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New York

Provisional

President: Mrs. Baeriswyl/Mrs. Baumann-Bresolin (Switzerland)

Members:

Algeria	Mr. Koudri
China	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana	Ms. Benn
Japan	Mr. Iriya
Malta	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
Sierra Leone	Mr. George
Slovenia	Mrs. Blokari Drobič
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersely
United States of America	Mr. Wood

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs; and Mr. George Szamuely, senior research fellow at the Global Policy Institute.

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

I now give the floor to Mr. Ebo.

Mr. Ebo: I am providing this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

The Russian Federation's full-scale invasion of Ukraine — launched on 24 February 2022 in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law — continues to inflict large-scale suffering on the people of Ukraine. As we approach the tragic milestone of 1,000 days since the start of the invasion, we continue to witness unimaginable levels of civilian deaths and injuries, with escalating Russian attacks reported across the country.

It is worth repeating that attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure are unacceptable. Indiscriminate attacks are prohibited under international law. All parties to any conflict have an obligation to respect and protect civilians, as well as to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

Transfers of arms and ammunition and the provision of other forms of military assistance to the armed forces of Ukraine have continued. Information from various Governments regarding those transfers is accessible through open sources. The transfers have reportedly included heavy conventional weapons such as battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters, large-calibre artillery systems, missile systems and uncrewed combat aerial vehicles, as well as remotely operated munitions and small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. There have

also been reports of States transferring, or planning to transfer, weapons such as uncrewed aerial vehicles, ballistic missiles and ammunition to the Russian armed forces and that those weapons have been used and are likely to be used in Ukraine. Recent reports also refer to the presence of third-party military personnel in the Russian Federation to assist in military operations against Ukrainian forces. We urge all concerned to refrain from any steps that may lead to further spillover and intensification of the war. I reiterate that any transfer of weapons and ammunition must take place consistently with the applicable international legal framework, including, of course, relevant Security Council resolutions, which in certain instances impose sanctions and restrictive measures on such transfers.

Reported uses and transfers of cluster munitions are deeply concerning in the light of the indiscriminate effects that those weapons have, combined with the widespread contamination they cause. Universal participation in and the full implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects must remain a priority.

Humanitarian imperatives have long driven disarmament efforts. I call on all States to abide by their international humanitarian law obligations and to become parties as a matter of priority to disarmament treaties and to comply with the obligations therein. Compliance with those obligations is crucial in preventing unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury to persons and in protecting civilians. It is in times of heightened tensions and insecurities that we should reaffirm our commitment to humanitarian disarmament and preserve global efforts to protect civilians.

The transfer of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict carries the risk of diversion and, by extension, raises serious escalation concerns. Measures to prevent and mitigate the risk of the diversion of weapons and ammunition are key for preventing further instability and insecurity in Ukraine, the region and beyond. Such efforts by all parties involved in arms transfers will also be essential to post-conflict recovery.

Importing, producing, exporting and transit States must act responsibly at every step along the arms

and ammunition transfer chain to prevent and detect diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse. Pre-transfer risk assessments and marking and record-keeping practices, as well as tracing and investigation capabilities, are of utmost importance. The effective physical security and stockpile management of arms and ammunition, as well as customs and border control measures, are also key.

To prevent the diversion of conventional arms and regulate the international arms trade, States have also established a number of arms control treaties and instruments. Those include the Arms Trade Treaty, the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its International Tracing Instrument and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management. Universal participation in the relevant treaties, as well as the full and effective implementation of those treaties and instruments, must remain a priority.

Between 24 February 2022 and 30 September 2024, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded more than 11,973 civilians killed and more than 25,943 civilians injured in Ukraine. According to the OHCHR, September was the month with the highest number of civilian casualties in 2024, continuing a trend of higher civilian casualties that started in July.

The use of uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles by the Russian Federation continues to cause civilian deaths and injuries, as well as damage to civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. In addition, there have also been reports of a number of cross-border strikes using missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles by Ukraine inside the Russian Federation, with some resulting in civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects. Just like any other weapons or weapons systems, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles must not be used in a manner that is inconsistent with international humanitarian law.

The use of explosive weapons in populated areas remains one of the most significant threats to civilians in armed conflict. Such use of those weapons is unacceptable, in view of the pattern of civilian harm and the likelihood of indiscriminate effects. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for States to reduce the human cost of weapons by endorsing the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the

Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, if they have not already done so.

I wish to reiterate the United Nations support for all meaningful efforts to bring about a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Szamuely.

Mr. Szamuely: I thank you, Madam President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Security Council.

If ever a war could easily have been avoided, the war in Ukraine is that war. If ever a war was needlessly provoked, the war in Ukraine is that war. The war in Ukraine came about as a result of the Western Powers' single-minded insistence on scooping up every single country on the European continent into NATO and on expanding the borders of NATO right up to the borders of the Russian Federation. The war in Ukraine came about because the Western Powers, for more than three decades, continued to dismiss the innumerable pleas of successive Soviet and Russian leaders, including Mikhail Gorbachev, Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, that there can be no security for anyone unless the West and Russia agree on a common framework for peace that guarantees freedom and security for all.

How do we know that? We know that because former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told us as much. In September 2023, Stoltenberg went before the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and explained very succinctly that the war in Ukraine could have been avoided had NATO not insisted on moving its military infrastructure up to Russia's borders. President Putin, he explained, had:

“actually sent a draft treaty that they wanted NATO to sign, to promise no more NATO enlargement... He wanted us to sign that promise, never to enlarge NATO... We rejected that ... So, he went to war to prevent NATO, more NATO, close to his borders. He has got the exact opposite.”

What Stoltenberg was referring to here were the two draft proposals for a new security architecture for Europe that Russia had issued on 17 December 2021.

The proposals, one addressed to NATO, one addressed to the United States, recalled the framework of the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, in which the mutually antagonistic parties of the Cold War agreed to recognize one another's security concerns and pledged not to enhance their own security at the expense of that of their purported adversaries.

At the heart of Russia's proposals was a commitment by NATO to no further expansion and, in particular, to no NATO membership for Ukraine. There was nothing so extraordinary about that. In its 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty, Ukraine had declared "its intention of becoming a permanently neutral State that does not participate in military blocs".

The notion propagated by NATO spokesmen and Western policymakers that every State has the sovereign right to join any military alliance it wants, to deploy whatever armaments it wants on its territory and to ignore the security concerns of its neighbours flies in the face of innumerable international treaties and covenants, not to mention the international practice of States since time immemorial.

The Helsinki Final Act of 1975 spoke of the indivisibility of security. The 1990 Charter of Paris for a New Europe declared that security is indivisible, and the security of every participating State is inseparably linked to that of all the others. The 1999 Istanbul Document of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe repeatedly returned to the theme of what it called the "concept of common, comprehensive and indivisible security and a common security space free of dividing lines" (p. 43).

And let us not forget, of course, that in October 1962, the United States did not accept the argument that the island of Cuba had the sovereign right to station on its territory whatever weapons systems it felt it needed for its security. However, the security the Western Powers demand for themselves they refuse to extend to others, in particular to the Russian Federation.

The Cold War came to an end in 1991. The Soviet Union dissolved the Warsaw Pact, then dissolved itself, then abandoned the Communist ideology that had once generated so much fear and suspicion in the West. Russia wanted nothing more than to be left in peace to rebuild its shattered economy. We recall Russian President Boris Yeltsin's words before the joint session of the United States Congress on 17 June 1992:

"Today the freedom of America is being upheld in Russia." "The idol of communism, which spread everywhere social strife, animosity and unparalleled brutality ... has collapsed. It has collapsed never to rise again. I am here to assure you, we will not let it rise again in our land."

What had taken place at that time was unprecedented in human history. Soviet and Russian leaders gave up territory, and military allies and sacrificed security. Let us recall that they did not have to do that. The Soviet Union had lost no war. To the contrary, the Soviet Union was still a formidable military and political force, inspiring fear and respect throughout the world. Soviet and Russian leaders did what they did because they believed it to be the right thing to do.

Yet Western leaders interpreted the end of the Cold War as a victory for the West and a humiliating defeat for the Soviet Union. According to former President George H.W. Bush, the Soviet Union did not simply lose the Cold War; the Western democracies won it. And as the supposed victors, the Western Powers immediately set about scooping up their winnings. They proceeded to contain, surround and encircle Russia, so that Russia would never again be a great Power.

Most shocking of all, especially to the Russians, was the speed with which the West did all of this. Let us recall United States Secretary of State James Baker's words to Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow on 9 February 1990. The Berlin Wall had fallen only three months earlier, yet the United States was already pushing for a united Germany inside of NATO. To get Gorbachev to agree to that, Baker pledged that NATO would not move "one inch to the East". Subsequently, Western politicians claim that Baker was referring only to the territory of East Germany, not to the countries of Eastern Europe. But that is a thoroughly disingenuous claim. At the time of Baker's meeting with Gorbachev, the Warsaw Pact was still in existence and, since the countries of the Warsaw Pact were all to the east of Germany, the words "not one inch to the East" would have had to be referring to them.

From that moment in February 1990, Western leaders were to give Russian leaders repeated assurances that there would be no NATO expansion, only to walk back those assurances the moment they had secured whatever concessions they were seeking from Moscow. Former United Kingdom Prime Minister John Major, for example, declared in March 1991

that he “does not foresee conditions currently or in the future, under which the East European countries could be in NATO”. Then there was former NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner who, after having assured a visiting Russian delegation that neither he nor anyone else in NATO was interested in NATO enlargement, was by March 1993 pressing the then United States Secretary of State Warren Christopher to “start considering possible time frames, candidates and criteria for membership expansion”.

Once the Western Powers embarked on NATO expansion, things moved with extraordinary speed. All that was needed was to tell the Russians that what was actually happening was not really happening, that it was all a figment of their imagination. For example, President Bill Clinton, after assuring President Yeltsin that the Partnership for Peace programme was an alternative to NATO enlargement — and not a preliminary step towards it — immediately went back on his word. In January 1994 in Prague, Clinton declared that, yes, Partnership for Peace was indeed the first step towards NATO membership. “Partnership for Peace”, he said, “is not a permanent holding room. It changes the entire NATO dialogue so that now the question is no longer whether NATO will take on new members but when and how.” Moreover, even at that early moment, Clinton was already indicating that the eventual goal was Ukraine’s induction into NATO. In a July 1995 memorandum written for President Clinton, then-National Security Adviser Anthony Lake boasted that the United States intended to ride roughshod over the qualms of some Europeans that NATO enlargement was moving too quickly. Lake boasted that

“some Allies reacted to Russian criticisms of enlargement by suggesting that the Alliance slow the process. We successfully insisted NATO stick to the timetable.”

Yet, in public, United States and NATO leaders were saying something different, something that was manifestly untrue, namely, that NATO expansion was all about ending divisions and bringing stability to Europe. For example, in 1994, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, declared that

“the expansion of NATO will advance America’s fundamental goal — a peaceful undivided, and democratic Europe. NATO enlargement will enhance stability, reduce tensions and prevent new dividing lines in Europe.”

United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright proclaimed in February 1997 that

“NATO has helped bring within our grasp the most elusive dream of this century: an undivided Europe, at peace, in which every nation is free and every free nation is a partner. For those not invited to join this year, but who wish to join, NATO’s door must remain open.”

But how could there be stability, how could there be no new dividing lines in Europe, if NATO expansion was to be directed towards the exclusion of Russia? Russian leaders repeatedly expressed an interest in NATO membership. In a December 1991 letter to NATO leaders, written shortly after the Soviet Union’s dissolution, Boris Yeltsin proposed exploring a framework for Russia’s possible membership in NATO. In 1993, in conversations with United States and European leaders, Yeltsin again raised the possibility of Russia’s joining NATO. Yeltsin told NATO Secretary-General Manfred Wörner that Russia might consider NATO membership if the alliance were to become a political organization rather than a military one.

President Putin also spoke of Russia’s interest in NATO membership. In March 2000, asked by BBC presenter Sir David Frost whether Russia could possibly join NATO, Putin replied,

“I don’t see why not. I would not rule out such a possibility if and when Russia’s views are taken into account as those of an equal partner.”

Putin discussed possible NATO membership with President Clinton. Clinton reportedly responded, “I have no objection.” Later on, Clinton told him, “You know, I’ve talked to my team, no, it’s not possible now.”

NATO leaders showed not the slightest interest in exploring those offers of genuine partnership, genuine dissolution of barriers and genuine frameworks for mutual security. That NATO expansion directed towards the exclusion of Russia and towards the containment and encirclement of Russia would end in disaster was obvious to seasoned observers of international affairs. Renowned diplomat and historian George F. Kennan expressed his disgust at this mad rush towards NATO enlargement. “I think it is the beginning of a new cold war,” he warned in 1998, adding that

“I think the Russians will gradually react quite adversely and it will affect their policies. I think

it is a tragic mistake. There was no reason for this whatsoever. No one was threatening anybody else.”

An obvious question arises: what was behind that rush for NATO enlargement? What was the need for it? No one was threatening anyone else. To the contrary, relations between Russia and the West were unprecedented in their conviviality. Yeltsin cooperated with NATO on Yugoslavia, even working against the interests of Russia’s traditional ally, the Serbs. That cooperation continued with Putin, who was the first foreign leader to telephone Bush after the 11 September terrorist attacks and proclaimed that Russia would become America’s partner in the global war on terror. Putin permitted the United States to transit troops and weapons across Russian territory en route to Afghanistan.

President Clinton has explained the rationale behind his push to expand NATO. Writing in the April 2022 edition of *The Atlantic*, Clinton explained that it was all about his fear of Russia’s supposed

“return to ultranationalism, replacing democracy and cooperation with aspirations to empire, like Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. If Russia chose to revert to ultranationalist imperialism — fuelled by natural resources and characterized by a strong authoritarian Government with a powerful military — an enlarged NATO and a growing European Union would bolster the continent’s security.”

And there we have it: there is nothing there about ending divisions in Europe, about extending security throughout the European continent or about all those other grandiose declarations that NATO leaders have regaled us with for the past three decades. It was, as Russian leaders had suspected, all about containing and encircling Russia with a hostile military alliance.

Over the years, Russian leaders have made their feelings plain, but their protests were repeatedly dismissed and ignored. In an interview with *The Telegraph* in 2008, former Soviet President Gorbachev said

“The Americans promised that NATO wouldn’t move beyond the boundaries of Germany after the Cold War. But now half of Central and Eastern Europe are members, so what happened to their promises?”

President Yeltsin repeatedly expressed bafflement as to why NATO was expanding at breakneck speed to the east if NATO and Russia were supposed to be partners. In a November 1994 letter to Clinton, Yeltsin warned that the Russian people were increasingly seeing NATO expansion as the “beginning of a new split in Europe”. In December 1994, Yeltsin asked, “Why sow the seeds of mistrust? After all, we are no longer enemies.” In May 1995, in a one-on-one conversation at the Kremlin with Clinton, Yeltsin declared,

“I see nothing but humiliation for Russia if you proceed. How do you think it looks to us if one bloc continues to exist while the Warsaw Pact has been abolished? It is a new form of encirclement if the one surviving Cold War bloc expands right up to the borders of Russia.”

Moreover, Russian leaders were only too aware that NATO had long set its sights on eventual membership for Ukraine. In March 1997 in Helsinki, Clinton disclosed to Yeltsin that, yes, the former republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would indeed be joining NATO, and that that would, of course, include Ukraine. From that moment, things moved quickly. May 1997 sees the opening of the official NATO Information and Documentation Centre in Kyiv; July 1997 sees the signing of a NATO-Ukraine Charter and the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Commission; and November 2002 sees the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. In April 2005, President George W. Bush and the then-President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko jointly declare:

“The United States supports Ukraine’s NATO aspirations and is prepared to help Ukraine achieve its goals. The United States supports an offer of an intensified dialogue on membership issues with Ukraine”.

April 2008, of course, sees the NATO announcement in Bucharest that Ukraine would be a member of NATO. And then, just to take matters up to the present day, we have United States Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin announcing in October 2021 that the door to NATO membership for Ukraine was open.

As to how the Russians were likely to view Ukraine’s membership in NATO, there is no better source than current Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns. In 2008, as United States Ambassador to Moscow, Burns wrote an e-mail to

United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in which he explained that

“Ukrainian entry into NATO is the brightest of all red lines for the Russian elite. In more than two and a half years of conversations with key Russian players, from knuckle-draggers in the dark recesses of the Kremlin to Putin’s sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests”.

That the current war in Ukraine was always about NATO expansion and not about seizure of territory was obvious from the arc of the peace negotiations that took place shortly after the start of the conflict — first in Minsk, then in Istanbul. In April 2022, in Istanbul, Russia and Ukraine reached and initialled an agreement, the most important part of which was that Ukraine would pledge to become a “permanently neutral State”; it would never join NATO or allow foreign military bases and contingents on its soil. Ukraine could, however, seek membership of the European Union.

Crucially, however, Ukraine was not asked to forgo its sovereign claims to Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk. Those matters were to be resolved in future discussions between the Presidents of Russia and Ukraine. However, that eminently reasonable agreement that would have brought the war to an immediate end was not to the liking of key NATO leaders. Washington became alarmed that Ukraine was about to agree to that deal. According to *The New York Times*, United States officials told their Ukrainian counterparts, “You understand this is unilateral disarmament, right?”. Finally, United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson flew to Kyiv and urged Zelenskyy to drop the idea. Putin was a war criminal, Johnson said. He should be crushed, not negotiated with. Even if Ukraine were ready to sign a deal, Johnson told him, the NATO Powers were not. Following the collapse of the talks, Türkiye’s Foreign Minister declared, “there are those within the NATO member States that want the war to continue...and Russia to get weaker.”

NATO’s policy therefore remains unchanged. Despite everything that has happened, despite the experience of the past 30 years, despite the obvious fact that the expansion up to Russia’s borders has generated instability and war, despite all of that, what does NATO do? It continues to insist that Ukraine must and will be a member of NATO. In other words, the war must

go on for the sake of a cause — Ukraine’s membership of NATO — that guarantees war. NATO’s leaders are like the Bourbons — they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the representative of European civil society, George Szamuely, for his sobering report on what is actually happening and on what triggered the current conflict, which is not a conflict between Russia and Ukraine, but rather between Russia and the West, or — more specifically — between Russia, the United States and NATO. We can supplement his report with a phrase from yesterday’s interview of Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, who said,

“in Europe, the word ‘peace’ is no longer used, it simply does not exist. Anyone who talks about peace is considered a warmonger. And anyone who talks about war is deemed to be fighting for peace.”

That is the Orwellian reality in which Western States are living. They decided to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia at the hands of the Kyiv regime, and their plans turned out to be a fiasco. The head of the Kyiv junta is concerned that he and his entourage will be thrown under the bus, to put it bluntly. Zelenskyy even decided to start blackmailing the planet by saying that Ukraine might obtain a nuclear weapon, which we discussed in detail on 21 October (see S/PV.9755). However, our Western colleagues did not say a word about that. The Kyiv junta has also embarked on military escapades, such as the one in the Kursk region, where the Armed Forces of Ukraine suffered losses of more than 25,000 troops, including its best-trained reserves.

Neither Kyiv, Washington, London or Brussels can come up with an effective plan to change the catastrophic situation for the Ukrainian army. It is obvious that without the West’s direct involvement in a war with a nuclear Power, which the past-due Ukrainian President seeks so ardently, Ukrainian troops will continue to retreat and sustain catastrophic losses.

That can be seen clearly from the information we receive from the front line, where the Russian army is successfully and gradually advancing with its offensive campaign in key areas. Even Western military experts cannot deny that. According to the data, we have

liberated 478 square kilometres of territory in October alone, and by the end of the month, we were liberating as much as 30 square kilometres per day. Recently, in only a few days, the Russian military liberated large and strategically important towns, such as Gornyak, Selydove, Katerinovka, Dobrovolye, Bogoyavlenka, Izmailovka, Alexandropol, Shakhterskoe and Vishnevoye. For comparison, during their much-publicized counter-offensive in 2023, the Armed Forces of Ukraine managed to capture only 250 square kilometres, which we have since liberated. During the whole of 2023, Ukraine therefore captured only half as much territory as we normally liberate in one month.

The Kyiv authorities are working very hard to hide the truth from their people and their Western sponsors. As we learned yesterday, Ukrainian servicemen were ordered to use, in their conversations with journalists, only such expressions as “victory”, “moving forward” and “pushing out the enemy”, and, conversely, not to use “retreat” or “the enemy broke through our defences”. In addition, the propaganda machine of the Kyiv regime quickly pivots and claims that cities lost have “no strategic importance” or are “heavily subsidized”. Kurakhove, Kurakhovskoye, Toretsk, Pokrovsk and the remainder of Donbas that is still under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine risk being given that status in the near future.

Nevertheless, the West continues to supply the Kyiv regime with military equipment, including artillery, uncrewed aerial vehicle systems and tanks, inter alia, in order to ensure that Western defence companies can make a quick profit and to use up their outdated military equipment. The Kyiv junta is also remembering to line its own pockets. In that regard, the Pentagon recently conducted an audit of \$2.1 billion sent to Ukraine from January to December 2022. The result was the finding that \$1.1 billion were unaccounted for, and it is unclear how to verify the corresponding payments. In time, journalists will surely be investigating the corruption that goes hand in hand with the delivery of military equipment to Ukraine.

However, even Washington and its allies are beginning to realize that it is not the lack of weapons and ammunition that is the problem with the Zelenskyy regime. The main reason for the Ukrainian forces falling back on the front line is that people simply no longer trust the former actor, who lost all legitimacy back in May. In his campaign, Zelenskyy used slogans about peace with Russia, equal rights for Russian-speaking

people and the protection of the Orthodox faith. That is why people voted for him.

However, in order to cater to Western geopolitical interests, he subsequently chose the opposite path, turning his country into a pawn in a game against Russia, in the hopes that, with the help of the United States, Ukraine would become a queen on the grand chessboard. That is a treacherous path for the Ukrainian people, and following that path, Zelenskyy sold off fertile land and strategic enterprises to Western corporations for next to nothing. That process is still ongoing. As we found out from the classified annexes to the so-called Zelenskyy peace plan, Ukraine is ready to allow the West to use Ukraine’s strategic resources, including uranium, titanium, lithium and graphite. Perhaps those annexes are classified because, according to article 13 of the Ukrainian Constitution, subsoil resources belong not to the Government, but to the people of Ukraine, and the transfer of those resources to foreign companies would require a referendum, at a bare minimum.

I would like to remind the Council that the United States has long had its eye on those deposits. For example, Senator Lindsey Graham suggested that the United States could provide assistance to Kyiv in exchange for access to minerals, which he valued at \$10-12 trillion. Other sponsors of the Kyiv regime are also insisting on selling off all of Ukraine’s assets. For example, a decision adopted by the Council of the European Union, on providing a loan to Ukraine backed by frozen Russian assets, contains a condition for transferring control over the Ukrainian military-industrial complex to Brussels.

Realizing that the current Ukrainian leader is acting in the best traditions of thieves, traitors and hetmans, an increasing number of Ukrainians are starting to turn away from Zelenskyy en masse. As a result, the Ukrainian army is experiencing a catastrophic shortage of troops, and there are no more volunteers in Ukrainian draft offices.

In order to solve the problem, the Kyiv regime is resorting to all sorts of tricks, inventing ever more sophisticated methods to get their hands on new recruits. In order to plug holes in the front line, young men now are not only being press-ganged on the streets and on public transport in small towns, but also at concerts and restaurants in Kyiv, where previously they used to lead a quiet life without fear of being snatched by draft officers and then sent to the front line after a

few days of perfunctory training. The hunt for recruits is harsh and unregulated. According to information leaked on the Internet, more than 100 people have died at the hands of draft officer *polizei* during attempted forced conscription in Ukraine. However, no one has been detained or punished, and any information about such cases has been hushed up.

However, there is still not enough cannon fodder on the front line. And, at the request of Kyiv's backers, we are hearing increasingly frequent calls to lower the conscription age to 18 to 21 years. As a result, many people are hiding at home, evading conscription or fleeing the country. The Internet is full of videos showing Ukrainian men who have managed to cross the border, congratulating each other on their escape from what they call Zelenskyy's concentration camp. Quite a few of them choose Russia. In one year alone, from February 2022 to February 2023, 5.3 million Ukrainian refugees arrived in Russia. Now there are many more of them in our country. Zelenskyy and his clique are incensed. Ukrainians who left for the West often face problems there, such as humiliation and discrimination because of language differences. As a result, they are opting to move, en masse, not only to Russia, but to the regions that became part of Russia following the referendums in the fall of 2022. The Ukrainian men who have not managed to flee and are being forcibly sent to the front line prefer either to surrender immediately or to desert. According to the Prosecutor Office of Ukraine, in the first eight months of 2024, almost 30,000 cases were opened following incidents of soldiers going absent without leave, while in 2022 there were only 6,500 such cases. Experts estimate that the total number of deserters ranges between 100,000 and 170,000 people. The whole country is engaging in a heated debate surrounding its conscription. Kyiv's Western sponsors alone are trying to turn a blind eye to those deadly developments in the country and to convince the head of the Kyiv regime to continue sending unfortunate souls to the front line. Our Ukrainian prisoners of war have said that completely unmotivated Ukrainian recruits are prevented from immediately deserting the front line by motivated nationalists and neo-Nazis stationed behind their units, who are basically acting as anti-retreat forces, shooting in the back anyone who tries to flee.

Another way to boost the morale of the Ukrainian units is to staff them with foreign mercenaries. Since the start of the special military operation, at least 15,000

mercenaries from more than 100 countries have arrived in Ukraine. Most of them have been liquidated, but private military companies from Poland and the United States are carrying out an active recruitment campaign, seeking to lure new cannon fodder to fight for the Zelenskyy regime. Among those actively involved in the conflict are the American private military companies Academi, Cubic, Darkhorse Benefit, Dean Corporation, Forward Observations Group, Hyperion Services and Sons of Liberty International and the Polish ASBS Othago and European Security Academy. They are mercenaries and nationalists who stand behind the most notorious and appalling crimes and violations of international humanitarian law, in particular those committed by Zelenskyy's bandits and marauders during the Kursk incursion. We have collected irrefutable evidence of the Kyiv regime's most egregious crimes against civilians and civilian infrastructure in Russian cities, which we convincingly demonstrated during the informal Arria Formula meeting last week. Even American journalists, a few days ago, had to admit the fact that Ukrainian soldiers had targeted fleeing civilians in the Kursk region.

Without a doubt, we will not hear any mention of the truth I have just shared with the Council from our Western colleagues. Nor will they mention the countless violations by the Zelenskyy regime of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Ukrainian units have been deliberately mining roadsides, bridges and areas near residential buildings, hospitals and educational institutions, using anti-personnel "lepestok" mines and booby traps against civilians and mining the bodies of fallen troops and civilians. The other day, for example, a video appeared on the Internet showing a Ukrainian soldier stuffing explosives into a child's toy, saying that the toy was to be sent to the Kursk region.

It is, of course, much easier for the West to repeat its hackneyed narrative than to assess the facts of the systematic use by the Armed Forces of Ukraine of toxic chemicals included in Schedule 2 — BZ — and Schedule 3 — chloropicrin — of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as well as the use of toxic substances and riot control agents, not only against the Russian armed forces but also against the civilian population. Those facts are either

hushed up or, in the West's tradition, Russia is blamed for using such chemicals. At the meeting on 21 October (see S/PV.9755), the representative of Slovenia tried to blame Russia for contaminating the Seym River with toxic substances. He forgot that as early as 13 September (see S/PV.9724), in this very Chamber, we warned about the potential discharge of toxic substances into the Seym and Desna Rivers from one of Ukraine's military-industrial complex enterprises in the Sumy region.

In conclusion, I would like to recommend that our Western colleagues summon the courage to finally recognize that the course they have chosen — fighting Russia using the hands of the Ukrainians — has proven a failure. Hopes of inflicting strategic defeat on our country and forecasts about the inevitable collapse of our economy have not come to pass, no matter how hard the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom tried yesterday to convince us of the opposite in the Chamber (see S/PV.9767). After all, facts are stubborn things, and they show that the economic and energy crises triggered by the short-sighted economic policies of Washington, London and Brussels have hit Western countries and their citizens the hardest, whereas Russia has managed to withstand thousands of sanctions. Our economy is growing. Last year it grew approximately 3.5 per cent; this year, growth is estimated at around 3.9 to 4 per cent. Yet the Eurozone economy is teetering on the brink of recession. We have all heard that one of the largest Germany's companies, Volkswagen, has announced plans to close at least three of its plants in Germany, which will entail the dismissal of tens of thousands of employees and an 18 per cent pay cut for the remaining staff. Another famous company, Siemens, announced that investment in Germany is pointless, and the company now intends to invest only in expanding its capacities abroad.

Last week everybody could see how futile the attempts to isolate our country have been. Kazan successfully hosted the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa Summit, attended by the leaders of 36 countries and the heads of six international organizations. They are now driving the process of finding a just, sustainable and lasting peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis that would be in line with the Charter of the United Nations in full, not just with the parts related to territorial integrity. That solution would imply the elimination of the root causes of the conflict and the development of sustainable and equitable

security formulas that would take into account equally the interests of all global players. This is a serious approach, rather than an attempt to impose ultimatums on Russia, which is divorced from reality.

I want to warn members right away that there will be no repeat of the scenario with the Minsk agreements; we will not freeze the front lines so that the Zelenskyy regime can lick its wounds. We also will not allow Ukraine to join NATO in any form. The goals of our special military operation, including the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, remain in force and are unchanged. What is changing, and quite rapidly so, is the size of the territory still under the control of the Kyiv regime. I advise all those who are cheering on their Ukrainian sidekicks to keep that in mind. I ask them to think not about Zelenskyy's clique, but about the Ukrainian people, whose long-term interests lie in peace and good-neighbourliness with Russia. So far, our Western colleagues have not been very good at doing that.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo for his valuable briefing. I also listened carefully to Mr. George Szamuely.

On several occasions, Algeria has warned of the danger of the conflict in Ukraine being dominated by the logic of confrontation and escalation. We have also stressed that such a logic would only exacerbate tensions that could drag the entire region into endless conflict and crises. The situation on the ground is worsening day by day, causing further loss of life and suffering among civilians in Ukraine and Russia, as well as destruction of civilian infrastructure, including houses, and hospitals.

There is no doubt that the flow of weapons and ammunition to the conflict zone not only inflames the situation but also distances us from any peaceful political process that might lead to a peaceful solution of the conflict. With that in mind, I would like to focus today on several points.

First, Algeria reiterates its deep concern about the continuing confrontation and condemns all violations of international law, including international humanitarian law. In that regard, we once again call on the two parties to exercise restraint and prevent further escalation. We also call on them to respect their international obligations and to prioritize the protection of civilians. The targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure

is unacceptable under any circumstances. It is also prohibited under international humanitarian law.

Secondly, in the light of the tense situation on the ground, we reiterate our deep concern with regard to the increasing use of deadly and destructive weapons and munitions in the conflict zone in Ukrainian and Russian territories. We also warn against the possibility of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorist, criminal and extremist groups, thus strengthening their ability to carry out hostile activities, the victims of which are mostly defenceless civilians.

Thirdly, we call once again for a comprehensive and constructive dialogue that would represent a real opportunity free from geopolitical tensions and polarization. It is important that diplomacy have the upper hand in addressing the conflict. Facilitating a dialogue to enable a peaceful solution to the conflict requires the genuine will of both parties and essential international efforts.

In conclusion, we are firmly convinced that just and lasting peace, on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and consideration of the legitimate security concerns of all parties is the key to reaching a solution to the conflict and defusing the war.

Mrs. Blokar Drobič (Slovenia): I wish to thank Director Ebo for his briefing. We also take note of the statement by Mr. Szamuely.

Let me make a couple of points on behalf of my delegation.

First, Slovenia is concerned with the extent of destruction and human suffering caused by this war of aggression. With the passage of time and new weaponry being delivered to the battlefields, the potential for devastation is further increasing. Although the global volume of arms transfers between 2019 and 2023 has decreased, in comparison to the previous five-year period, uncontrolled and illegal arms flows continue to present challenges to peace, stability and development across the globe. That is especially true for small arms and light weapons, where diversion presents a tangible problem, causing cycles of violence around the world. However, the current cause for instability and deterred development in Ukraine is a unilaterally instigated invasion. A country under siege must be able to defend itself, as provided for by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the international legal framework

pertaining to arms transfers. We strongly reject the notion that Russia, as the aggressor in this war, can act as an advisor as to which way or with which conventional arms Ukraine should defend itself.

Secondly, the efforts of the Council would be much better spent addressing illegal arms transfers — for instance, the emerging evidence of missile transfers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Russia for use in the war on Ukraine. That is a clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and presents an obvious proliferation risk. We discussed that issue in detail yesterday (see S/PV.9767); however, let me reiterate Slovenia's grave concern over the growing military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Thirdly, Slovenia is deeply concerned about reports of ballistic missile transfers from Iran to Russia. If true, that would represent a serious development and an unacceptable act of material support to the ongoing aggression.

In conclusion, this war has ever-growing consequences for the global state of peace and security. Its ramifications are felt far beyond its geography; they are global. The Council should put every effort into ending it and institute a just and durable peace for Ukraine and its people. Until then, Slovenia will continue to support Ukraine in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. De Rivièrè (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

We gathered here yesterday (see S/PV.9767) to discuss the worrisome increase in military cooperation between Russia and North Korea, and the violations of international law committed by those two countries to support a brutal, illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression against a sovereign State. I would like to reiterate our condemnation of those serious actions. In that context, it is clear that calling this meeting on Western arms deliveries is another attempt at disinformation. Russia cannot blame others for a conflict that it chose to start and continue. Russia decided alone, in defiance of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to attack Ukraine, even though Ukraine posed no threat to it. It ignored the order of the International Court of Justice, which, on 16 March 2022, called on it to immediately cease its aggression. It has also ignored the resolutions of the General Assembly, which condemned that aggression seven times — and

by a very large majority — and called for respect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Russia has chosen, for almost 1,000 days, to prolong this conflict. It is trying to break the resistance and unity of the Ukrainian people by increasing violations of international humanitarian law and by carrying out systematic strike campaigns on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector. Ukraine is preparing to face a third winter with two-thirds of its energy production capacity destroyed. Thousands of civilians have been killed, tens of thousands injured and millions displaced by this senseless war of aggression.

The continuation of this aggression is made possible by arms deliveries, particularly from North Korea and Iran, which fuel the Russian war effort. Let us recall that Russia, in order to obtain arms supplies, does not hesitate to flout the foundations of the international non-proliferation regime, the guarantor of our collective security. We urge all States to refrain from supplying Russia with military equipment, dual-use goods and all components that fuel this war.

France, with its partners, will continue to stand by Ukraine for as long as necessary. We are providing political and military support to Ukraine so that it can exercise its right to self-defence, in full compliance with Article 51 of the Charter. That right includes the possibility of striking targets that may be involved in operations targeting Ukrainian territory. The capitulation of the aggressed party cannot be the condition for peace negotiations under international law. Ukraine must be able to defend itself in order to be in a position, when it so decides, to open discussions with a view to establishing a just and lasting peace. That cannot be based on anything other than respect for the principles of the Charter and the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

Let me start with a basic fact: Western support for Ukraine's self-defence is both legal and moral. Any support for Russia's act of aggression, whether by Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or any other party, is neither. Russia calls these meetings to talk up the scale and costs of Western support for Ukraine in order to try to undermine public support and to claim that the West is the aggressor. But their concerns should really be closer to home. It is clear where President Putin's priorities lie. Defence and national security

will consume over 40 per cent of Russia's entire federal spending next year — a post-Soviet record high, exceeding expenditure on health care, education and the environment combined. Let me repeat that: the Russian Government is spending more on killing Ukrainians and trying to steal their land than it is on the health and education of its own people, and the environmental protection of its own territory — all put together. It is reckless and it is self-harming. It has fuelled inflation, forced interest rates up to a 20-year high and increased dramatically the cost of Government, corporate and household borrowing.

As a consequence, Russia has become poorer than all Group of Seven and European Union countries on a per capita basis, including Eastern bloc States. The more Russian capital is funnelled into defence spending, the weaker the finances of the Russian economy become, which will directly harm the livelihoods and futures of Russia's own people. The costs of Russia's aggression go further. Not only is the Russian Government finding it harder to recruit Russians to sacrifice their lives for an illegal war, but they are also haemorrhaging human capital at home. Russian citizens are leaving Russia at a rapid rate, especially high-skilled workers. In 2022, 668,000 people left Russia, causing severe labour shortages. That is in addition to the over 600,000 casualties on the battlefield in Ukraine. It is no surprise that Russian economists have predicted that those labour shortages are set to continue. Russia's out-of-control defence spending is therefore not only wholly unjustified, it is not only a recipe for misery and suffering in Ukraine, it is not only driving global instability — it is also hugely damaging Russia itself. We urge Russia to take a different path, and to bring to an end its illegal, unprovoked and self-harming invasion. Until then, we will continue to provide Ukraine with the support it requires to defend itself and to secure a just and lasting peace in line with the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I extend my gratitude to Mr. Ebo for his briefing. Today's meeting is the fourth that the Security Council has held in last two weeks on the situation in Ukraine. On all of the previous occasions, we heard clearly the international community's collective voice urging Russia to end its illegal invasion against Ukraine. In particular, just yesterday, the majority of Council members expressed their serious concerns about North Korea's dispatch of its military forces to Russia (see S/PV.9767). Against

that backdrop, it is dismaying that Russia once again called today's meeting under the topic of weapons transfers to Ukraine, turning a deaf ear to the calls of the international community.

Needless to say, the global support for Ukraine's efforts to safeguard its people and territory is entirely legitimate. Frankly, it is deplorable that this organ has to address the most basic principles of international relations, instead of allocating its time and energy towards tangible actions for the resolution of global challenges.

In stark contrast, deepening military cooperation between Russia and North Korea clearly elucidates the ongoing illegal and immoral collusion. Russia has waged this unjustifiable war at the expense of innocent people's lives in Ukraine and is now attempting to sustain it by bringing foreign troops from a notorious pariah regime, one that consistently violates international laws and Security Council resolutions. Such violations have been repeated once again, as North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile just yesterday. Furthermore, since August 2023, Russia has secured North Korea's ballistic missiles and munitions and used them against Ukrainian civilians, destroying Ukraine's critical infrastructure. And now we are about to see North Korean troops themselves on the front lines in Ukraine, putting the Ukrainian people directly in their crosshairs. The North Korean regime's inhumane nature is manifest in its pursuit of this illegal deal, at the risk of thousands of their young soldiers' lives.

Yesterday in this very Chamber, we heard from the representatives of Russia and North Korea (see S/PV.9767). Those two countries have been reluctant to admit their weapons transfers and the dispatch of North Korean troops. All of those insidious actions indicate that both Russia and North Korea are well aware that they are doing something that they want to hide, either from the international community or from domestic audiences. We reiterate that supporting an act of aggression that completely violates the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, is illegal. We also affirm that Russia's training of North Korean soldiers involving arms or related material, and North Korean soldiers providing or receiving any related training or other assistance are in violation of resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2270 (2016), in addition to Russia and North Korea's ongoing United Nations arms embargo violations. As North Korea's direct involvement in the

war in Ukraine poses serious security threats to both Europe, North-East Asia and beyond, the international community must unequivocally and resolutely condemn that illegal military cooperation.

For its part, the Republic of Korea will respond resolutely to any threats to our national security, in cooperation with the international community, and will take corresponding measures depending on ensuing developments related to Russia-North Korea military cooperation. We once again urge Russia, as a responsible permanent member of the Security Council, to change course and end this brutal war. And the first crucial step is to return North Korean troops, as well as its own, to their homes.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Deputy to the High Representative of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Adedeji Ebo, for his detailed briefing. I listened attentively to Mr. Szamuely.

Ecuador's position on this matter is clear: the transfer of arms and ammunition must be in accordance with the applicable international legal framework and the relevant Security Council resolutions. My delegation shares the concerns expressed again today by the Deputy to the High Representative, especially with regard to the risks posed by the inflow of arms and ammunition. Ecuador supports his recommendations regarding the measures necessary to mitigate those risks and underlines the importance of States acting responsibly at each stage of the transfer chain so as to prevent the diversion, trafficking and misuse of arms.

Even years after ceasefire, weapons used in conflicts can continue to affect civilians and become a factor of long-term instability. That is the case of the use and dissemination of anti-personnel mines, an unacceptable practice that permanently threatens the civilian population and compromises the use of agricultural land. Ecuador knows first-hand the negative impact of the diversion of weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, which frequently end up in the hands of criminal and terrorist groups, threatening the security of the civilian population.

On several occasions over the past few days, the Council has been informed of the devastating effects that the conflict continues to impose on the civilian population. Reports confirm that many of the victims have been caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, also exposing the civilian population

to such collateral damage as the interruption of essential services. I reiterate the urgency of ceasing attacks against the population and against civilian infrastructure, wherever they occur, and I insist on the responsibility of the parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution.

As I mentioned yesterday in this very Chamber (see S/PV.9767), Ecuador is concerned that — if the conflict continues on this trajectory — we could be approaching a critical point of no return. The rise of nuclear rhetoric and the intensification of hostilities are a cause for international concern. Therefore, in conclusion, I reiterate my delegation's call for an end to the violence and the illegal occupation, and I urge the Council to intensify its efforts to explore all possible avenues towards a peaceful, just and sustainable solution, in accordance with the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the resolutions of the General Assembly.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative to the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing. We also note the information provided by Mr. George Szamuely.

Sierra Leone takes note of the differing perspectives presented on the supply of arms with respect to the conflict in Ukraine, including those supplies of weapons that have the potential to prolong and escalate the level of violence in the conflict, potentially leading to a state of attrition, and those that may be in breach of Security Council resolutions. At the outset, Sierra Leone reiterates its principled position that all transfers of weapons in conflict situations should occur within the applicable international legal framework and relevant Security Council resolutions and include pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification so as to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition.

Sierra Leone is deeply concerned about the continuing toll of the conflict on civilians and civilian infrastructure. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine has verified that conflict-related violence has resulted in about 37,000 civilian casualties, including over 12,000 deaths and about 25,000 injured since the conflict began on 24 February 2022. In September alone, over 1,400 deaths and injuries were verified, the highest number since the start of the conflict. The Office for the Coordination

of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported that the humanitarian situation in Ukraine worsened in August and September, due to intensified attacks in the north-east, east and south. Homes, hospitals and schools have been damaged, in addition to the disruption of other essential services, including water and electricity. Entire neighbourhoods and villages have been decimated, leaving millions displaced — internally and in other countries. It is estimated that roughly 40 per cent of Ukraine's population need some form of humanitarian assistance.

Reported attacks against Ukraine's energy infrastructure since March have drastically reduced the country's electricity capacity, leading to daily power cuts for millions of people across Ukraine. These outages, often lasting many hours, limit access to water, mobile networks, Internet and public transportation. Damage to energy infrastructure is expected to exacerbate the challenges civilians will face in the coming winter, which is forecasted to be the toughest for Ukrainians since February 2022. We are deeply concerned over that development as Ukraine approaches its third winter since the start of the conflict in February 2022.

The alarming civilian casualty figures and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, as verified by the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and OCHA, underscores the urgent need for all parties to the conflict to prioritize the protection of civilians and refrain from further escalation and pursuit of the option of winning the war on the battlefield at all costs. The impact of this conflict also includes its adverse effects on the global economy, development and the environment. Prices of wheat, maize, edible oils and fertilizers have risen exponentially over the past three years due to reduced agricultural production and disruptions in supply chain, including reduced activity in major ports and other means of transportation in Ukraine. The United Nations Environment Programme also estimates that the conflict has resulted in increased release of toxic materials into the air, including greenhouse gas emissions, damaged ecosystems and biodiversity loss, soil pollution and landmine contamination.

It is clear that a military solution to the conflict is not feasible. The international community, including the Council, must therefore remain steadfast in its commitment to supporting dialogue and diplomacy as the primary tools for de-escalating tensions and paving the way for a just and sustainable peace in Ukraine. Sierra Leone once more calls for good-faith diplomatic

efforts in pursuit of a peaceful resolution involving the parties to the conflict. Meaningful steps must be taken towards the immediate de-escalation and cessation of hostilities. We urge the parties to the conflict to engage constructively, including on their legitimate concerns, to find a political and diplomatic solution, as envisaged in Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity within internationally recognized borders, and genuine diplomatic efforts to achieve a peaceful and lasting resolution to the conflict, taking into account the legitimate concerns of all parties involved.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Ebo and Mr. Szamuely for their briefings.

The Ukraine crisis has dragged on, with no sign of an end to the fighting, for now. All kinds of weapons and ammunition continue to flow in, with widening variety and scope. The battlefield has become a show of weapons. The Council has considered the issue of providing weapons to Ukraine many times. Many Council members, including China, have expressed concerns about the increased lethality of the weapons and the rising risk of diversion and proliferation. I would like to reiterate that weapons may help win wars, but they cannot win lasting peace. The continuous supply of weapons to the battlefield will only exacerbate the cruelty, danger and unpredictability of the war, hasten the spread of the spillover effects and further dim hopes for a cessation of hostilities. China believes that the pressing priority of the moment is to follow the three principles of preventing the expansion of the battlefield, non-escalation of the fighting and non-provocation by any party. Work must also be done to de-escalate the situation and resolve the crisis politically as soon as possible. We call on the parties to the conflict to demonstrate political will in earnest, to start peace talks and to stop fighting sooner than later. We also call on the international community to actively create favourable conditions and to provide constructive assistance to that end.

If I am not mistaken, the representative of the United States will, as on previous occasions, discredit and vilify China and play the blame game on the Ukraine issue. At previous meetings I responded to those accusations. Today I might as well take the offensive and say a few things about the United States.

First, the Ukraine crisis is essentially an eruption of built-up security tensions in Europe. It is the result of the long-term increase and worsening of the security and trust deficit in Europe. And it is precisely the United States that is constantly exacerbating security tensions, widening the trust deficit and creating division and confrontation in Europe.

Secondly, after the outbreak of the war, in the face of an increasingly severe humanitarian crisis and its spillover effects, most of the countries in the world have called for the early resumption of peace talks and a ceasefire with a view to ending the war. It is precisely the United States that continues to send weapons to the battlefield, openly calling this an opportunity to weaken and defeat Russia and blatantly advancing its own geopolitical agenda.

Thirdly, the international community is calling for cooperation, not division. Dialogue, not confrontation, is needed to resolve the crisis in Ukraine. It is precisely the United States that has repeatedly discredited China's peace efforts, constantly tying China to Russia and driving a wedge between Chinese-European relations in order to deliberately create bloc confrontation.

We would like to advise the United States that peddling anxiety, fabricating enemies and stoking confrontation will not only bring disputes and chaos to the world but will also harm the United States in the end. We hope that the United States will stop its pointless blame game and work with the relevant countries, including China, to make a tangible contribution to the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis instead of obstructing the international community's efforts for peace.

Finally, if the representative of the United States, uncharacteristically, does not make any accusations against China in his statement later on, I would like to apologize to him in advance.

Mr. Camilleri (Malta): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing. I also took note of the views expressed by Mr. Szamuely.

We regret to see that the Russian Federation persists in using the Council's time and resources to express its dissatisfaction with how the victim, Ukraine, is defending itself against the aggression. Requests for such meetings are nothing more than futile attempts to try to justify the unjustifiable.

The facts are clear: through its decision to invade Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation took a conscious decision to violate the Charter of the United Nations and international law, while exploiting its permanent seat on the Security Council. Nor can we forget that the Russian Federation has also procured weapons and ammunition from Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — some of which are in violation of Security Council resolutions — and has just received 12,000 soldiers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As we approach the 1,000-day mark since the start of the conflict, it is important that the Council continue to take stock of the devastating impact the illegal war has had on Ukraine. The relentless bombing of Ukraine's civilian infrastructure and ports and the intensity of missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities in recent months has continued to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, the reprehensible loss of life and suffering since the start of the war is on the increase. We also condemn the systematic attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, which have reduced Ukraine's energy production capacity and placed it under additional pressure as we approach the winter months.

Malta continues to call for full and unfettered access for all humanitarian workers currently operating on the ground. We are deeply concerned about the incidents of violence against humanitarian workers in the vicinity of the front line. Malta reiterates that international humanitarian law and international human rights law must be fully adhered to by all parties at all times.

We stress the need for full accountability for all crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine. We reaffirm our support to the ongoing work of the International Criminal Court, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine and the Register of Damage for Ukraine. We also reiterate our support for the establishment of a special tribunal for the prosecution of the crime of aggression against Ukraine.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Ukraine has a right to defend itself under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. We once again call on the Russian Federation to immediately end the war it started and withdraw all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo and Mr. Szamuely for their comprehensive briefings.

In yesterday's meeting (see S/PV.9767), we emphasized that any attempt to resolve the conflict through further military escalation would pose a serious threat to international peace and security. Such actions not only intensify an already severe conflict, but fundamentally undermine global disarmament goals. The implications for international stability are far too consequential to disregard.

Mozambique has consistently affirmed the right of States to self-defence, as enshrined in international law. However, the continuous provision of arms, such as long-range systems, advanced combat platforms, high-calibre artillery missiles and uncrewed aerial vehicles fuels further tensions. We must recognize the fundamental truth that when nations prioritize armament, diplomatic solutions become increasingly elusive.

As previously articulated, historical precedent clearly demonstrates the profound dangers associated with uncontrolled arms proliferation. The current absence of post-shipment verification protocols, robust tracking and end-use monitoring exacerbates those risks, creating vulnerabilities that malevolent actors may exploit.

The situation in Ukraine presents no exception. The transferred weapons in the present context risk emerging in future black markets, including in Africa, thereby potentially fuelling an illicit arms trade that endangers civilian populations and regional stability. That destructive cycle demands our immediate action. In that context, we underscore the critical importance of the United Nations disarmament framework and of the binding obligations outlined in the relevant international instruments, including the Arms Trade Treaty, which mandates stringent controls on arms transfers so as to prevent unintended consequences.

The humanitarian implications remain profoundly disturbing. Civilian casualties in Ukraine remain unacceptably high, with a significant portion of injuries resulting from explosive weaponry. We must emphasize that international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure, requires universal adherence and respect.

Recalling our previous appeals, we strongly urge the Council to spearhead a strategic shift from sustaining military engagements to creating conditions conducive to peace. Such a course correction would substantially reinforce global confidence in the Council's mandate to safeguard international peace and security.

To conclude, we call upon the Council to elevate diplomatic initiatives above armament considerations so as to prevent an irreversible escalation, with dire consequences for Ukraine and beyond. Let us channel our collective efforts towards genuine peacebuilding initiatives.

Mr. Iriya (Japan): I too thank Mr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the other briefer for their presentations.

Russia has repeatedly claimed that the so-called transfer of Western arms to Ukraine prolongs the war of aggression that Russia itself started. No reasonable person would believe such a distorted narrative. Rather, the focus should clearly be on military aid, which Russia is seeking. Specifically, the advancement of military cooperation between Russia and North Korea is extremely alarming, as it leads to a further deterioration of the situation in Ukraine, and North Korea will likely gain something in return.

We have repeatedly condemned in the strongest terms Russia's procurement of ballistic missiles from North Korea to use against Ukraine. As we stated yesterday (see S/PV.9767), North Korea's dispatch of its soldiers to Russia and their engagement in military training constitutes a blatant violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. We continue to closely monitor that development with serious concern, including the imminent risk that those troops may take direct part in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which would constitute a grave violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. In addition, we reiterate our deep concern about Iran's transfer of ballistic missiles to Russia. These are the issues the Security Council should be focusing on. Any act of support for Russia's violation of the United Nations Charter is unacceptable. On the contrary, the support provided to Ukraine by the international community is both legitimate and legal. Russia's claim is clearly an attempt to mislead the international community.

Some members have suggested that all parties should show restraint. However, that is completely

misguided in such a clear-cut case. We would like to reiterate that any call for peace that does not affirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is not in line with the United Nations Charter. That is unjust and unsustainable. The international community must reject such pseudo "peace."

In conclusion, we reiterate our strongest demand that Russia immediately and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine and reaffirm our commitment to continuing to support Ukraine.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing.

After 980 days of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, with all the death and destruction Russia has caused, Russia is today falsely trying to blame others for its war and for Putin's obstinance. Russia started this war. Russia could end it tomorrow. Until it does, Ukraine has an inherent right to defend itself, and the international community can — and must — ensure that Ukraine's borders are not redrawn by force.

As I have said many times, Russia's disinformation fools no one. The real issue is not international support for Ukraine's defence. Russia is the aggressor; Ukraine is the victim. For Russia, war means conquest; for Ukraine, survival. The issue today is Russia's unlawful aggression against Ukraine, and the countries that are dangerously fuelling it. It is not hard to miss the irony of Russia calling this meeting just as 10,000 soldiers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea deploy in Russia to train and potentially join Russian forces against Ukraine.

We heard yesterday (see S/PV.9767) the international community's serious concerns that Russia may be planning to use soldiers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea against Ukrainian forces. We caution Russia not to make such a dangerous miscalculation. The participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in combat against Ukraine would be an alarming expansion of the conflict. Already, the troop deployment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Russia marks a dangerous expansion in Russian-Democratic People's Republic of Korea ties.

We note that, in March, Russia vetoed the mandate renewal of the United Nations Panel of Experts on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see S/PV.9591). For 15 years, the Panel of Experts monitored compliance

with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-related Security Council resolutions, which all remain in effect. Last week, the Duma ratified the mutual defence agreement between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, while the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has unlawfully supplied ballistic missiles, launchers and ammunition to support Russia's war of aggression.

Russia's actions with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are not only dangerous, but they are antithetical to its responsibility as a permanent member of the Security Council. Russia's military cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea violates multiple Security Council resolutions, which prohibit both procuring arms from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and providing military training. Specifically, Russia's training of soldiers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, involving arms or related materiel, violates resolutions 1718 (2006), 1874 (2009) and 2270 (2016). We condemn in the strongest possible terms the path the Kremlin is taking with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Moscow showed the same contempt for this institution when it violated other Security Council resolutions by deepening military ties with Tehran. Iran has supplied the Kremlin with armed drones as well as close-range ballistic missiles, undermining the security of Europe as well as the Middle East.

Meanwhile, China continues to downplay its large-scale support for Russia's defence industrial base, providing materials key to Russia's defence production, including weapons components, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and cruise missile technology, machine tools, microelectronics and nitrocellulose. People's Republic of China-based companies have even collaborated with Russian defence firms to design and produce long-range attack drones. China cannot credibly claim to be a voice for peace when it enables Russia to wage the largest war in Europe in decades. China's support to Russia is decisive. China's support is prolonging the war. China talks about creating conditions for peace, but China could quickly create those conditions by suspending that support to Russia.

And I want to be clear: it is not our intention to vilify or smear China. These are facts. China is providing materials key to Russia's defence production, including, as I said, weapons components, UAV and cruise missile technology, machine tools, microelectronics and

nitrocellulose. I repeat that because it is important. And as I said, People's Republic of China-based companies have collaborated with Russian defence firms to design and produce long-range attack drones. Those are critical facts worth repeating.

As 141 countries condemned Russia's invasion and its violation of the United Nations Charter, as 141 countries called on Russia to withdraw its forces and bring peace, China abstained in the voting (see A/ES-10/PV.19). Even now, China's voice could help end the war by calling on Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders. As I have said previously, the United States delegation will continue to call out those countries, including China, that provide support to Russia's defence industrial base. My calls will not end until that support ceases.

Lastly, we again call on Russia to end this war and immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized territory, to cease its procurement of Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iranian materiel and to meet its responsibilities as a member of the Security Council. And let me be clear: even with the addition of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Russian forces will not prevail in Ukraine.

Ms. Benn (Guyana): I thank Mr. Ebo for his briefing today and take note of the information provided by Mr. Szamuely.

Guyana shares the concern expressed by Mr. Ebo about the risk of the diversion and proliferation of arms and ammunition transferred into this or any armed conflict. We note that much of this risk will remain even after the fighting has ended and underscore the need for all involved to ensure that arms transfers comply with relevant disarmament instruments and Security Council resolutions. They must also have robust provisions and controls to prevent their diversion. We also took note of the fact that the supply of weapons and ammunition into an armed conflict has the potential to further escalate or prolong the violence.

The only effective means of preventing a further escalation or instability in Ukraine and the broader region is to end this war. Its prolongation poses increasingly grave risks and consequences, not only for the parties directly involved but also for the countries in the region and global peace and security.

The scale of the current humanitarian needs in Ukraine remains quite vast and will only increase further in the coming winter months. There are 14.6 million people in need, with almost 4 million internally displaced and more than 6 million living as refugees in Europe. Yesterday the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that the humanitarian situation in the country had worsened since August, owing to intensified attacks in the north-east, east and southern regions. Meanwhile, the 2024 humanitarian appeal has received less than half of the requested \$3.1 billion, and response efforts face growing challenges, including safety risks.

Guyana calls upon the international community to scale up support for the humanitarian response. We also call on the parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international law and minimize civilian harm, to grant unhindered humanitarian access to all persons in need and to ensure the safety and protection of humanitarian workers. We also urge them to commit to a serious political and diplomatic process towards ending the conflict peacefully and with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

It is time to end the hostilities and deploy resources to rebuild the lives of the millions of people affected.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Switzerland.

I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the Deputy High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Ebo.

Switzerland continues to strongly condemn the flagrant violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, that is Russia's military aggression. We reiterate that Russia's actions violate the prohibition on the use of force and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Those actions cannot be justified. It is high time to act to restore respect for the Charter. We therefore once again call on Russia to immediately cease all hostilities and withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

Switzerland remains deeply concerned about the impact of this war on the civilian population. We remind all parties of their strict obligation to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. The latest report by the Independent International

Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (see A/79/549), published this week, provides a devastating account with new findings concerning torture, sexual violence, attacks with explosive weapons that affected civilians and civilian objects, as well as attacks on energy-related infrastructure. We note that the Commission concluded that it has sufficient evidence to determine that the Russian authorities have committed crimes against humanity of torture. Switzerland strongly supports the work of the Commission and its recommendations. We urge Russia to comply with those recommendations without delay and to cooperate fully with all international monitoring and investigative bodies.

Switzerland has repeatedly expressed its position on today's subject.

First, we reaffirm that Ukraine has the right to ensure its own security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Secondly, we express our deep dismay over the apparent continuation and intensification of external support for Russia's military aggression. I refer to yesterday's Council meeting (see S/PV.9767), which dealt with the alleged deployment of troops from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Russia, and to the position that Switzerland expressed on that occasion.

And thirdly, we echo the call of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to comply with the applicable international legal framework, including the relevant resolutions of the Council, when transferring arms and munitions. We urge all States to respect their legal obligations and uphold their political responsibilities.

In conclusion, I emphasize Switzerland's ongoing commitment to supporting efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, based on the principles of the Charter. That commitment goes hand in hand with our support for accountability efforts, particularly those aimed at bringing the perpetrators of international crimes to justice. For there can be no peace in Ukraine without justice.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of China has asked for the floor to make a further statement. Before giving him the floor, I would remind Council members of what has been so important to Switzerland during our presidency

and remains important to us in this, the final debate on the final day of our presidency, namely, that the Council is a place of respect. I therefore invite all speakers to participate with an appropriate tone and appropriate language when making their remarks.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My response will be brief. China has not provided arms to any party to the conflict in Ukraine and has always strictly controlled dual-use items. Chinese enterprises carry out normal economic and trade cooperation with countries around the world, including Russia and Ukraine, in accordance with World Trade Organization rules and market principles, which is reasonable, legitimate and beyond reproach. We oppose the use by the United States of the Ukraine issue to smear and exert pressure on China, and we also oppose the wanton imposition by the United States of unilateral sanctions and illegal long-arm jurisdiction on Chinese entities and individuals. We will take all the necessary measures to safeguard the legitimate and lawful rights and interests of Chinese enterprises and citizens.

I would also like to point out that, from the very beginning of the war, China has called for an early

ceasefire and an end to the fighting, for the settlement of disputes through diplomatic negotiations and for the promotion of a political settlement. Over the past three years, China has been speaking out and using its good offices to that end. I think that the international community can see clearly who is supporting peace and who is obstructing it.

The President (*spoke in French*): The representative of the United States of America has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I am not going to respond to my Chinese colleague; I think that I have been very clear.

We just received some information, just coming in minutes ago, that indicates that there are now 8,000 Democratic People's Republic of Korea soldiers in Kursk oblast. And I have a very respectful question for my Russian colleague: does Russia still maintain that there are no Democratic People's Republic of Korea troops in Russia. That is my only question and my final point.

The meeting rose at noon.