the face of many flashpoints and conflicts where intolerance, hate speech and fear of the other are not only potent drivers but also actual causes of conflict and wars. We need to enhance our essential values to achieve a culture of peace, and we will therefore continue to advocate for harmony in diversity and pluralism as assets for peace and security, because humankind has much more that unites us than divides us.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Special Adviser Alice Wairimu Nderitu for her briefing.

In June last year, facilitated by the United Arab Emirates, the Security Council unanimously adopted

resolution 2686 (2023), which recalled one of the original purposes of the United Nations — practicing tolerance and living in harmony — reaffirmed the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and called for eliminating extremist racism and hate speech. Those problems have remained very present in the past year in international relations and within many countries, and have become major triggers of instability and insecurity. China supports positive action by the international community in accordance with resolution 2686 (2023), aimed at making the world more inclusive, harmonious and peaceful.

First, we must advocate for dialogue among civilizations. Our global civilization is based on diversity, and exchanges and mutual understanding among civilizations are a source of progress for humankind. So-called civilizational superiority and the clash of civilizations not only exacerbate gaps between nations and peoples, they increase the risk of ideological and geopolitical confrontation. President Xi Jinping has put forward a global civilization initiative that advocates respecting the diversity of world civilizations, promoting the common values of all humankind, emphasizing heritage and innovation in civilization and strengthening international humanistic exchanges and cooperation. Last week the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/286 by consensus, a resolution introduced by China establishing 10 June as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations every year. By way of implementing the resolution, China calls on all countries to give full encouragement to the important role of dialogue among civilizations in eliminating discrimination and prejudice, promoting exchanges between peoples and injecting positive energy into working together to address humankind's common challenges.

Secondly, we must enhance mutual trust among countries. Multipolarity is the dominant trend in today's world. It is therefore natural for a country or group of countries to desire a place in the global multipolar system that is truly theirs, and it is right that it should be so. We believe the world is big enough for all countries to grow together. At the same time, enhancing mutual trust among countries is essential, as it is a major prerequisite for maintaining stable international relations. We stand for equality among countries, large or small, and against hegemony, power politics and the monopolization of international affairs by a few countries. We must respect the political

systems independently chosen by each country and support individual countries in taking a path of development that is in line with their own national conditions and addresses their legitimate security concerns and interests.

Thirdly, we must promote social inclusion, which is not merely a matter of individual rights and interests but has spillover effects that affect international relations. Today we are seeing some countries' problems with social fault lines and political polarization growing. That not only affects their own stability and development, it tends to result in increasingly conservative and populist foreign policies, which in turn increase instability and uncertainty in the international environment. Those countries should engage in deep introspection, step up to their historical responsibilities, focus on righteous ideas and values and forge social consensus rather than abandon themselves to populism. While safeguarding freedom of expression in accordance with the law, all countries should make joint efforts to combat disinformation and hate speech so as to minimize their negative impact and foster a cohesive and inclusive social environment.

Fourthly, we must promote common development. Enabling countries to share the fruits of development is what the spirit of an all-inclusive international order is all about and is the fundamental path to realizing lasting peace. At the moment the development gap between the global North and South is still widening, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is at risk of falling off track. We call for maintaining a free and open international economic and trade environment and respecting the South's legitimate right to development. Developed countries should effectively honour their commitments and increase financial, technological and capacity-building support to developing nations.

It is very worrying that in their pursuit of monopolistic advantage and in violation of the principles of a market economy, some developed countries have continued to practice protectionist policies and even unilateral economic coercion, thereby disrupting global industrial supply chains, impeding the world economy's healthy development and damaging the interests of all countries. We hope that those countries will begin to reflect the current trends that aim to practice openness and win-win cooperation with a view to encouraging cooperation and realizing common prosperity.

Humankind is a community of solidarity and a common future, and the choices that we make today will have a bearing on our future. China calls on all countries in the world to stand on the right side of history, strengthen communication and dialogue and practice tolerance, with the aim of achieving common development, security and progress through solidarity and cooperation.

Ms. Zabolotskaya (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We listened with interest to Ms. Nderitu's informative briefing.

Exactly one year ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 2686 (2023), and we thank the United Arab Emirates for that useful initiative, which we fully support. The resolution drew the attention of the Security Council for the first time to the importance of promoting the ideals of brotherhood, based on tolerance, equality, coexistence, dialogue, pluralistic traditions, mutual respect and the diversity of religions and beliefs. The principles of the sovereign equality of States and multipolarity are foundational to the ideals of brotherhood on a global scale.

The resolution directs the Council to pay serious attention to combating discrimination, intolerance and extremism that take the form of hate speech or violence, including on a basis of ethnicity and religion. It advocates for taking practical measures to combat discrimination against persons belonging to religious communities, particularly in cases resulting from Islamophobia, antisemitism, hatred of Christianity and other forms of intolerance.

It is a well-known fact that notions of racial superiority gave rise to policies of apartheid, colonial exploitation, fascism and Nazism. All of those ideologies and practices originate from the same root. They resulted in the worst crimes in the history of humankind, whose victims were hundreds of millions of people on every continent. The United Nations was created to overcome that legacy.

However, ideas of racial superiority and exclusion have persisted and have taken on new forms. The modern world has been flooded with racist and xenophobic rhetoric. Nazism is reviving and manifestations of intolerance based on religion, ethnicity or language have become everyday occurrences. Worse still, some States fail to adequately suppress such manifestations, while others simply make them part of their policies. We have seen how in the guise of freedom of expression

the Qur'an has been publicly burned in countries that proclaim themselves beacons of democracy. We have seen neo-Nazis and Nazi accomplices marching in Europe and the desecration of monuments to the wars that defeated Nazism. Those are all serious challenges of our time that we cannot treat with indifference.

We cannot be reconciled to the fact that Ukraine has been pursuing a policy of eradicating everything Russian since 2014. It has introduced a gradual ban on the use of Russian, the native language of at least 40 per cent of the country's population. Russian is being squeezed out of education, the media and public life. Monuments to Russian writers such as Alexander Pushkin have been demolished. Ukraine's 2017 law on education is part of its discriminatory policies, another element of which is a law on preschool education that was adopted just yesterday. In November 2023 Ukraine enacted a law designed to protect the rights of national minorities that states explicitly that it does not apply to the Russian language.

We will not be reconciled to the fact that people who defend the rights of the Russian-speaking population or who merely advocate for dialogue and peace with Russia in Ukraine have simply been killed in the street, as was the case with journalist Oles Buzina in 2015. Or they disappear, like Ukrainian human rights activist Elena Berezhnaya, who was arrested on 16 March 2022 and taken to a detention centre in the Holosiivskyi district in Kyiv. There has been no trace of her since then. No one knows what happened to her. If she is alive, she is most likely in the Ukrainian security forces' torture chambers. We have asked for the Secretary-General's help, and we once again call on him to assist in ascertaining Elena Berezhnaya's fate.

Resolution 2686 (2023) recognizes the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and its valuable contribution to strengthening social cohesion and peace and rightly considers such dialogue as an important tool in efforts to establish peace. Within the walls of this Chamber we have repeatedly drawn attention to the tragedy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church that is unfolding in Ukraine before our very eyes. Right now, steps are being taken in Ukraine across the board, from the legislature to law enforcement to the media, with the aim of eradicating canonical orthodoxy in Ukraine, the faith with the largest number of adherents in the country. There is a massive disinformation campaign against the clergy designed to discredit its priests in the eyes of parishioners and portray them as aiding and abetting

the enemy. Every day, the Ukrainian security services and so-called journalists spew false accusations and hate speech about priests into the information space. In this way Kyiv is giving carte blanche to every kind of radical to use violence and lawlessness in order to cleanse the country's religious landscape, and it has to be acknowledged that those policies get results. Priests are being beaten and arrested. The Internet has been flooded with videos of such events.

Churches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church have been seized since 2019, and their congregations illegally liquidated by force on a pretext of undergoing alleged "voluntary conversions" to other religious denominations. The expulsion of the monks from the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, Ukraine's oldest monastery and symbol of canonical orthodoxy, is a blatant example. Orthodox churches in Ukraine are also simply being destroyed, as happened in Kyiv only a month ago, on 17 May, in the case of the Vladimiro-Olginskiy chapel of the Tithes Monastery, restored by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church on the site of the first stone church in Kyiv Rus. It was simply annihilated. In that regard, I would like to point out that resolution 2686 (2023) strongly condemns all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief and such acts directed against their places of worship, as well as all attacks on or in religious places, sites and shrines that are in violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, we would like to note that resolution 2686 (2023) is also intended to give impetus to the development of national strategies to combat intolerance and extremism, which create breeding grounds for terrorism. It is States and their competent authorities that play the decisive role in combating the radicalization of populations and extremism in all its manifestations and ideologies. However, civil society, including religious communities, academia, educational institutions, the media and representatives of the private sector, should also be involved in those efforts. We call on the relevant United Nations agencies to work intensively to carry out that important task. However, it should be remembered that when implementing any international anti-extremism or counter-terrorism initiatives, it is essential to take account of the traditional, historical, social, cultural and religious contexts. We cannot ignore the fact that radical groups and their ideas are exploited by certain political forces, including as a

tool for influencing the Governments of other States in order to destabilize them.

Mr. Bendjama (Algeria): Let me thank Ms. Nderitu for her remarks.

Tolerance — how good that word sounds in this Chamber, where every day we discuss war, conflicts, crises, massacres and even genocide. Yes, in the twenty-first century we are discussing genocide. Tolerance, and more broadly a culture of peace, as concepts and ideals, are deeply challenged nowadays in the current global context. We therefore need to confer a concrete sense on endeavours aimed at achieving tolerance, beyond what is contained in resolution 2686 (2023). In that regard, I would like to point out the following.

First, we have to consider that the principle of tolerance within the Security Council's agenda must align with various other calls made by the same Council for respect for international law and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. In the current context of international relations, tolerance does not exist when we are faced with the barbaric aggression being perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against innocent civilians, including women, girls and children, in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. It cannot be achieved, because one of the clearest examples of tolerance that we have — a two-State solution — has been rejected by the Israeli aggressor. Those who have shredded the Charter and are questioning the noble role of the United Nations are putting the principle of tolerance in danger.

In a context in which we still have colonized territories around the globe, tolerance would naturally mean that the right to self-determination should be granted to those under oppression and who are being forcibly displaced and silenced in Palestine, Western Sahara and elsewhere. In that regard, I would like to point to article 3, paragraph (n) of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted in 1999, which establishes that a culture of peace is integrally linked to

"[r]ealizing fully the right of all peoples, including those living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, to self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations".

Observing the principles of international law, without selectivity or bias, can lay the foundations needed to achieve tolerance.

Secondly, we need to build more bridges between the Security Council and the General Assembly on topics such as tolerance and a culture of peace. The Assembly has adopted multiple products that we should study closely for meaningful implementation aimed at strengthening the concept of tolerance. My country, Algeria, was proud to introduce resolution 72/130, adopted by the Assembly in December 2017, which declared 16 May as the International Day of Living Together in Peace. I would like to take advantage of this occasion to reiterate that resolution's call to all Member States, bodies of the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and individuals, to observe that International Day. In the spirit of that resolution, Algeria condemns any kind of discrimination, intolerance or extremism based on race, ethnicity, religion or belief. In that regard, the Assembly's adoption in March of resolution 78/264, on the fight against Islamophobia, represents an important achievement that we need to sustain. Algeria was part of the core group that negotiated that landmark resolution on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation group, and we reiterate our commitment to maintaining the momentum that it has created.

Thirdly, tolerance has to be inserted into prevention and, most broadly, the peacebuilding architecture as a central component in making a concrete contribution to long-term stabilization efforts. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Algeria fully supports its mandate to strengthen coordination among all relevant actors in the international community, particularly regional organizations, in promoting the principle of tolerance. Observing and respecting that principle must align with the nature, traditions and belief of each community and society.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I too thank Special Adviser Nderitu for her briefing.

This meeting is taking place in a global context in which intolerance, hate speech and discrimination are on the rise, offline and online. That undermines social cohesion and can lead to tension and violence. The genocides that we have witnessed since the Second World War are haunting reminders of the catastrophic consequences for international peace and security of

incitements to violence, hate speech and intolerance. Respect for international law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law remains at the core of the Security Council's work.

All Member States have a responsibility to protect and uphold the full spectrum of human rights for all, including persons of diverse ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity and members of marginalized groups. The Security Council must unequivocally condemn all forms of violence, discrimination and hate speech, including homophobia and transphobia. International human rights law provides a robust framework for protecting freedom of expression and religion in the context of peace and security. All of us have the right to choose our religion, change it or have no religion at all, and to practice our beliefs publicly or privately. Yet we see religious minorities being repeatedly targeted on a daily basis, particularly during armed conflict. Religious communities and leaders also have a responsibility to reject hate speech, and we commend the peacemaking role played by some religious leaders and organizations in that regard. Freedom of religion or belief is inseparable from freedom of expression, which should be limited only by boundaries strictly defined by international law. We are deeply concerned about the rising number of instances of harassment, coercion and reprisals, including by State and non-State actors, against human rights defenders and others exercising their right to free speech.

On this day, we also want to reaffirm the civil society's essential role in preserving peace. The private sector, in particular technology companies, has a responsibility to comply with human rights obligations and effectively handle disinformation, misinformation and hate speech.

We deplore the misuse of broadly defined extremism laws to target women human rights defenders, journalists and political opposition. Furthermore, we are deeply concerned by the impact of discriminatory laws, the gender-biased enforcement and application of existing laws and structural gender inequalities.

Advancing gender equality and ensuring the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation and leadership of diverse women in all efforts to build peace and prevent conflicts are goals unto themselves. They must never be reduced to counter-terrorism tactics, which can have a negative impact on women and women's human rights organizations. That is why gender-

responsive approaches are essential in responding to the potentially harmful impacts of counter-terrorism measures on women and girls and to strengthening prevention and respect for human rights.

The role of the Council is to work for the maintenance of international peace and security. Human rights are the bedrock of peace. It is therefore incumbent on us to guarantee those rights for all persons, in all their diversity.

Ms. Laurens (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Ms. Alice Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for her briefing.

Hate speech that promotes or justifies hatred, violence or discrimination on any grounds whatsoever is unacceptable and is therefore prohibited by international law. Tolerance, the subject of the resolution adopted a year ago that mandated the oral report presented to us today (resolution 2686 (2023)), is an essential value to which we all afford great importance. It is crucial for life in society, along with fraternity among individuals and respect for all human beings. Tolerance is what must oppose hatred, hateful rhetoric, discrimination and violence. It must not be exploited. Tolerance applies to everyone, in all circumstances.

Respect for international law, in particular for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, is the sine qua non for lasting peace. The rights of women, children and persons belonging to minorities under international humanitarian law and international human rights law — just as those of all individuals — must be fully respected. All forms of discrimination and incitement to violence or hatred must be condemned. That is the meaning of tolerance.

More than ever, the Council must focus, within the framework of its mandate, on respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law and all conventions guaranteeing human rights by seeking to take concrete and operational action to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security. In that regard, selective approaches must be avoided, as human rights, including the freedom of expression, the defence of human rights, women's rights and the rights of LGBT+ persons, are universal.

Freedom of religion or belief and the necessary protection of the right to freedom of expression — the only limits to which are those strictly

defined by international law — are inseparable. Many religious leaders and organizations play a peacemaking role that is to be commended and promote a spirit of brotherhood, tolerance and cohesion. However, we must condemn all rhetoric that stirs up hatred and violence.

Disputes can be resolved only through political solutions that bring people together. Civil society and human rights defenders have an essential role to play in preserving peace. Women, men, young people, and believers and non-believers alike all contribute to reconciliation and peace. In that respect, France reiterates its full support for the women and peace and security and youth, peace and security agendas.

The role of the Council is to exercise the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Respect for international law is the primary and essential condition. It must guide us as we work concretely, crisis by crisis and region by region, to devise political solutions so as to make progress in resolving crises and advancing peace.

Ms. Jurečko (Slovenia): I would like to thank Ms. Alice Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for her presentation.

As the Council struggles to find solutions to the complexities of today's growing number of conflicts and their drivers, one thing seems clear: mutual understanding and respect are the bedrock of the promotion of tolerance and the building of peaceful, inclusive and resilient societies. In doing so, the role of civil society is indispensable. Investing in children and youth will lay the foundation for more tolerant and peaceful future societies.

Allow me to make three points in that regard.

First, past lessons teach us that widespread, gross and systematic human rights violations and abuses are often indicators of a risk of violence and conflict. The Security Council should pay close attention to those processes and respond to them in a timely and appropriate manner. Prevention is key.

Secondly, only inclusive societies that are grounded in social cohesion and embrace diversity can promote tolerance and build lasting peace. The role of women is key in that respect. As builders of peace and social cohesion, women are indispensable partners in preventing and resolving conflicts. Their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation must be at the heart of

all activities related to peace and security. Societies that empower women are more peaceful, and, when women are included, peace is more sustainable. Resolution 1325 (2000), with its succeeding resolutions, set up a strong normative framework to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all the peace and security efforts of the United Nations. We call for its full implementation.

For my third and final point, I would like to take this opportunity to stress the importance of addressing human rights in all United Nations forums. There should be no doubt that human rights also belong in the Security Council, whether as an early-warning mechanism, as a part of preventive action or in the context of the protection of civilians, to name but a few. As the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2024/385) points out, strengthening compliance with international human rights law is central to the protection of civilians agenda. Therefore, we fully support the inclusion of human rights considerations in the work of the Security Council. Full and non-selective adherence to international human rights law in that respect is essential.

The mutually reinforcing relationship between peace and security, sustainable development and human rights is clear and has also been recognized by the Council. The United Nations human rights system provides a collective toolbox for providing a better understanding and a more accurate assessment of the security situation on the ground. It can therefore provide indispensable support to countries and to the Security Council in their conflict prevention efforts and in building sustainable peace.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank the Republic of Korea for organizing this session and Ms. Nderitu for her comprehensive briefing.

As resolution 2686 (2023) recognizes, hate speech, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, related forms of intolerance and gender discrimination can contribute to driving the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict. States must respect and vigorously protect international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and human rights.

To that end, I would like to make four points.

First, when we promote freedom of religion or belief, we must also promote freedoms of expression,

association, peaceful assembly and other human rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that same interdependence. Fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of religion or belief and the freedom of expression, are also vital to stable and secure societies.

When each person is respected, regardless of their beliefs, and allowed to express them, they are more empowered to reach their full potential, which can in turn lift up communities and societies. In that regard, we hope that the international community, including members of the Council, will work together in solidarity towards a world in which no one suffers discrimination or persecution on account of what they believe or do not believe. The United States will continue to stand with and support brave advocates for the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion — including in countries where rights are under attack — both publicly and directly in our engagement with government officials.

Secondly, for years, the United Nations has appropriately focused on addressing violent extremism, including in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and existing commitments made by Member States to prevent and counter violent extremism. To that end, resolution 2686 (2023) does not grant licence to States to repress dissenting views under the pretext of "countering extremism" or maintaining peace or societal harmony.

Thirdly, resolution 2686 (2023) reaffirms the vital role of women's leadership in the prevention and resolution of conflict and their contributions to preventing the spread of intolerance and hatred. The full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all stages of peacebuilding, security and decision-making is essential to forging lasting solutions to challenges in areas of conflict and crises and achieving sustainable global peace and security.

Finally, the United States stands with like-minded members of the Council in its commitment to ensuring that resolution 2686 (2023) is not misused to justify the repression of human rights defenders, women, youth, LGBTQI+ persons or any violations or abuses of human rights. Together let us strive for a world where all individuals can realize and express their full potential with respect for their human dignity, irrespective of their identity, religion or belief. Only by respecting human rights can we truly promote tolerance.

Mrs. Edwards (Guyana): I thank Special Adviser Nderitu for her briefing on the implementation of resolution 2686 (2023) in the context of situations on the Security Council's agenda.

Guyana views resolution 2686 (2023) as a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security, as it provides another framework for promoting respect, understanding, inclusion and tolerance. Those elements are essential for conflict prevention and resolution and for reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding, and are therefore important tenets for advancing the human rights of all individuals, including the right to live in peace and dignity. The Council made a useful step forward by adopting a resolution on tolerance and can go even further by being a beacon of tolerance in a world where its deficit is growing.

We are increasingly witnessing how intolerance can fuel conflict, particularly when it manifests as misinformation and disinformation, violent extremism, hate speech and the suppression of freedom of expression. We need continued efforts from the local to the global level to address intolerance in all its forms and to promote respect and understanding. In that context, it would be extremely useful to see the Security Council mainstream responses to intolerance as it executes its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. Resolution 2686 (2023) offers an important pathway in that respect. Guyana is particularly concerned about how intolerance is disproportionately affecting women and girls in conflict situations when it intersects with the gendered dimensions of conflict. We emphasize the importance of also viewing intolerance through a gendered lens in order to capture and address any gaps that may be detrimental to the well-being of women and girls.

Guyana's experience as a pluralistic society that has moved from tolerance to harmony is one from which we can draw several positives that are applicable to the global context. To give some background, Guyana is comprised of six ethnic groups, and the three major religions practised are Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Our peoples have managed to use our diversity as a point of unity, creating a culturally rich and harmonious tapestry that is interwoven with understanding, respect and acceptance. That state of harmony has been built through deliberate strategies for promoting interfaith harmony, respect for diversity and good relations among Guyanese. Those strategies have

a strong constitutional basis. Our experience has taught us that tolerance is really the minimum that should be achieved and that harmony should be the end goal that we aspire to. Guyana would therefore like to proffer three points for consideration to further strengthen the implementation of resolution 2686 (2023).

First, national and international stakeholders, including Governments, must cultivate a strong culture of dialogue as an antidote to intolerance. It is through dialogue that understanding can be achieved and differences resolved. The rising incidence of hate speech around the world is concerning, and the proliferation of information and communication technologies only exacerbates the problem. As the Secretary-General himself has said, hate speech is an alarm bell — the louder it rings, the greater the threat of genocide. We must collectively do everything possible to counter that tide and promote dialogue.

Secondly, we must continue to promote the responsible use of information and communication technologies in ways that both uphold individuals' right to freedom of expression and reinforce their responsibility not to harm others with their words.

Thirdly, there must be accountability for acts of intolerance, including in conflict situations, so that a culture of impunity is not created around such acts.

I would like to conclude by expressing Guyana's commitment and support to addressing all issues that have implications for international peace and security. While some issues may not be in the conventional domain of the Council's work, it is nonetheless imperative that we continue to broaden our horizons so as to treat with them in a context of prevention and in the interests of peace.

Mrs. Chanda (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for her statement.

Switzerland would like to take the opportunity presented by this meeting to address a key condition for conflict prevention and peacebuilding — respect for human rights and their fulfilment, including non-discrimination, freedom of expression and freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Social cohesion is built on opinions, convictions and beliefs cohabiting together. Tolerance is the glue of any inclusive society. Conversely, intolerance, discrimination, incitement to

hatred and violent extremism can divide or even break up society. A call for tolerance is therefore a call to fight discrimination in all its forms and to respect the dignity of every human being. It is rooted in a universal legal framework. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. From that provision derives the ban on discrimination that is enshrined in several international conventions.

Human rights are a *sine qua non* for building a lasting peace. They are our bulwark against the dehumanization, inequality and injustice that often lie at the root of violent conflict. It is therefore not surprising that armed conflicts are spreading around the world just as human rights are losing ground. Impunity for human rights violations is a major risk to peace and security. A recent study by the Peacebuilding Fund has once again demonstrated, based on concrete cases in 45 countries, that human rights and peacebuilding are mutual catalysts. The study confirms that focusing on human rights helps us to identify and resolve disputes before they erupt into violence, as well as to tackle root causes and remedy structural inequalities. It also shows that promoting women's rights and their socioeconomic needs is a powerful lever for peace and that empowering women facilitates access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. In that respect, the study demonstrates that combating gender-based hate speech is essential to promoting women's participation. According to the study, hate speech in general can be a precursor to spikes in violence and large-scale human rights violations.

Switzerland strongly condemns all forms of hate speech. In the fight against it, respect for human rights, particularly freedom of expression, must be guaranteed. All voices, even the most critical, must be able to express themselves. Freedom of expression, like freedom of religion and belief, fosters open and honest debate, the cornerstone of any pluralistic, inclusive and peaceful society. They create a climate of trust, which is essential for conflict prevention. In the same vein, tolerance and respect for the dignity of all human beings and the protection of minorities are essential if that coexistence is to be achieved. As the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, affirmed before the Council in May 2023,

“Full compliance with human rights is the best antidote to... inequalities, unaddressed grievances and exclusion” (S/PV.9315, p. 2).

To act for human rights is to act for peace. So let us act, by putting an end to all forms of discrimination, by guaranteeing women's participation in decision-making and, above all, by placing human rights at the heart of prevention and peacebuilding.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this briefing, and I also thank Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, for her valuable briefing.

Sierra Leone welcomed the adoption of resolution 2686 (2023), which recognized, *inter alia*, that hate speech, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related intolerance can contribute to driving the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict. That undermines initiatives to address the root causes of conflict and prevent and resolve conflict, as well as reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts. The importance of resolution 2686 (2023) cannot be over emphasized. That resolution provides more inclusive and wider context on how to deal with the spectrum of drivers of violence, including cultural forms such as hate speech, racism and intolerance. Sierra Leone will continue to fully support and advocate for the full implementation of that resolution, because it seeks to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence through dialogue and inclusivity. In that vein, we equally commend the Council's resolve to address hate speech, racism and all forms of extremism, which are threats to international peace and security.

We need to strengthen, in line with the intents and purposes of resolution 2686 (2023), our collective efforts to prevent and combat racist doctrines and practices, which remain a deep-rooted problem in our societies. We must come together in our resolve to galvanize all efforts aimed at the promotion of understanding between races and take actions that can make the world equal, fairer and just for everyone.

However, in recent times divisive and dangerous ideologies have been delivered through the global megaphone of social media. The vile messages remain all too familiar — racism, misogyny, lies, anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim bigotry, stigmatization, discrimination and the outright denial — or even glorification — of past genocides. The global community must stand as one against that torrent of hate speech and denounce it wherever it is found. We must stand together in a renewed global push to ratify and fully implement the

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, while strengthening prevention mechanisms, educating new generations about past genocides and countering the mis- and disinformation that fuels hate speech and genocidal intent and actions that are happening today. The universal principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, human rights and gender equality must be respected and implemented.

In 2001, Member States, through the adoption by consensus of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, agreed to pursue justice, development, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. They committed themselves collectively and individually to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action road map, which illustrates how the international community will follow up on those commitments to prevent future occurrences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and to accelerate momentum to make the fight against that scourge a reality.

We are pleased that Member States have, since the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, pushed through landmark, legislative and administrative measures to effectively combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on any basis. More importantly, we thank all Member States that appreciate and respect the knowledge of people of African descent, including by recognizing and promoting their culture and heritage and their contributions to development in their respective economies and globally.

We should never forget nor cease to denounce all vestiges of racism and any other related intolerance. Structural racism and discrimination can and must be dismantled. We must show stronger political will, take concrete actions and accelerate actions to tackle racial injustice and inequality. We also must speak out against hate speech and harassment, both online and offline. We have a responsibility to raise awareness of the impact of those entrenched threats to our values and common agenda. If we combine our concerted and sustained efforts, we could achieve a shared future based on our common humanity.

In that vein we, as States Members of the United Nations, have a responsibility to engage, demonstrate maximum solidarity to tackle poverty and exclusion, invest in education and rebuild trust and social cohesion

in line with the global development aspirations of leaving no one behind.

Let me close by highlighting the particular harsh reality at this present time for women's rights and for their quality of life generally. In so many of the world's major conflicts, women and girls, including children, are the most affected, and their rights are trampled upon. At the current pace, it will still take a very long time to achieve equality under the law for all.

For our part, in Sierra Leone, there is evidence that the women and peace and security resolutions are not just an abstraction. When those resolutions have recognized women's enormous contribution to peace and the devastating effects of women's exclusion and marginalization, actions have been taken over time. Accordingly, we are compelled by our experience to advocate strongly for the protection of women, girls and children generally, and to seek concrete actions and aspire to a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Ms. Nderitu for her briefing.

It has been a year since the Council adopted a resolution on tolerance and international peace and security (resolution 2686 (2023)), but the current state of the world remains unbearable for many. We are witnessing the highest number of conflicts since the Second World War, with a quarter of the world's population living amid those crises.

Grievances ignite conflicts, which in turn generate more grievances. Often, that arises not only from genuine difference but from misunderstanding, prejudice or disrespect. In order to break that vicious cycle and achieve lasting peace, the international community must embrace tolerance and respect the dignity of others. In that spirit, my delegation would like to emphasize three points.

First, tolerance is not about merely tolerating the existence of others. It requires an active acknowledgement of different values in the form of cultures, beliefs, traditions and more. Embracing tolerance is easier said than done. Japan has been convening human rights dialogues with other Member States for more than 20 years to exchange views on various human rights issues. It is also critical to bear in mind that the continuing effort to learn from others must happen not only between States and groups but between individuals.

Secondly, tolerance can be fostered by promoting individual efforts to learn from others. That is best achieved through inclusive and holistic education. Japan has been actively supporting various educational programmes, including an initiative in Mosul, in Iraq, implemented by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. That initiative focuses on investing in youth by developing their technical and vocational skills and preventing violent extremism. The programme aims to cultivate essential cognitive and behavioural skills, such as multi-perspectivity, an understanding of complexity, moral courage and responsible online behaviour. By equipping young people with those skills, the initiative not only enhances their personal development but contributes to building a more tolerant and peaceful society.

Thirdly, Japan believes that tolerance is about refusing any form of violence that threatens people's dignity and paying great attention to the plight of others. In that regard, the international community must give particular attention to those who are more vulnerable to the risks posed by armed conflict, such as children, women and religious and ethnic minorities. In particular, as an advocate for women and peace and security, Japan continues to make every possible effort to amplify women's voices by promoting their meaningful participation in various fields.

Japan will continue to contribute to peace and prosperity in the international community by ensuring human dignity and tolerance.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Adviser Nderitu for the valuable and comprehensive information that she has provided to the Council.

Fighting the root causes of violence and inequality is always a sure path to consolidating peace, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. In the face of persistent conflict and inequity, States have a duty to promote the rule of law, reach sustainable ceasefire agreements, favour dialogue and political negotiation and repair the social fabric in order to build tolerant, safe and peaceful societies. For its part, the international community contributes to achieving the same objective by issuing early warnings aimed at preventing armed conflict, providing timely and sustainable financing for field operations, seeking to create conditions that ensure that Special Envoys and their teams are able

to work safely and effectively and facilitating the coordinated deployment of actions to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

Within the scope of the topics that we are currently considering, Ecuador recognizes the essential role of peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations and of operations aimed at sustaining peace, particularly in the following areas. First, they are needed in the quest for strategic communication to counteract the effects of hate speech and disinformation; secondly, in the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, with an understanding of their interdependent and indivisible nature, especially the right to freedom of expression; and thirdly, in mobilizing plural and inclusive dialogue with the aim of eradicating all discrimination on the basis of politics, race, gender, religion or ethnicity.

Among other issues, resolution 2686 (2023) examines the need to overcome obstacles that limit the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women and young people in all areas of public life, and recognizes that women's economic empowerment and leadership are key to conflict prevention and resolution. In that regard, it is also important to apply the provisions of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2250 (2015) and to support State efforts to mainstream the principles of the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda into national policies and action plans.

In conclusion, I want to recognize that implementing coordinated and effective actions to ensure that women regain access to their educational and labour rights, guaranteeing the revitalization of civic space and the exercise of freedom of expression and investing in education systems that promote peace and solidarity are important measures in the effort to attain the common goals of tolerance, equality and peaceful coexistence.

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

Let me begin by thanking the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide for her briefing on behalf of the Secretary-General.

Resolution 2686 (2023) on tolerance reminds us of the significant responsibility that we have to respect the human rights of all individuals and to combat discrimination, hate speech and acts of violent extremism. We note that the resolution was adopted

unanimously last year and urge all Member States to implement it genuinely and holistically, not selectively.

In that regard, I would like to highlight the following points. First, we must address human rights violations rooted in intolerance and discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity or religion, especially those targeting minorities. Such violations are invariably linked to conflicts, both as warning signs and as significant features, as we have seen in the notable cases of the Yazidis in Iraq and the Rohingya in Myanmar. The recent escalation of conflicts in Darfur in the Sudan and in Myanmar also clearly demonstrates how intolerance based on ethnicity or religion results in vulnerabilities and violence. That calls for increased attention from the international community and the enhanced engagement of the Security Council.

The Republic of Korea condemns all forms of violence, discrimination and incitement to hatred that violate the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals in every corner of the world under international law. While prioritizing freedom of expression as a crucial value, we cannot accept acts of violent extremism and hate speech that undermine the freedom of others, particularly the vulnerable. That freedom is limited only by boundaries strictly defined by international law, and it must not be misinterpreted or distorted. In that regard, the recent claim by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that Pyongyang's sending of trash balloons to South Korea constituted the North Korean people's exercise of freedom of expression is an example of a bizarre and deplorable interpretation of the concept.

Secondly, we commend the ongoing efforts of United Nations peace operations to promote human rights, including addressing hate speech, misinformation and disinformation within their mandates. We call strongly for the Security Council's full support, in both mandates and resources, to the further integration of those aspects into peace operations. With that support, missions can better protect civic space for human rights defenders and peacebuilders on the ground, as well as the safety of United Nations peacekeepers themselves.

Thirdly, as a signatory to the statement of shared commitments on women and peace and security, the Republic of Korea emphasizes the importance of ensuring that women in all their diversity are safe from gender-based violence, including hate speech, and that their voices are heeded and reflected in the decision-making process. We are looking at the disturbing reality that girls in Afghanistan have been out of school beyond the sixth grade for 1,000 days. That epitome of discrimination and intolerance is itself intolerable.

As my President, Yoon Suk Yeol, has constantly emphasized, the Republic of Korea places universal values such as freedom, human rights and the rule of law at the core of our diplomacy. We are committed to standing in solidarity with the international community to safeguard and advance those crucial values.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.