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New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Costa Filho/Mr. De Almeida Filho	(Brazil)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Mr. Hoxha
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Gabon	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
	Ghana	Mr. Agyeman
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya	Mr. Kimani
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Syed
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Dame Barbara Woodward
	United States of America	Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield

Agenda

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

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

Expression of gratitude to the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations

The President: Before proceeding, I would like to say a word concerning the end of the tenure of our distinguished and dear colleague Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason. I have been informed that this is her last meeting in the Security Council.

I am certain that I speak for all of us around this table when I express my gratitude to Ambassador Byrne Nason for our valuable cooperation and relationship in the United Nations. Particularly here at the Security Council, it has been an honour to work side by side with her to promote peace and security and to defend our shared deep belief in the Charter of the United Nations.

With Ambassador Byrne Nason's competent leadership, Ireland has successfully promoted the core values of empathy, partnership and independence here in the Security Council and time again played an important role in building bridges, closing gaps and reaching consensus.

Since we held a meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace this very week (see S/PV.9101), I would like to highlight that, during Ireland's presidency last September, Ambassador Byrne Nason worked to bridge the critical gap between peacekeeping and peacebuilding in leading the Council's first-even resolution on United Nations transitions (resolution 2594 (2021)).

Ambassador Byrne Nason has also been a champion of women's voices at the United Nations, not only at the Security Council, where we share commitments to make women and peace and security a top priority, but also in other forums — for instance, as Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women for two years.

The Council, and indeed the entire United Nations, will miss her top-notch skills and negotiating prowess. We look forward to continuing to work with her, her team and her successor, hoping our paths cross again shortly. I wish her and her family all the very best in Washington, D.C.

As one would say in Irish — and please excuse my pronunciation — *Go n-éirí an bóthar leat*, that is, may the road rise to meet you.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Thibault Camelli, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, 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. DiCarlo.

Ms. DiCarlo: The war triggered by the Russian invasion of Ukraine is more than five months old and shows no sign of ending. Instead, the fighting is intensifying. In the face of such a grim prospect, the agreement signed on 22 July in Istanbul to facilitate the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from the Ukrainian ports of Odesa, Chernomorsk and Yuzhny constitutes a beacon of hope for humankind, as the Secretary-General put it. The humanitarian agreement, together with the understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat on promoting access of Russian food products and fertilizers to world markets, will help bridge the global food-supply gap and reduce high prices.

Member States received a virtual briefing on those efforts yesterday from Martin Griffiths, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and Vera Songwe, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa. The grain agreement is a sign that dialogue between the parties is possible in the quest to ease human suffering. The United Nations is currently making every effort to support the parties in operationalizing the initiative, starting with the inauguration of a Joint Coordination

Centre two days ago. As the Secretary-General has stated, all the parties made clear commitments to ensure the safe movement of grain and related products to global markets. Avoiding incidents such as the recent strikes on Odesa and creating enabling conditions will be key to the success of the initiative. It is therefore imperative that the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Türkiye work in partnership to effectively implement the agreement.

Since I last briefed this Council, on 28 June (see S/PV.9080), the number of civilians killed, wounded or maimed by fighting has continued to grow. The deadly missile, air and artillery attacks by Russian armed forces have continued unabated, reducing many Ukrainian cities and towns to rubble. The streets of Kharkiv, Dnipro and Mykolayiv have been repeatedly targeted. The port city of Odesa and the surrounding region have also suffered multiple attacks. The capital of the Kirovohrad region was reportedly struck yesterday, as was the town of Liutizh, just north of Kyiv. Cities in the Donbas, including Donetsk and Bakhmut, are also reported to be under fire. Renewed heavy fighting is now anticipated in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions.

At the same time, reported efforts to alter administrative structures on the ground, including attempts to introduce local governing bodies in Russian-controlled areas, raise serious concerns about the political implications of the war. As the conflict enters a more protracted phase, attention is increasingly turning to its longer-term humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction and socioeconomic impact. As summer wanes, the need for winterization planning is also becoming pressing. Regrettably, political dialogue has virtually ground to a halt.

The war has taken an unacceptable toll on Ukrainian civilians. As of 27 July, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had recorded 12,272 civilian casualties in the country, with 5,237 killed and 7,035 injured. That represents at least 1,641 new civilian casualties since my previous briefing. Those figures are based on verified incidents; the actual numbers are considerably higher. As we have reported, most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by explosive weapons with a wide-impact area. Many of those weapons are inherently indiscriminate when used in populated areas, where they invariably have devastating humanitarian consequences. OHCHR, the World Health Organization and UNESCO continue

to document the damage and destruction of civilian housing, educational and health-care facilities and places of worship. The impact of the war on Ukraine's health sector is particularly alarming. As of 25 July, there have been 414 attacks on health care in Ukraine, resulting in 85 deaths and 100 injuries. That includes 350 attacks on facilities in areas of conflict, where on average around 316,000 patients have been treated per month. In addition, since 24 February UNESCO has verified conflict-related damage to 168 cultural sites, including 73 religious buildings and 13 museums, while 2,129 educational institutions have also reportedly suffered from bombing and shelling. Indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are a clear violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. We reiterate our urgent call to all the parties to respect them, including the rules of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and to avoid the use of heavy weapons in populated areas.

As of 20 July, the humanitarian community has provided aid to 11 million people. Some 9 million have received food and livelihood assistance, and more than 4.5 million have benefited from protection services, including legal assistance, mine clearance and mine risk reduction. More than 4.2 million people have also been able to access safe water and proper sanitation, while nearly 2.3 million people have received cash assistance. Despite difficulties in reaching people in need in the non-Government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, humanitarian partners have provided aid to as many as 125,000 people and to more than 30 health, education, and social institutions in the area.

As of 19 July, 5,984,263 refugees from Ukraine were recorded across Europe. Border crossings from Ukraine since 24 February totalled more than 9.5 million. Crossings to Ukraine numbered 3.8 million. We are concerned that winter will make it harder for the displaced and the returnee community to have access to shelter and health care. In order to address those risks, the humanitarian community is focusing on supporting the national and local systems to respond with housing solutions, social protection and economic inclusion.

We cannot ignore the specific way the war is affecting women and girls. While access to food has significantly declined throughout Ukraine, women-headed households in Ukraine are twice as likely to experience food insecurity as those headed by men. Women's access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health, is rapidly deteriorating, as is access

to health care for newborns and children. With access to education also largely hindered, women are taking on the primary responsibility of homeschooling children. Furthermore, women in Ukraine face significantly increased safety and protection risks. Incidents of gender-based violence, including allegations of sexual violence in conflict, have grown, but services for survivors are not provided in full. It is also likely that many victims and survivors are currently unable to report their cases.

Especially for those reasons, women must meaningfully participate in discussions and initiatives to shape the future of the country, including peace negotiations, recovery efforts, peacebuilding and accountability efforts.

The impact of the war globally is glaringly clear. The consequences will only become more pronounced the longer the conflict lasts, in particular with the onset of winter. Despite the encouraging developments on grain and fertilizers, we remain deeply concerned about the lack of prospects for a shift towards a meaningful resumption of diplomatic efforts to end the war. Escalatory rhetoric from any side, including about expanding the conflict geographically or denying Ukraine's statehood, is not consistent with the constructive spirit demonstrated in Istanbul.

Let me state once again the commitment of the United Nations to Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, within its internationally recognized borders.

We are all aware of the horrors of this war. In both Government- and non-Government-controlled areas, ordinary people bear the brunt of attacks and counter-attacks. Two weeks ago, the city of Vinnytsia became the scene of another atrocious attack. Missiles fired from the Black Sea killed more than 20 people, including three children. Among those brutally cut down in the attack was a 4-year-old girl, Liza, who had been strolling through a park with her mother. We know the heartbreaking story of her killing, and yet there are many other children, fathers and mothers who are dying in similar circumstances every day in Ukraine. That incident and the long list of attacks devastating Ukraine will stand as the ultimate indictment of the utter senselessness and brutality of this war.

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

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

Mr. Hoxha (Albania): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for your thoughtful remarks on behalf of the Security Council about Geraldine Byrne Nason. I echo those words and would like to reiterate my personal pleasure and honour to have had the chance to work with a seasoned diplomat. I wish her all the best.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for today's update on Ukraine.

The Russian aggression has entered its sixth month. It constitutes a blatant breach of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, as it aims to wipe Ukraine from the map. It is destroying cities, railroads, bridges, Government offices, hospitals, schools, cultural monuments, industry, farms and ports. Everything is under attack. Because the war is an attack on the quintessence of Ukraine's economy, it assaults the backbone of the country.

Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations prohibits the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of another State. Russia violates that Article. Last month, the International Court of Justice issued an order calling on Russia to immediately halt its military operations in Ukraine. Russia disregards that order. On 2 March, the General Assembly called on Russia to stop the war. Russia ignores it.

Russia continues to claim that there is no war in Ukraine, and as recently as last month, the Foreign Minister told the *BBC News* that his country had not invaded Ukraine, despite the more than 12,000 civilian victims, whose numbers continue to increase; the uninterrupted shelling, with widespread and deliberate destruction of civilian infrastructure and vast areas of Ukrainian land temporarily occupied through massive bombardments; and the scorched-earth campaign, which amounts to nearly 20 per cent of Ukraine's territory that is not under the control of the legitimate Government that was elected by the people of Ukraine, not chosen by the Kremlin.

Just because we are used to that mantra, here and elsewhere, that does not make it any less outrageous. Whatever Russia may say, there are no legal grounds, no moral justification and no other possible excuse for this unprovoked war of aggression — it is a pure act of aggression.

We remain concerned about the steps Russia is taking to institutionalize and perpetuate control in the occupied territories in Ukraine through a policy of social engineering. The Moscow-imposed authorities in Kherson say that they plan to ask the Kremlin to formally annex the region to Russia. The response comes in the form of the rationale that locals should decide their own fate, which credits reports that Russia may be planning to hold a referendum in the city.

Russia is already introducing its own currency, media and Internet services to Kherson and other occupied parts of Ukraine, as it has done in Crimea. It is the same old playbook. There is no need to reinvent the wheel for a territory grab. By doing so, Russia has again outdone itself in its assembly line for manufacturing artificial entities, which has become its *modus operandi*, as we have seen before — staging fake referendums or other such forms of sham legal simulation in order to mushroom pseudo-republics at will. Annexation by force will remain a violation of the United Nations Charter. It will bear consequences for those responsible in the framework of the accountability process and will not be accepted. Any purported annexation, whatever its cover, is premeditated, illegal and illegitimate.

We remain equally concerned about the reports of forced population transfers, including of hundreds of thousands of children, via the so-called filtration process. As described in detail in the report of the Moscow Mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that was released earlier this month, more than 1.4 million Ukrainians have been transferred to Russia having passed through so-called filtration centres.

Let us recall that the mass forcible transfer of civilians during a conflict to the territory of the occupying party is prohibited under the 1949 Geneva Conventions. It constitutes a war crime. We reiterate our call on Russia to stop the war and withdraw its forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and territorial waters.

We do not need to be reminded that the war in Ukraine is having a devastating global impact. By deliberately destroying Ukraine's agricultural and transport infrastructure and equipment and blocking its ports, Russia has endangered food security for millions of people across the world. That is now a fact. Russia has weaponized grain, just as it has done with its natural gas. The war has threatened European security.

By weaponizing gas and asserting energy coercion, Russia is also testing European resolve and resilience as winter approaches.

Albania welcomes the progress achieved in the talks held last week in Istanbul, with mediation by Türkiye and the United Nations, to open up the Black Sea for Ukrainian exports of grains. That news brought a sense of relief for many in the world as, for the first time in five months of war, something positive was in sight. We wanted to believe, as we still do, that diplomacy and dialogue are always better than war. Unfortunately, it took less than 24 hours after the deal was brokered to see a cynical attack on the port of Odesa. The message that those missiles brought home was clear — we are bound by nothing, we can strike anywhere, anytime.

It is therefore difficult to blame those who say that promises made by Russia, oral or written, are worthless. Ukraine has learned that the hard way. In 1994, Ukrainians gave up the world's third-largest arsenal of nuclear weapons on Russia's promise to guarantee Ukrainian security. Documents were signed but they turned out to be only papers. In 2014 and again this year, Russia invaded the same country.

Nonetheless, we hope that the grain deal will be honoured and quickly implemented in full, for the sake of millions of people. Most of them live in developing countries that have seen what it is like when Russia enters their dining room and are now unsure that they will have food on the table when they wake up the next day.

Ukraine is the most serious stress-test of the rules-based international order. It is the boiling point between tyranny and the free world — a struggle between strategic corruption and democracy, a battle between the right to choose and the might to impose. Its outcome will be paramount not only for Ukraine but for all of us.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

I, too, would like to take a moment to express my sincere appreciation to Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason for her contributions to the Security Council. During the year and then some that we have worked together, I have admired her steadfast approach and her commitment to finding a way forward for peace and security. I wish her the best of luck in the future and look forward to seeing her in Washington.

The Charter of the United Nations is the Organization's most sacred document. It is more than a small blue booklet or noble words on a page. It is a commitment that we have all freely signed as States Members of the United Nations. It is the embodiment of our ideals and the most powerful tool we have, in its own opening words, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Today, we are here to discuss how one country, Russia, has effectively set the Charter of the United Nations on fire. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February, the world has witnessed its flagrant violations of international law and complete disregard for the Charter and the principles of peace, sovereignty and the protection of civilians that the Charter holds dear.

The International Court of Justice has ordered Russia to immediately suspend its military operations. With overwhelming support from the international community, the General Assembly has adopted resolutions that have condemned Russia's aggression. It has demanded an end to the invasion and the withdrawal of Russian troops and has suspended Russia from the Human Rights Council.

Instead of following those demands and feeling shamed by these clear condemnations, Russia has in fact publicly expanded its war aims. As we warned earlier this year, there should no longer be any doubt that Russia intends to dismantle Ukraine as a geopolitical entity and wipe it off the world map entirely. We are seeing growing signs that Russia is laying the groundwork to yet again attempt to annex more of Ukraine's territories. That includes the installation of illegitimate proxy officials in Russian-held areas with the goal of holding sham referendums or issuing decrees on joining Russia. Foreign Minister Lavrov has even stated that this is Russia's war aim. Specifically, Russia is currently reviewing plans to attempt to annex the regions of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, and all of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. That is galling. The acquisition of territory by force is about as clear a violation of the Charter of the United Nations as you can get. We cannot and will not stand by and let it happen in silence.

So while we welcomed the progress made in Istanbul last week on the export of grain and food and commend the Secretary-General and the Government of Türkiye for their efforts to facilitate that much-needed progress, we also saw Russia's true character a few hours later when it launched a missile attack on the port of Odesa.

Bombing a port does not make it easier for grain to get out. Russia should allow grain and food to leave Odesa unharmed in order to feed a hungry world. Those cruel acts should come as no surprise. As we have said many times, we assess that members of Russia's forces have committed horrific war crimes in Ukraine. Those who perpetrated and ordered those crimes must be held to account for their actions.

For those countries saying that one country's security should not come at the expense of another's, what exactly do they call Russia's armed invasion — an armed invasion of its neighbour that disdains attempts to reach a peaceful resolution by silencing its guns, withdrawing its forces and embracing diplomacy? To countries that call for all parties to embrace diplomacy without naming Russia, we should make it clear that Russia's ongoing actions are the sole obstacle to a resolution to the crisis. The evidence of the scale of atrocities continues to mount. We have seen credible reports of bombings of schools and hospitals, as we heard in Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo's comments today, as well as of the killing of aid workers and journalists, the targeting of civilians attempting to flee and the brutal execution-style murder of those going about their daily business in Bucha.

We have also seen the violent abuse and forced deportations of Ukrainian civilians through so-called filtration operations. To date, there is evidence that Russia's forces have interrogated, detained and forcibly deported what are estimated to be hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens, including children — tearing them from their homes and sending them to remote regions in the East. As of May, in one location within a Russian-controlled area of Ukraine, more than 20,000 people were in line for filtration. The process of filtration is slow, with some Ukrainians waiting up to three weeks to be processed. Given the long wait, reports indicate that filtration-centre employees and people awaiting filtration were selling places in line. The United States has information that officials from Russia's presidential Administration are overseeing and coordinating filtration operations. Russia is also using advanced technology to facilitate filtration processes, including for the purpose of collecting data on Ukrainians undergoing filtration. In 2021, officials within a Russian-controlled area of Ukraine formulated a draft list of more than a dozen proposed locations for filtration operations, including reinforced police stations.

Let me put this in plain terms. Russia is tearing families apart. It is sending children to remote regions far from their homes. It is forcibly replacing people's passports and attempting to impose its own identity over the national identity of Ukrainian citizens. It is expanding this horrific operation with blatant disregard for the principles of national sovereignty.

Despite the disinformation that Russia peddles in this very Chamber, no one believes Ukraine is doing any of that to itself. Every member here has borne witness to the atrocities, and we will not forget. Each and every atrocity deserves accountability. The awful consequences of the conflict — the millions of Ukrainians who have been forced to flee their homes for neighbouring countries or other parts of Ukraine, the disruptions to food and other essential supplies, the war crimes and atrocities against civilians and the resulting trauma — will end only when Russia ends the war. Until that fateful day, the rest of us have a duty to stand up, to say that enough is enough and to defend the Charter of the United Nations, which we have all pledged to support.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates): At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo for her informative briefing. I also welcome the participation of the representative of Ukraine in this meeting.

More than five months into the war, United Nations figures reveal a staggering humanitarian crisis. Nearly 16 million people need assistance and more than 12 million have been forcibly displaced, including approximately two thirds of Ukraine's children. As the battlefield expands, a growing number of people whose movement is limited due to age, illness or disability are caught in the midst of the heaviest fighting. The war's devastating toll continues to be felt outside Ukraine, as it exacerbates food shortages and commodity-price increases, and thereby threatens the lives and livelihoods of people around the world.

Against this difficult backdrop, we would like to express three key points. First, the protection of civilians remains paramount. Recent fighting in urban areas risks homes, schools and hospitals with damage and destruction. The last several weeks witnessed numerous examples of the destruction of civilian infrastructure, often with reports of heavy civilian casualties. There are increasingly worrying reports that this trend will escalate. Parties must heed their obligations under

international law, including international humanitarian law, and refrain from targeting civilians and civilian objects and avoid placing military objectives in or near civilian areas.

Secondly, the war's impact on global food security only adds to the urgency of confidence-building measures that could pave the path towards broader agreements. In this context, while we welcome the deal agreed in Istanbul on exports of grain, foodstuffs and fertilizers and praise the invaluable role played by the Secretary-General and the Republic of Türkiye, we are disappointed that the Security Council could not unify behind an endorsement of the deal. Unfortunately, positive developments in this conflict have been exceedingly rare. It is all the more critical, therefore, that when progress does occur, this body should find a way to respond with a single voice.

For its part, the United Arab Emirates believes that the agreement is a step in the right direction. But the measure of its success will be its full implementation and its utilization for further constructive international engagement, including by the United Nations.

Thirdly, this crisis has put this institution and its Charter under strain. While the prospects of meaningful Security Council action on Ukraine appear limited, it remains crucial that we defend the principles of the Charter and seize every opportunity to bring about a peaceful resolution. It is also critical that we recognize that upholding the United Nations Charter means ensuring that the Council continues to work to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in Ukraine and on every file on its agenda.

As we have said before, only an end to the war will put a stop to the devastation it has wrought. This means a negotiated resolution that produces a sustainable peace. And as we have frequently said, achieving that requires women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all peace efforts. It is essential that women's leadership and involvement take place not only at the end of a conflict, but also in the design and implementation of conflict-resolution processes.

As the fighting unfortunately continues, the parties and the international community must work to limit the suffering inflicted in Ukraine and its ramifications beyond. Still, we know that important progress can be made through dedicated and pragmatic diplomacy. It is

vital that we encourage, nurture and facilitate dialogue and de-escalation whenever and wherever possible.

Mr. De Rivi re (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank the Ambassador of Ireland for her contribution to the work of the Security Council since the beginning of last year and wish her all the best for her next mission with great warmth and friendship.

We are entering the sixth month of the conflict. Russia continues its unjustifiable and devastating war. It is concentrating its efforts on eastern Ukraine, subjecting such cities as Poltava, Kremenchuk and Bakhmut to indiscriminate artillery shelling. Attacks on schools and hospitals continue. The conflict has already killed nearly 350 children and injured 560 others.

Russia is responsible for this devastation. It has premeditated its aggression against a sovereign State in flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter. As demanded by the International Court of Justice in its order of 16 March, Russia is legally obliged to immediately suspend its military operations. By acting aggressively against Ukraine, not only is Russia undermining the security of Europe, but it is also calling into question the fundamental principles of international law.

France denounces the forced Russification of the zones occupied by the Russian army. The substitution of Russian names for Ukrainian names in cities and neighbourhoods, the granting of Russian citizenship to newborns, the introduction of the ruble and the modification of school curricula are all clear signals of Russia's intentions. France will never recognize Russia's control or annexation of Ukrainian territories.

This war of aggression runs the risk of an unprecedented world food crisis. Russia is solely responsible for the worsening of the world food situation. In this context, the progress made in Istanbul on 22 July is a first step. France thanks the Secretary-General and T rkiye for the key role they played in those negotiations. The commitments that have been made must be kept and implemented without delay. What the world needs now is for ships to circulate in the Black Sea and for grain to reach those who need it. No sooner had the ink dried on these agreements than Russia launched an attack on the port of Odesa, followed a few days later by new strikes on Mykolayiv. To claim that these bombings do not undermine the effective launch of the mechanism agreed in Istanbul is a further lie.

The French position is very clear: it is necessary to continue to support Ukraine by all means, be they military, humanitarian or financial. France is devoting \$2 billion to economic and humanitarian support for Ukraine. It welcomes the Lugano conference on reconstruction. It is ready to provide this support in the long term.

France remains resolutely committed to supporting the efforts of the Ukrainian authorities and the international courts to bring those responsible for the large-scale abuses to justice. In this regard, it has provided technical assistance to the Prosecutor General's Office of Ukraine and actively supports the activities of the International Criminal Court.

France once again calls on Russia to immediately cease hostilities, withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory and fully respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It will continue to stand by the sovereign Ukrainian nation in its courageous and unrelenting action to defend itself.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, like other speakers, I would also like to bid farewell to Ambassador Byrne Nason, Permanent Representative of Ireland, and thank her for her contribution to the work of the Security Council. I wish her all the best in her new post.

The Ukraine crisis has been dragging on for more than five months now. The crisis has not only had a serious impact on Europe, but its negative spillover effect is also reverberating globally. In a world affected by wars and sanctions, the impediment to the exportation of food and fertilizer from Ukraine and Russia is not only posing a challenge to global food security and aggravating the plight of vulnerable developing countries, but it is also making it more difficult for the international community to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promote a stable recovery in the world's economy.

We are pleased to see that last week in Istanbul, with the joint efforts of the relevant parties concerned, Russia, Ukraine, T rkiye and the United Nations signed an agreement on shipping grain out of Ukraine and that Russia and the United Nations signed an agreement on the export of Russian food and fertilizers. Currently, a Joint Coordination Centre, with the participation of the four parties, has been established, and the preparation is progressing smoothly for the first shipment of grain out of Ukraine. That brings hope for easing the food

shortage and the suffering of the poor in developing countries and for alleviating the global food crisis. China welcomes that. China commends Secretary-General Guterres and all the parties concerned for the positive role they played.

The signing of the two agreements shows that, as long as we do not relent in our efforts, there is still room for the parties to resolve problems through consultation. We are encouraged by the efforts of Russia and Ukraine to transcend their political differences for constructive engagement. We also hope that the two parties will continue to maintain dialogue and communication, strive for an early return to diplomatic negotiations and achieve a ceasefire as soon as possible.

The issue of grain shipping is very complex. It is quite common to encounter difficulties of one kind or another in implementing an agreement. The parties concerned should adhere to their political will, uphold the spirit of cooperation, strengthen communication and coordination and properly address the challenges so that they can jointly promote the implementation of the agreements, get it off to a good start and push it forward continuously. The international community should see the signing and implementation of the two agreements from the humanitarian perspective, reject politicization, create a favourable environment for the follow-up implementation of the agreements and provide solid guarantees.

Since the outbreak of the Ukraine crisis last February, China has been taking an objective and impartial approach and proceeding from a historical perspective and the merit of the issue itself. China has been standing on the side of peace and of humanitarian efforts, calling for a ceasefire to stop the fighting, facilitating a cool-off period, actively promoting peace talks and providing humanitarian assistance. China has put forward a six-point initiative and the international food security cooperation initiative to ease the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. China provided two batches of humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, totalling 15 million yuan, with an additional 20 million yuan in emergency humanitarian aid to be provided in the near future. We undertook our efforts in a responsible way to mitigate the spillover effect of the crisis and alleviate its impact on the global industrial chain and supply chain. We will continue to play an active, constructive role in stabilizing international trade and the world economic order.

China's position on the Ukraine issue is consistent and clear and will stand the test of history. We have always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the legitimate security concerns of all countries be taken seriously, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be abided by. All efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis should be supported. We have stated China's position many times in the Council recently, and I would like to emphasize three points today.

First, the Ukraine crisis shows that the security of all countries is indivisible. Only by attaching importance to the security of others and safeguarding the security of everyone can our own security be truly realized. All countries should uphold a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security concept, attach importance to each other's legitimate security concerns, build a balanced, effective and sustainable global and regional security architecture and jointly safeguard world peace. Putting one's own security above that of others, attempting to strengthen military blocs, establishing absolute superiority and even shaping the surrounding environment of other countries according to their own standards will lead only to conflict and confrontation, divide the international community and make themselves less secure.

Secondly, the Ukraine crisis shows that the evolution of changes not seen in a century is accelerating and our world is facing increasing instability and uncertainty under the intertwined impact of war and the pandemic. In an era of changes and challenges, no country can deal with them alone and no country is insulated. At a time when the international community is in dire need of unity and cooperation to overcome the difficulties together, it is extremely irresponsible and dangerous to cling to the Cold War mentality and bloc politics, promote decoupling, erect barriers and politicize, instrumentalize and weaponize economic and trade exchanges in order to coerce other countries to take sides and deliberately create division and confrontation. The international community should be highly alert to that counter-current and resist it together. We must not let the crisis of Ukraine trigger a new Cold War. We must not repeat the mistakes of history. We must not let humankind experience once again the unbearable scourge of war.

Thirdly, the crisis in Ukraine shows that only by adhering to the purposes and principles of the United

Nations Charter can we enjoy peace and development, and any deviation from that will bring about only conflict and anxiety. As the legal cornerstone of today's international order, the United Nations Charter is irreplaceable in its role and unshakable in its status. Compliance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter should be consistent, with words matching deeds, instead of saying one thing while doing another, not to mention double standards or selective application. While a certain country has repeatedly emphasized the principle of sovereignty over the issue of Ukraine, it has incessantly challenged the sovereignty of China over Taiwan and even deliberately created tensions in the Taiwan Strait. That is a disregard for, and an infringement of, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. China has always respected the sovereignty of other countries, and certainly hopes that its own sovereignty will be respected by other countries. China is resolute and firm as rock in its will to safeguard national sovereignty. No one should underestimate the determination and ability of more than 1.4 billion Chinese people to defend its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. I hope that the country concerned will clearly see that and not play with fire.

Mr. Agyeman (Ghana): Let me begin by joining you, Mr. President, in expressing our appreciation to our colleague Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason for her impactful work in the Security Council, including on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which we worked on together. I wish her the very best in her next endeavours. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for the timely updates on the security and the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. I warmly welcome to this meeting all rule 37 and rule 39 participants.

Ghana deeply regrets the unrelenting hostilities several months into the start of this needless conflict in spite of the mounting civilian death toll and the extensive destruction caused to economic infrastructure, cultural sites, monuments and livelihoods.

We also continue to worry deeply about the expanding humanitarian threat as more civilians, particularly children, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities, come under the barrage of crossfire and are forced to flee their homes or to shelter in bunkers with limited access to food, clean water and basic services.

As we have forcefully stated previously, infrastructure and livelihoods could potentially be rebuilt after the war, but the tragic reality is that the human lives lost to this senseless conflict cannot be recovered.

It is for that reason that we wish to use this opportunity to renew our call on the Russian Federation to stop this war and to heed the international community's call to unconditionally withdraw all its invading troops from the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine.

In making that genuine call on the Russian Federation, we are mindful of, and acknowledge, the stated security concerns, which, we believe, could be effectively addressed by a pacific settlement, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations, through intense diplomacy, underpinned by unconditional dialogue and a commitment to cooperation. The solution required is certainly not a military one, but a consensual political settlement that takes into account the security concerns of the parties and assures the stability of the entire region.

We are concerned about the persisting inability of the Council to support the parties' engagement in substantial discussions about urgent ceasefire and peace initiatives despite its obligation under the Charter to shoulder the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The current situation affects the Council's reputation and undermines its credibility as an effective arbiter in other conflict theatres.

In the light of the Council's handicap, Ghana encourages and affirms its steadfast support for the continued deployment of the good offices of the Secretary-General in the international endeavour to bring an end to the war and facilitate a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Ukraine.

Ghana commends the Secretary-General and other leaders, especially those of Türkiye, for the positive engagement of the parties to the Ukrainian conflict, culminating in the landmark agreement on the initiative on the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports, signed in Istanbul on 22 July. We also welcome the memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat on promoting the access of Russian food products and fertilizers to world markets.

Ghana takes note the official inauguration of the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul and remains confident of the prospect of a swift and effective implementation of the agreements in order for commercial operations to resume in the Black Sea and contribute substantially in helping to stabilize the international prices of food and fertilizers, which are currently priced beyond the capacity of many consumers and users.

These are difficult times for Ukraine, and we are pained by the traumatic circumstances that the people of Ukraine have been forced into by the war. The mental impact, especially on children, is likely to have devastating consequences for several years to come. In that connection, humanitarian efforts should focus not only on the physical needs of the affected civilians, but also on their psychological needs and emotional health, as the damage of the war will result in long-lasting psychological trauma.

In conclusion, I would like to remind all actors, including the parties to the conflict, that the protection and safety of civilians should drive our efforts to facilitate a peaceful settlement of the conflict. As a Council, we have an urgent and collective responsibility to invest in the peace of Ukraine and avoid actions that reinforce the security concerns of the parties and serve only to perpetuate a needless war.

Mr. Raguttahalli (India): I also join others in extending our best wishes to the Permanent Representative of Ireland, Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason, for her future endeavours. I thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her briefing on the situation in Ukraine.

India remains concerned about the situation in Ukraine. The conflict has resulted in lives lost and untold misery for its peoples, particularly women, children and the elderly, with millions becoming homeless and forced to take shelter in neighbouring countries. Reports of deaths of civilians in the ongoing conflict are deeply disturbing. We reiterate our grave concerns in that regard.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine, India has consistently called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and an end to the violence. India has called upon both sides to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue and has expressed its support for all diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. We believe that no solution can be reached at the cost of innocent lives. Our Prime Minister has spoken to the Presidents

of Ukraine and Russia on multiple occasions and reiterated India's position.

The impact of the Ukraine conflict is not limited just to Europe. The conflict is exacerbating concerns about food, fertilizer and fuel security, particularly in developing countries. It is necessary for all of us to adequately appreciate the importance of equity, affordability and accessibility when it comes to food grains. Open markets must not become an argument to perpetuate inequity and promote discrimination.

In that context, we welcome the recent development towards ensuring the safe and secure export of grains and fertilizers. We hope that those agreed measures will be implemented by all parties earnestly, even if they may not be sufficient to address the food insecurity concerns.

India is committed to working constructively to mitigate the adverse impact of the conflict on food security. India has been providing financial assistance and supplying food grains to countries in order to meet their food security needs, at the request of their Governments. India has exported more than 1.8 million tons of wheat to countries in need, including Afghanistan, Myanmar, the Sudan and Yemen in the past three months. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also acknowledged that the export of wheat from India has emerged as a key supply line for Yemen in the wake of the Ukraine conflict. We are continuing to help our neighbour Sri Lanka to ensure its food security.

We are trying to increase the production of fertilizers in India. There is also a need to focus on the availability of fertilizers and keep the supply chains of fertilizers smooth at a global scale. Similarly, efforts should be made to ensure stability in the global supply of fuel, commensurate with the demand.

We reiterate the importance of the United Nations guiding principles for humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian action must always be guided by the principles of humanitarian assistance — humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Those measures should never be politicized.

We continue to reiterate that the global order is anchored to international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for territorial integrity and the sovereignty of States.

Ms. Syed (Norway): Let me also, on behalf of the Norwegian delegation, join others in thanking Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason for her excellent companionship — both in running for and in the Security Council itself over the past years. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her updates on the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, and in particular its impact on the lives of the Ukrainian people.

The Charter of the United Nations prohibits aggression and the acquisition of territory by force. As this war on Ukraine continues, it inflicts a terrible, cumulative harm on the civilian population, undermining prospects for peace and security. More than five months of Russian invasion and violence has created wounds that will take generations to heal. Russian attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure have continued to intensify in many areas across Ukraine. Recent attacks in Chasiv Yar, Kharkiv, Kramatorsk and Vinnytsia, have left scores of civilians injured or killed. And people all over Ukraine, including in Kyiv, continue to live in daily fear of the next attack. We reiterate our demand that civilians be protected and international humanitarian law and international human rights law fully respected and implemented.

The Russian aggressors' disregard for human rights continues to shock the international community. We are deeply concerned about reports that Russian forces have tortured prisoners of war and unlawfully detained, tortured and forcibly disappeared civilians in occupied territories. There are ample indications of war crimes being committed. Those crimes cannot be forgotten. Perpetrators — at all levels — must be held accountable.

We have seen some hope amid the bleak outlook. Norway commends the Secretary-General for his contribution to the essential initiative on the safe transportation of grain and foodstuffs from Ukrainian ports. We also commend the Republic of Türkiye for facilitating the negotiations and subsequent signing ceremony on 22 July. That initiative will be essential to easing global food insecurity and building trust between the parties — but it must be implemented.

The entire world was shocked by the Russian missile attack against the Ukrainian port of Odesa the very next day after the signing of the initiative. Norway stands together with Ukraine and echoes the clear

condemnation by the Secretary-General of Russia's attacks against Odesa.

The war in Ukraine is a human crisis purposefully created by Russian leaders. They bear the responsibility to end this war. They must end the suffering, both for the Ukrainian people and for all people around the world impacted by the consequences of Russia's actions. We demand the immediate cessation of hostilities by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the full and immediate withdrawal of the Russian forces and military equipment from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders and territorial waters. We also support all sincere efforts towards political dialogue, negotiations and mediation.

In May, the Council expressed its unified support for the efforts of the Secretary-General in the search for a peaceful solution. Those efforts are more important than ever as the accumulated effects of the war are felt by the people of Ukraine and beyond. We therefore encourage the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to support dialogue between the parties in the search for a peaceful solution and peace for the people of Ukraine.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to wish our friend the Ambassador of Ireland every success in undertaking her new responsibilities in Washington, D.C. It has been a pleasure working with her.

I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing, and we welcome those representatives present at this meeting in accordance with rules 37 and 39 of the rules of procedure.

For slightly more than five months, we have heard various interpretations of a confusing narrative that fails to justify the war in Ukraine. From the beginning, my country's position has been very clear with regard to upholding Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that all Members shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. What is happening in Ukraine is a flagrant violation of the Charter. The free and self-serving interpretations of the right to self-defence set out in Article 51 of the Charter, which set a dangerous precedent, are also very worrisome. My country has systematically condemned such conduct in various contexts for many years.

In addition to the blatant affront made against the Charter and my country's own constitutional principles of foreign policy, there have been recurrent violations of international law, including the norms of international humanitarian law. The attacks against commercial and residential areas continue, and the toll that has been exacted on the civilian population is deplorable. On 14 July, an attack in Vinnytsia left more than 20 civilians dead, including a number of children. That was preceded by the 9 July attack on Chasiv Yar, in which another 48 civilians were killed. A total of 5,000 civilian deaths have been verified, but the actual number is undoubtedly greater.

As long as hostilities continue, the protection of civilians and humanitarian aid must be prioritized. The parties must observe the principles of distinction and proportionality and take all the necessary precautions to protect both the population and civilian infrastructure. Specific priority measures that must be taken include the accurate and timely dissemination of information and warnings; the evacuation of civilians to safe locations; building shelters; the enabling of, and providing access for, civil protection organizations; and the non-use of weapons with indiscriminate effects in densely populated areas.

Our repeated call is unequivocal: international humanitarian law must be respected, without exceptions. The humanitarian dimension of this conflict has reached tragic and regrettable proportions. It is estimated that there are already close to 16 million people with humanitarian needs of various kinds, many of them very critical.

The world paid close attention to the agreements signed in Istanbul on 22 July. Mexico recognizes the commitment and effort made by both parties — Russia and Ukraine — to reach those agreements, as well as the diligent facilitation efforts of the Government of Türkiye. We commend the vision, initiative and impetus given by Secretary-General António Guterres, as well as the outstanding work of his mediation team. Just as we welcomed his good offices in presidential statement S/PRST/2022/3 of 6 May, today we express our appreciation and reiterate our support for him in continuing the delicate work of seeking new pathways to move forward in bringing peace to the region.

Moreover, it is regrettable that the Security Council has not been able to welcome the so-called Black Sea agreements, notwithstanding their extreme significance,

as they represent the first concrete measures to address the global food crisis looming over, and posing a threat to, many regions throughout the world and show that, even in the middle of a war, dialogue is possible.

It is certainly also very regrettable that, a few hours after the signing of the agreements, Odesa was targeted by missile attacks. The agreements are nevertheless in force and have begun to be implemented, which is a very important step forward, the importance of which cannot and must not be underestimated. The safe passage of grain, fertilizer and related products to global markets represents a lifeline for the millions of people depending on it who are living in food insecurity and could fall victim to starvation.

While Istanbul has sent us a sign of encouragement, the complete cessation of hostilities must be our actual goal. In the immediate future, openness, dialogue and genuine commitment will be required from both the parties concerned and the international community to end the war. Mexico reiterates its belief that the only way to achieve that outcome is through diplomatic channels, which involves continuing the mediation work provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. We therefore urge the Secretary-General and his team to ensure the continued implementation of the agreements that were reached.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): I join others in thanking Ambassador Byrne Nason for her stalwart and eloquent defence of international peace and security during her tenure on the Security Council and elsewhere. We will miss her.

I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing.

First, we join others in welcoming the 22 July deal agreed in Istanbul to export the grain trapped by Russia's blockade of Odesa and other ports. We commend the role of the United Nations and Türkiye in brokering that solution. The agreement is undoubtedly important. Its implementation is now vital so that Ukrainian farmers' grain can once again be baked into bread in markets and sent to tables around the world and enable the World Food Programme to address pressing famine conditions, including in Somalia and Ethiopia.

Secondly, we cannot forget the record of Russia's atrocities and crimes in the more than five months since Russia invaded Ukraine. Before the ink had even dried on the 22 July grain agreement, Russia brazenly

attacked the port of Odesa. That latest attack follows others — breaches of international humanitarian law in Bucha and Irpin, the attacks on civilians in the Mariupol theatre, the Kramatorsk train station, the Kremenchuk shopping mall, apartment buildings in Chasiv Yar and Vinnytsia and the widespread torture and abuse of detainees, including women and children, as identified by Human Rights Watch and the Moscow Mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The video this week of the castration of a Ukrainian prisoner of war by Russian soldiers is an illustration of Russia's barbarism and criminality.

Thirdly, Russia has violated the Charter of the United Nations and breached its obligations under that Charter. For five months, Russia has been engaged in an illegal invasion of another Member State, in breach of its Charter obligations and in complete disregard of resolutions of the General Assembly and the orders of the International Court of Justice. The preparations for sham referendums in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia are the most recent examples of Russia's breaches of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity. We therefore continue to demand that Russia end its invasion, withdraw from Ukraine and uphold its obligations under the Charter.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In the month that has passed since the last Security Council meeting on Ukraine (see S/PV.9080), we have made significant progress in achieving the objectives of the special military operation.

With the capture of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk, the Russian armed forces and formations of the Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics have completely liberated the territory of the Luhansk people's republic. A systematic offensive in the Donetsk people's republic is continuing. A total of 255 settlements have been liberated in both places, and it is only a matter of time before the people of the Donbas regain control of the entire region. There are videos all over the Internet showing the people of liberated Lysychansk taking to the streets to meet the Russian military and the people's militias with Saint George's ribbons and Russian flags in their hands. We suggest that everyone who in the past few months has grown sick of Ukraine's propagandistic fairy stories about Russian troops allegedly terrorizing the local population should watch that footage and see the reactions of real people and their tears of joy when they can at last leave their shelters and no longer fear the Ukrainian nationalists. The restoration of the

liberated areas is in full swing. Thanks to our efforts, peace is returning to Mariupol, where centralized water and electricity are being restored. Construction has begun on a main water pipeline in the Luhansk people's republic, and on a multifunctional medical facility in Luhansk itself.

The cruelty of the Ukrainian nationalists and their indifference to the residents of southern and eastern Ukraine have had a serious impact on the mood of residents. In the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions people are standing in line to apply for Russian passports. Despite the Ukrainian authorities' efforts to do their utmost to intimidate their citizens by committing acts of terror against civil administration employees and launching criminal prosecutions against those who switch to Russian citizenship, the people are continuing to choose the country they trust and opting for a normal future for themselves and their children. Ukraine is losing those people by the minute, just as it previously lost the people of the Donbas when the Kyiv regime waged a war of annihilation on them in 2014.

The Kyiv regime is trying to exact vengeance even on its own military personnel, who have realized the futility of carrying out their criminal orders and surrendered in order to have a chance at redemption and a peaceful life. This morning a detention centre near Olenivka in the Donbas was struck by missiles from a United States-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, killing more than 50 Ukrainian prisoners of war. However, such scare tactics will only encourage Ukrainian servicemen to surrender. We are seeing multiple cases daily of soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces refusing to continue fighting.

The changing attitude of the people of southern Ukraine that I have just described is largely attributed to the fact that the Ukrainian armed forces have continued to employ their favourite tactic of using civilian infrastructure as cover and deployment sites for heavy equipment. Dozens of eyewitnesses have confirmed the reports of the Kyiv regime's treatment of its people, and unlike the so-called witnesses from Ukrainian and Western investigations, they do not conceal their names and addresses. They also confirm that Ukrainian armed forces are targeting civilian objects and shooting at civilians, actions they later try to present as those of Russian troops. Staged incidents, such as notoriously occurred in Bucha, are being increasingly refuted, and that is almost impossible to ignore. It is only our Western colleagues who appear

not to notice, and that we have seen with our own eyes even in today's meeting. Our British colleague cited an exhaustive list of such provocations, for which I thank her very much.

In the past month there has been some progress on exports of Ukrainian grain and access for Russian foodstuffs and fertilizers to global markets. Two separate documents, which together constitute a package agreement, were signed in Istanbul on 22 July. I should underscore that we were ready to settle those issues as long ago as April after they were discussed by President Putin and Secretary-General Guterres at their meeting in Moscow. However, Kyiv and its Western sponsors attempted to sabotage the package agreement, emphasizing only the part about Ukrainian grain, although, by our estimates, what is at issue is only about 5 million tons, or less than 1 per cent of the total volume of grain on the global market. We are grateful to the Secretary-General and Türkiye, as they did not agree to do the West's bidding, which went a long way to enabling the agreement to be reached. The signing of a memorandum between Russia and the United Nations on facilitating access for Russian foodstuffs to global markets once again proves how completely unfounded the attempts are to blame our country for the global food crisis, which was artificially created by the actions of Western States, and the signs of which we are seeing more and more clearly.

On 26 July, the Joint Coordination Centre began working to facilitate the safe transportation of grain from Ukrainian ports, with the participation of representatives of Russia, Türkiye and Ukraine and with the coordination of our United Nations colleagues. We hope that the Istanbul agreements will soon begin to be implemented in full and that the Secretary-General, in accordance with his obligations, will do everything possible to remove the obstacles created by the United States and the European Union with regard to the payment, insurance and logistics for Russian cargoes. Incidentally, the deployment of military equipment and facilities in the port of Odesa is hardly conducive to the successful implementation of the grain deal. We will continue to destroy such cargo and equipment, as we did on 23 July, when we destroyed a Ukrainian military ship and a depot of Harpoon anti-ship missiles sent by the United States. Nothing in the memorandum we signed prevents us from continuing to ensure the demilitarization of Ukraine.

Over the past month, the proxy war waged by the West against Russia, which is being fought to the very last Ukrainian, has escalated to new levels. With the initiation of active deliveries to the Ukrainian regime of modern multiple-launch rocket systems, which are being controlled by and used upon Western instruction, Western countries have come close to direct involvement in the conflict. Private Western companies are purported to be willingly providing Kyiv with their satellite imagery for strikes. We have already repeatedly seen how those images are being used for all kinds of staging and provocation. Of course, we cannot ignore that.

As for the weapons supplied to Kyiv and the mercenaries who remain on Ukrainian territory, they will continue to be destroyed by the Russian armed forces as legitimate military targets. The thoughtless pumping of heavy weapons, artillery systems and firearms into Ukraine means that, due to the corruption flourishing among Ukraine's political and military leadership, those weapons are spilling over into Europe. It is well known that a significant proportion of such weapons fall into the hands of smugglers directly from storehouses, with established channels for supplying the global weapons black market.

Information on available weapons is being published almost publicly on certain online sites. The problem has reached such proportions that the leading Western media can no longer gloss over it, and even the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) has been forced to admit it. Last week, its spokesperson, Mr. Jan op gen Oorth, told the German Press Agency that EUROPOL was aware of reports of heavy arms trafficking and that European law enforcement agencies had information about people leaving Ukraine with firearms. He also stressed that there remains a risk of all such weapons falling into the hands of organized criminal groups or terrorists.

A number of media outlets have been circulating leaked information from the confidential part of EUROPOL's report submitted to the European Council. It notes that criminal networks are involved in smuggling a significant number of firearms and ammunition from Ukraine to European Union (EU) countries. EUROPOL estimates that weapons caches have been set up along the EU's Ukrainian border.

A clear illustration of those conclusions is the result of a joint operation by Hungarian and Slovak law

enforcement agencies to apprehend a criminal group engaged in smuggling weapons supplied to Ukraine. An entire arsenal, including sniper rifles, machine guns and explosives, was found in the Hungarian town of Rajka — an hour's drive from the main international disarmament platform in Vienna. According to one of the detainees, the weapons found were supplied to Ukraine and destined for Ukrainian armed groups, including the Azov Battalion, and were then sold and delivered to EU territory.

I should like to ask our Western colleagues whether they are aware of the consequences of their actions, as we are beginning to doubt it. After all, they are creating a regional — and possibly global — hub for illegal arms deliveries in the centre of Europe with their own hands, thereby creating real risks for their populations at the expense of their own taxpayers. They cannot say we did not warn them about what would happen when the weapons they supplied to Ukraine surfaced, for example, in a conflict zone in a country in another part of the world, impacting United Nations peacekeepers, or in the hands of extremists in Europe itself to carry out a terrorist attack.

All attempts to pump the Ukrainian regime full of weapons will only prolong its agony and increase the suffering of the Ukrainian people, who are being used as cannon fodder by the country's current irresponsible leaders. The objectives of our special military operation will be achieved, no matter how much fuel is poured on the fire in the form of weapons.

In July, our Western colleagues tried to pass over in silence the fact that Ukrainian armed forces were actively using foreign unmanned aerial vehicles laden with explosives to attack the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. As a result of the attack on 20 July, a fire broke out on the site of the plant — only by happy coincidence was it possible to avoid a major accident, the consequences of which would have been felt by all Europeans. I would like to stress that we are talking about an intentional, targeted attack by the Ukrainian armed forces against a nuclear facility — the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. The problem was resolved, and the plant continues to operate normally under the control of the Russian military.

What shocks us most about that entire incident is the monstrous hypocrisy demonstrated by Western countries, which did not deign to even comment on that reckless provocation by the Kyiv regime. Yet, at Security

Council meetings back in March, they were whipping up hysteria around the alleged radiological threat supposedly created by the Russian military's shelling of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, despite the fact that the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency had publicly denied its existence.

Frankly, that is highly reminiscent of the criminal blindness shown by Western countries when they were covering up Kyiv's failure to implement the Minsk agreements for seven years. It is tragic that the same blindness and double standards are now being demonstrated by the leadership of the United Nations. Such an irresponsible approach only encourages the Kyiv regime to take further steps that undermine nuclear security on the continent.

I would like to draw the attention of Western delegations to the fact that their long-range artillery is allowing the Ukrainian armed forces to reach areas far into Donbas and killing civilians without any military logic, purely for the purposes of revenge and intimidation. Schools, hospitals and residential buildings in Donetsk, Kherson, Stakhanov and Horlivka are being deliberately targeted by the Kyiv regime. Almost every day in Donbas, 5 to 10 people die and dozens more are injured as a result of shelling by the long-range systems supplied by NATO countries. The Western and Ukrainian media are the only ones that do not see any of that, but it does not make those crimes any less horrific. By supplying Ukraine with long-range artillery, the West is becoming directly complicit in the war crimes committed by the Kyiv regime.

It is especially painful when children are killed by Ukrainian shelling. In the Donbas region, children have been buried regularly for eight years now — ever since the start of the Ukrainian punitive military operation in the region. The day before yesterday, on 27 July, the Donetsk People's Republic held a day of remembrance for child victims of the war in Donbas. On that day, Donetsk residents laid flowers and brought toys to the memorial in the Alley of Angels. During a moment of silence, one could hear a pin drop in the city. That silence was not broken even by the sound of artillery, despite the fact that shelling from the Ukrainian armed forces had been taking place since that very morning.

The date was not chosen at random: on 27 July 2014, Kira Zhuk, who was not even 1 year old, and her mother were killed in Horlivka, near Donetsk, during shelling by Ukrainian troops. I am holding up her

photograph right now. Four other children also died that day. They were all among the first victims of Kyiv's war against Donbas, which has been going on for eight years. The Alley of Angels was built in Donetsk in their memory, with a monument bearing the names of the children killed by Ukraine. There are now 130 names there, including, for example, 13-year-old Anastasia Konopleva, whose photograph I am holding up now. She, along with her brother and sister, died in a shelling attack at their home in 2015. Sadly, that horrific list of names is regularly extended.

Since February, 249 civilians, including 16 children, have died in the Donetsk people's republic alone. I want members to look at the photographs of 10-year-old Veronika Badina, who was killed by Ukrainian shelling in Donetsk on 5 July, and 7-year-old Masha Evtukhova, who was killed on 6 July in a playground with three of her peers. I am deliberately showing the Council these photographs, not only because Ukraine killed them this month but because they, like the three other children, were killed by shells launched from Western artillery systems.

Until the Ukrainian armed forces received those weapons systems, they were simply unable to reach those areas — but now they can. After the Ukrainian armed forces killed five children, one after another, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy did not express his condolences to the parents who lost their beloved children. Instead, he said:

“We finally feel that the artillery we received from our Western partners is working very powerfully. They really are as accurate as they should be.”

I now turn to my American, British and French colleagues sitting in this Chamber. I want them to clearly understand the following. Children are being killed with the weapons that their countries provided to Ukraine, weapons paid for with money from their taxpayers. The President of this country is openly sneering at that and boasting about the accuracy of those weapons. Is that what they were trying to achieve? If not, where is their condemnation of this unheard-of sacrilege? Some in this Chamber probably thought that the Ukrainian regime was killing children in Donbas unintentionally and that their deaths, to use the terminology of our former American partners, was the collateral damage of military activities. I am afraid I must disappoint members on that front.

Here is another photograph. Do members know what this is? This is a remotely activated “petal” landmine. Ukrainian forces now plant lots of these mines in Donbas with the help of cluster munition. It is unique in that it is the size of the palm of the hand. On the ground, it is almost invisible. It looks a lot like a children's toy. It goes off if touched or stepped on. It would maim an adult, but it would almost certainly kill a child. Please answer this question: why drop these fatal toys deep behind the lines in peaceful civilian towns? The answer is obvious. It is to kill as many children as possible. This cruelty might give one pause, but those who were present at our two most recent informal Arria Formula Security Council meetings on Ukraine will understand fully that the roots of the hatred towards those living in the south and east of Ukraine lie in the ideology of Ukrainian nationalism and neo-Nazism. The world will learn many more unpleasant truths about the horrible phenomena that the Western backers of Ukraine prefer to ignore. This is the clear result of their blindness.

Having shown these photos of children, I do not think I need to say anything more. The de-Nazification and the demilitarization of Ukraine will be carried out in full. There must no longer be a threat from this State to Donbas, Russia or to the liberated Ukrainian territories, where for the first time in several years people are finally able to feel that they can live as they choose.

In conclusion, I would once again like to turn to our Western colleagues and tell them that, by supplying long-range artillery systems and multiple launch rocket systems to Ukraine, they are essentially shifting the provisional security line that is necessary for peaceful development of the mentioned regions further west, thereby adjusting the goals and objectives of our special military operation. They should think about that and know that, once it is over, in one way or another they will have to live alongside and cooperate with us. They are now in large part creating the conditions for that stage themselves. Believe me when I say that their readiness to help the Ukrainians kill the children of Donetsk and Luhansk will hardly be forgotten, either by the Ukrainian or the Russian people.

Mr. Kimani (Kenya): The delegation of Kenya wishes Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason great success in her next assignment as Ireland's chief representative to the United States. Ms. Byrne Nason's determination and persistence in pursuit of the

security of the most vulnerable will be missed in the Security Council.

I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, for sharing her assessment of the dire situation in Ukraine and for the efforts that are under way to relieve the humanitarian crisis.

Kenya applauds the leadership of the Secretary-General in facilitating an agreement between Ukraine and Russia to safely export Ukraine's food products using the Black Sea, and also in enabling food and fertilizer exports from Russia. I am sure the entire membership appreciates President Recep Erdoğan and the Government of Türkiye for the key role they played in the negotiations and as a guarantor. Increased exports of food products and fertilizer will bring some relief to the suffering millions across the world. It is also a much-needed victory for the United Nations, at a time when our collective faith in multilateralism is at such a low ebb.

At the start of what we were told was a special military operation in Ukraine, we believed that there was still time for diplomacy to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. More than five months have passed since then, and we are now witness to a brutal war of attrition that shows little inclination to a ceasefire in favour of negotiations. We mourn the terrible suffering it is causing to Ukrainians, and few countries, including Kenya, have escaped its baleful effects.

Unfortunately, we must now additionally contend with the increasingly clear fact that the militaristic energies loosed by the war in Ukraine threaten a new era of major global conflicts. It is right that we should use this briefing and every available platform to sound this warning to the Members of the United Nations, in the hope that it will spur a united resistance to the present course we are on. If we fail to inspire or pressure the warring parties and their allies to the table, then I hope that we shall use the regional and global instruments available to us to find some degree of security.

It is time we also deliberated on responses to the global threats of the situation in Ukraine. The European security order is in ruins. It has been replaced by military-political alliances preparing for war and trying to deter and contain one another. The situation in Europe today is a dire threat to international peace and security. Its great-Power alliances and their projections of power are endangering the stability of the Korean

peninsula and the South China Sea, to mention just two potential flashpoints.

The escalation of the present competition and rivalry can easily escalate into conflict that will lay waste to the world economy and lead to the proxy wars of the Cold War. At a minimum, it will mean that the sea lanes vital for the transportation of goods in our globalized economy will not be open and secure, and that globalization itself, which has been a great engine for development, will grind to a halt or even be reversed.

The race for technological development is more weaponized than ever and part of an emerging contest between great Powers. There is now a great, if not greater, chance of cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence leading to even more destructive wars than being engines for shared prosperity. Their production and procurement, rather than responding to the governance reforms that developing countries have been asked to make for a generation, will now be allocated along geopolitical lines. Meanwhile, a future of extreme political and economic instability, leading to the impoverishment and deaths of millions from the effects of climate change, looms.

Sitting here in the Security Council, it is difficult to argue that our briefings, debates and decisions meaningfully respond to those profound threats to international peace and security. That needs to change so that the world does not turn its back on this hallowed Chamber, which still has useful tools to help relieve, and even solve, some of the challenges I have described.

It is not enough for Kenya to only sound the alarm. We must use the urgency of this moment to take more ambitious and courageous actions to rescue multilateralism and our common peace. To that end, allow me to make five recommendations.

First, the world will believe in the mandate of the Security Council if it can assist in delivering a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and support a lasting settlement that stabilizes the European security order. The Council should do that while respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. As difficult as it is to achieve those goals, they are the minimum required if the Security Council is to be credible and able to take on the other challenges I have outlined.

Secondly, the Security Council must stop being the echo chamber for growing appeals for humanitarian aid

as millions of lives around the world are threatened by extreme food insecurity. The conflict in Ukraine, like the coronavirus pandemic, has proved that distributed production, particularly in Africa, and the developing world, is a key safety net. If the great Powers want to make their case to Africa, they should start by partnering with us to deliver fertilizer independence and gains in our agricultural productivity.

Thirdly, agreeing to meet, and even exceed, the Paris climate commitments at the upcoming twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Egypt, is a minimum deliverable by the industrialized countries. In addition, climate adaptation and mitigation should be a core operating system in the international financial institutions and every Government, to the point that there are fundamental changes to the global financial system and its treatment of debt and investment in the developing world. It should respond robustly to regions suffering extreme climate change effects and that are in need of strong and shared development.

Fourthly, we believe that the useful work that the World Bank has done in situations of fragility, conflict and violence is a promising foundation for action. That work should be strongly coordinated with climate change action, as I have described briefly, and with the peacebuilding agenda of the United Nations. The Bank's development knowledge and resources, coordinated with United Nations humanitarian aid, peacebuilding and peacekeeping knowledge, plus its ground presence, can make real inroads in delivering peace and resilience.

Fifthly, and finally, it is an outcome of a great war that the most powerful States in the United Nations should also be among the greatest shareholders in the Bretton Woods institutions. Even while needing substantial reforms for inclusion, those institutions can still offer ambitious solutions to the major challenges we face. We believe that the Secretary-General's Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance offers a valuable platform for action in the short term. Its recommendations and solutions should receive sufficient financial and operational support and be a bridge to longer-term ambitious reforms and initiatives if we are to save multilateralism and protect our common peace.

I thank you, Mr. President, and congratulate you for Brazil's responsible, professional and skilled presidency for the month of July.

Ms. Byrne Nason (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for your very generous tribute to me at the start of what is my last meeting in this chair at this table. Your remarks were very warm and touching. *Go raibh maith agat*. I would also like to thank all of my colleagues for their kind remarks. I will miss them and will also miss working alongside them in this Chamber. Working alongside them in defence of international peace and security — most of the time, as we do — has been the privilege of a lifetime and career. Again, *Go raibh maith agat*.

On 22 July, Ireland warmly welcomed the signing of the Black Sea grain initiative, which, once implemented, will help reduce pressure on those countries suffering as a result of food supply constraints and high prices. We know that the agreement did not come easily. We commend Ukraine and Russia for overcoming the obstacles necessary to make it possible. We deeply appreciate the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and his team. We also recognize the important contribution of President Erdoğan and the Government of Türkiye to bring the sides closer together. In the words of the Secretary-General, the agreement is a ray of hope in a world darkened by global crises.

In the past year, global food prices have risen by nearly one third, and up to 95 million more people, many of whom were already enduring hunger exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, conflict, disease and the global impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, could be plunged into acute food insecurity as a result. We urge the full and immediate implementation of the initiative. Simply put, it could not be more urgent. That is why the Russian attack on the port of Odesa less than 24 hours after the agreement was signed was particularly cynical. We condemn that reprehensible act outright. All parties made clear commitments to ensure the safe movement of Ukrainian grain to global markets to help address the global food crisis, reduce pressure on high prices and ease the suffering of millions, including in places already devastated by hunger, such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Lebanon. We urge all sides to act in good faith and to implement their commitments without delay.

Ireland has been crystal clear since joining the Security Council on the irrefutable link between

conflict and hunger. We encourage those who have been reluctant — I would say unwilling — to recognize this link to think again, reconsider their position and look at this global crisis.

While we welcome last Friday's agreement, we must not forget why this agreement was needed in the first place. For more than five months, Russia has waged an unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine in violation of international law — a war that is an absolute affront to the Charter of the United Nations. Most of us here dedicate ourselves every day to protecting and promoting the Charter. The Charter is our touchstone. This war is a violation of that precious Charter. With each passing day, new harrowing testimony emerges. Innocent men and women are targeted by gunfire while evacuating to save their own lives. Children are condemned for life to relive the indiscriminate bombing and shelling of their homes, schools and playgrounds. Elderly Ukrainians speak of being brutalized and starved in their own homes. Across the country, civilians are being targeted, displaced and dying as a consequence of a war not of their making in any way.

Just this month, a Russian cruise missile hit civilian areas of Vinnytsia in central Ukraine, killing at least 22 people and injuring more than 100. Among those reported to have been killed was a 4-year-old girl with Down syndrome. That is absolute depravity. That is not Russia's first attack on Ukraine's towns and cities, as we know too well. However, it speaks to a worrisome trend of attacks on civilian targets that appear to have just one goal in mind: to intimidate and terrorize the civilian population. Let me be clear: those responsible for such attacks must be held to account.

Across Ukraine, attacks on civilian infrastructure have also left millions without access to basic health services, including water, electricity, gas and adequate shelter. We have all seen the images, and we have read the reports. Women are giving birth in bomb shelters and hospital basements, with no electricity for incubators. That is unconscionable. Children are at imminent risk of being cut off from safe drinking water. Families are forced to flee due to fear of bombardment and war or because the lack of electricity and heat in their own homes has made them unliveable. Needs are expected to grow as long as hostilities continue, promising to exacerbate an already dire humanitarian situation as winter now soon approaches.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under international law. Full stop. Parties to the conflict must comply with international humanitarian law, including the obligation to distinguish between civilians and combatants and to attack only military objectives, the prohibitions against indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks, and the obligation to take all feasible precautions in attack. I have said it before, and I will say it for the last time: compliance is not optional. We urge the parties to facilitate full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need of life-saving assistance and medical support.

Russia alone bears responsibility for this war. Russia alone can end it. It is high time. I call on the Russian Federation once again to put an end to this needless suffering, comply with its obligations under international law and to withdraw all its forces unconditionally from the entire sovereign territory of Ukraine.

Mrs. Ngyema Ndong (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): On behalf on Gabon, I would also like to extend to departing Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason my wishes for success in her new role. It was a real pleasure to work together with her on the issues discussed in the Security Council.

We listened very closely to Ms. DiCarlo's update on the situation in Ukraine, and I would also like to make a few remarks.

As the war in Ukraine will soon enter its sixth month, Gabon would like to welcome the Black Sea grain initiative signed last Friday in Istanbul. The agreement, signed under the auspices of the Secretary-General and facilitated by the Government of Türkiye, will make it possible — we hope — to meet the grain needs of many countries, particularly African countries, that depend on grain supplies from Russia and Ukraine. This unprecedented event is a testament to what is possible when all parties manage to rise above their differences for a common goal. The rapid implementation of the agreement is essential and will require just as much commitment from the parties to produce the expected results.

The humanitarian consequences of war can and must be stopped. The signing of this agreement is a positive development, and we hope that it will allow us to start new momentum. Gabon encourages the parties to take advantage of this momentum to consider

additional steps to resolve the crisis. The conclusion of a ceasefire seems at once urgent, necessary and within reach, provided that the parties agree to redouble their commitment to achieve that objective.

I wish to conclude by once again expressing Gabon's support for initiatives aimed at a political resolution of the war, in particular the good offices of the Secretary-General.

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

I thank the Permanent Missions of Albania and the United States for proposing this meeting, and I thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo.

This month, we all became aware of military actions in Odesa, Chasiv Yar, Vinnytsia, Chuhuiv, Kharkiv and other Ukrainian cities, which claimed the lives of dozens of victims. Attacks against civilians are unjustifiable under international humanitarian law. We reiterate the call for the parties to act with restraint and prevent further civilian casualties as a side effect of the hostilities. Since the beginning of the conflict five months ago, we have insisted on the need for engagement in constructive and pragmatic dialogue that will limit the immense losses imposed on Ukraine and begin the process of re-establishing peace.

The conflict and its associated sanctions have aggravated disturbing trends around the world. Rising food and fuel prices, as well as the threat of a supply crisis, are hitting developing countries the hardest. The agreement announced last Friday brought with it the hope that political solutions can be achieved. Negotiations between the parties resulted in a concrete response to an urgent problem. The two agreements in Istanbul pave the way for the resumption of exports of grains and fertilizers and the reintegration of the two countries into international markets. We thank the Secretary-General and the Government of Türkiye for their decisive role in brokering the agreements.

Brazil shares the disappointment expressed by other members at the incapacity of the Security Council to reach consensus for the approval of a presidential or press statement. We should, however, welcome the parties' active engagement in the negotiations. We urge both sides to avoid actions that could jeopardize the implementation of the agreements. The insistence on the search for a decisive result on the battlefield will result only in greater destruction.

Although the past few months seem to have downplayed the role of diplomacy in dealing with the crisis, it is precisely in the face of the greatest challenges that we must remain committed to the spirit of the United Nations and devote all our efforts to achieving lasting peace. Let us not be carried away by the impulse to close the doors to dialogue. The Istanbul accords point to a viable path. The immediate resumption of direct negotiations between the parties for the end of hostilities must be the priority of the Council, in order to stop the escalation of violence and avoid the loss of thousands of human lives.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I would like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Before I begin my intervention, I would like to join everyone who thanked Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason for being a good colleague and doing an excellent job. Although she has, for whatever reason, decided to move south, as if it were not hot enough here, the Irish spirit will stay with us. We greatly value the integrity of Ireland, and we look forward to working with whoever replaces her. I thank her very much.

I also recognize here the representatives of terrorist Russia in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

There is plenty of evidence of the terrorist nature of the current Russian regime, and the most horrifying evidence continues to emerge. Yesterday a video was posted in Russian Telegram channels to show a Ukrainian prisoner of war being castrated by his Russian captors — a group of men in Russian uniform, which featured a "Z" patch. Some of the Russian soldiers who appear in the footage were earlier filmed on the front lines in Donbas back in June. After the cruel and inhumane torture, the victim was killed. The Prosecutor-General's Office of Ukraine will investigate the event, and we will inform the Security Council of the outcome of the investigation.

Today Russia committed another petrifying war crime by blasting a penitentiary in occupied Olenivka,

Donetsk region, where it held Ukrainian prisoners of war, mostly from the Azov Battalion. The Russian occupiers pursued their criminal goals in order to accuse Ukraine of committing war crimes, as well as to cover up the torture and executions of prisoners that they carried out there. It speaks volumes that so-called “Donetsk People’s Republic ombudsperson”, Morozova, informed that there were no casualties among the staff of the colony.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Brazilian presidency for organizing today’s meeting. The issue of the Russian war against Ukraine remains as relevant as ever because we observe no de-escalation on the ground and Russia has not given up its aggressive and neo-colonial plans with respect to Ukraine. Moreover, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Lavrov went even further, claiming recently that the “geographical objective” of the so-called special operation had been expanded to a number of other territories. Indeed, it sounded like the base wish of a thief to keep possession of what has been stolen.

One can hardly expect that Russian behaviour in the Council will differ from its behaviour on the ground. It took less than 24 hours for Russia to manifestly go against the aforementioned initiative signed in Istanbul on 22 July and to shell Odesa port with missiles. That is one of three ports it has committed not to attack, according to the document.

As always, Russia contradicted itself in its excuses. Initially, as reported, Russia denied its responsibility for the attack altogether. On the next day, realizing that its outright lie is obvious to everyone, Russia was compelled to change the story. It assumed responsibility; however, by telling another lie that a missile store in Odesa port was the target. That lie was easily refuted by extensive footage from the site, which showed no sign of secondary detonation of alleged Ukrainian missiles. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his unequivocal condemnation of this attack. His clear assessment made futile all Russian attempts to create artificial caveats that the Istanbul documents never contained.

Ukraine remains resolute with respect to contributing to resolving the food crisis. We will engage constructively with the activities of the Joint Coordination Centre, officially inaugurated in Istanbul on 27 July. Now it is the responsibility of international partners to ensure Russia’s compliance

with its obligations within the framework of the safe functioning of the grain corridor. That is the only prerequisite for unlocking more than 20 million tons of grain from last year’s grain harvest in Ukraine. Today President Zelenskyy visited the Chornomorsk Sea Trade Port, where the first grain carrier since the beginning of the war has been loaded with Ukrainian grain. Now we are waiting for a green light from partners — representatives of the United Nations and Türkiye — regarding the start of grain transportation.

It is outrageous that Russia still tries to disseminate fakes instead of fulfilling its obligations. To be frank, a diplomatic note sent this week and signed by the Russian chargé d’affaires should be subject to consideration by medical specialists rather than Security Council members. Let me quote just one sentence from it: “the Russian armed force do not target civilian infrastructure.” Seriously? Does the Russian diplomat believe that the Security Council is the studio of a Skabeyeva show? If it is an early sign of an insanity defence, let it be remembered that the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis during the Second World War were not a result of medical insanity or illness. They were committed collectively by thousands of individuals. Hitler’s henchmen, officers and diplomats, like Putin’s today, worked hard to please and execute the leader’s wish and orders, even if the orders were not easily traceable. Luckily, in the case of that diplomatic note, it is clearly signed in ink, and it will be preserved as evidence.

Since our previous meeting (see S/PV.9080), further bloody and shameful pages have been added to the list of Russian war crimes. They have been added daily, if not hourly. To name just a few examples, on 1 July Russian missiles hit a residential building and two resorts in Serhiivka village, Odesa region, killing 19 people and injuring 34. Forty-eight civilian residents, including a child, were killed following the targeting by Russian missiles of a five-storey apartment building in the city of Chasiv Yar, Donetsk region, on 9 July. On 14 July, the world was shocked by the Russian missile strike on the city centre of Vinnytsia. Twenty-six civilians, including three children, were killed, and almost 90 were wounded. Yesterday Russian terrorists increased the number of casualties among Ukrainians with missile shelling, including from the territory of Belarus, of Kropyvnytskyi, Liutizh in Kyiv region and Honcharivske, in Chernihiv region. Kharkiv and Mykolayiv sustain heavy rocket and artillery shelling

on an almost daily basis. This morning, Russians shelled a bus stop area in Mykolayiv with cluster munitions, killing five and wounding seven civilians. Earlier, many Council members might have seen a heartbreaking picture taken in Kharkiv on 20 July. The picture is of a man praying while holding the hand of his 13-year-old son, who was killed at a bus stop by a Russian Uran missile. Killing innocent children is what Russian murderers call de-Nazification.

Another declared goal — so-called demilitarization — means razing Ukrainian cities to the ground. Civilian infrastructure is among the primary targets. As of June, for instance, the Russian war had led to the destruction or damage of 116,000 residential buildings, which were home for 3.5 million Ukrainians. In 14 Ukrainian regions, 183 religious sites, including 173 Christian, 5 Muslim and 5 Jewish sites, were destroyed. Just visualize how Russian soldiers, blessed by Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, have destroyed almost 200 Orthodox churches in Ukraine. Pictures of Ukrainian children lying on the ground of destroyed Ukrainian cities and villages have been the reality of the past five months of the war. That is a reality that we will never get used to, never accept and never forgive.

Russia has resorted to terrorism to intimidate and to undermine our resolve to resist. To that end, cities and villages throughout Ukraine have shelled with more than 3,000 missiles. The effect, however, is quite the opposite, and Ukrainian society is united in its aspiration to liberate our sovereign territories and to bring all those responsible for the killing and destruction to justice.

Let me quote a person who spent days, months and years in this very Chamber. Despite having presided over the Security Council, that person nevertheless said:

“there is nothing in the obligations that Russia has taken on — including within the framework of the agreements signed on 22 July in Istanbul — that would prohibit us from continuing the special military operation.” That means, in fact, that there is nothing that would deter Russia from killing and destroying.

There is no United Nations Charter for Russia. There are no Geneva Conventions for Russia. There are no more restraints on Mr. Lavrov.

It is time to say it loud and clear to the Russian delegation:

“You are here because we let you be here for reasons that have proven to be wrong. We — all of us — tolerate your presence, just because we need to remind you daily that you will be held accountable for war crimes and that the Soviet seat in this Council will not help you escape the punishment that you deserve, as a State and as individuals in the Russian war cell in Manhattan.”

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Grünwald (Slovakia): Over the more than 150 days since beginning the senseless war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and despite multiple calls by the international community addressed to the Russian Federation to immediately cease its hostilities, severe bombardments of cities and rockets flying over the heads of innocent civilians continue to be a horrific daily reality for the Ukrainian population. These attacks have resulted in a significant increase in civilian casualties — over 12,000 so far, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as a result of which over 5,000 have been killed and 7,000 wounded. Needless to say, the reality is much worse.

In that regard, we have to be reminded of the reason why the Russian Federation started this unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, in blatant violation of international law: simply to deny the right of Ukraine to decide its own future, specifically its right to decide to bring prosperity to the country and well-being to its citizens, who are now forced to live in fear and to see massive destruction of their homes and such critical civilian infrastructure as health and educational facilities. In response, respect for international humanitarian law must be ensured.

We would also like to take this opportunity to once again condemn the Russian propaganda and related distortion of facts and promotion of an alternative reality that the Russian Federation continued to put forward today, including with respect to my country. That is highly deplorable, and we totally reject its allegations. Let me be clear: the identity of the aggressor accountable for this situation is obvious; it is the Russian Federation, which alone can decide to stop this war at once, and we call on it to do so without further delay.

Together with other States and stakeholders, Slovakia already made a commitment to help Ukraine

in its reconstruction and recovery as soon as this nightmare is over. Ukraine will undoubtedly flourish once again, but the blood of victims of this senseless war will be forever dried on the palms of the hands of the Russian Federation.

Speaking of civilians, we must also mention the hundreds of millions of people experiencing acute food insecurity throughout the world. Through its war in Ukraine, the Russian Federation — and the Russian Federation alone — is responsible for aggravating the global food-security crisis.

Slovakia welcomes the agreement reached between Ukraine and the Russian Federation to unblock the Black Sea for the export of grain, which was signed last week, and we praise Türkiye and the United Nations for their efforts and crucial role in reaching this agreement. On the other hand, we were horrified that only one day after signing the agreement, Russian missiles hit the port of Odesa, which can only be considered to be proof of the Russian Federation's total disregard for international law. We urge the Russian Federation to refrain from any additional action with the potential to hamper the implementation of the agreement, which is an important step in overcoming the global food insecurity caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

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

Mr. Camelli: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. At the outset, allow me to join all the praise for Ambassador Byrne Nason. It is very clear that she will be missed in the Security Council Chamber. She will also be missed by her friends in the European Union. We wish her luck in Washington, D.C.

We welcome today's discussions on Ukraine and thank Brazil for organizing this meeting. It is essential that the Security Council remain seized of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her briefing and updates.

I would like to focus my statement on three points. First, I wish to address the continued violations of the United Nations Charter by the Russian Federation. The European Union continues to condemn in the strongest terms the unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine by Russia, aided by Belarus. This

blatant violation of international law, and in particular of the United Nations Charter, is having devastating consequences in Ukraine and around the world. It seriously undermines the international rules-based system that underpins global peace and security and forms the bedrock of the Organization.

As has the overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations, we reiterate our demand that Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, immediately end its war, unconditionally cease all hostilities and withdraw its troops and military equipment from all of the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. We also condemn the announced preparations for a staged referendum in parts of the Kherson region on joining the Russian Federation. The international community will not recognize the result of such an illegal referendum. In response to Russia's aggression, the EU, together with its partners, remains steadfast in its support for Ukraine in its courageous defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Secondly, international humanitarian law must be respected. We condemn the heinous and repeated attacks by the Russian armed forces on civilians and civilian infrastructure. In the past month alone, Russian missile strikes have killed innocent civilians, including children, across most regions of Ukraine. The continued shelling of civilians and civilian objects is unacceptable and amounts to war crimes. Russia bears full responsibility for these crimes and will be held accountable for them. We further urge Russia to allow safe, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access without delay, enabling aid to be delivered to those in need.

Thirdly, and lastly, I would like to highlight the importance of efforts to alleviate global food insecurity. The European Union welcomes the progress announced last week in Istanbul towards ensuring the safe and secure export of Ukrainian grains via the Black Sea ports. We commend the role of Türkiye and the United Nations in facilitating this positive outcome, which has the potential to significantly ease global food insecurity. The European Union has been consistently supportive of these efforts, and we congratulate in particular the Secretary-General, Rebeca Grynspan, Martin Griffiths and their teams for their unrelenting efforts. It is now essential that all parties swiftly and in good faith implement the commitments made. The initial indications that grain cargo ships can already leave port in the coming days gives us hope.

However, we strongly condemn the missile strikes carried out by Russia on the port of Odesa less than a day after the parties signed the agreement and in the following days. This defies the deal reached to allow grain exports from blockaded Ukrainian ports. These attacks demonstrate once again Russia's disregard for international law and the commitments made.

The European Union is firmly committed to supporting the food security of our partners worldwide by increasing our humanitarian assistance, supporting food production and getting Ukrainian grain to world markets. The EU-Ukraine solidarity lanes action plan has facilitated the export of 2,5 million tons in June alone, up from 0.6 million tons in April. We also strongly support the United Nations-led efforts to promote a swift multilateral response in order to address the global food-security crisis. In this context, we are mobilizing over €7.7 billion until 2024 to support the most affected partners around the world, and we are working closely with our member States to further step up these efforts.

I would emphasize, once again, that the EU has no sanctions on the agricultural sector in Russia. EU sanctions do not prevent Russian-flagged vessels from carrying our grain, food or fertilizers to any third country. We are ready to look into such issues as market avoidance and overcompliance, and we will address any concrete obstacles that are raised.

Finally, let us not forget that Russia itself is aggravating the global food crisis with its war of aggression against Ukraine and its repeated attacks against Ukraine's grain fields and storage and transport facilities. If Russia is truly committed to alleviating the situation all over the world, and in Africa in particular, it must immediately stop its war.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the full solidarity of the European Union with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We will continue to provide strong support, including humanitarian, economic, political and military assistance, for as long as it takes. The EU is also firmly committed to demonstrating global responsibility and solidarity in addressing the international impacts of Russia's aggression, especially on the most vulnerable.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Latvia.

Mr. Filipsons (Latvia): I would also like to begin by thanking the Permanent Representative of Ireland for her excellent service in the Security Council.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Baltic countries: Estonia, Lithuania, and my own country, Latvia.

We welcome today's meeting of the Security Council to address the implications of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, including the consequences for the United Nations Charter. We thank Under-Secretary-General Rosemary DiCarlo for her update today.

As is well known, the United Nations Charter prohibits the use of force except in self-defence and in cases when the Security Council has granted an authorization. Russia's unprovoked large-scale attack on Ukraine does not qualify under either of these exceptions and must therefore be considered as use of force in blatant violation of the United Nations Charter. Such actions by a permanent member of the Council shake the foundation upon which the United Nations was built. If Russia's aggression is not stopped and perpetrators are not held accountable, it may induce other actors to follow its path and further erode the international rules-based order. Unfortunately, in the face of such violations, it will always be the civilian population that will pay the highest price.

This week we have entered the sixth month of Russian aggression against Ukraine, aided by Belarus. The latter aid was vividly on display yesterday when a barrage of 25 missiles was launched at northern Ukraine from the territory of Belarus.

Every single day of Russia's war has brought devastation and suffering to the people of Ukraine. Atrocity crimes in Bucha and Irpin, the bombing of a maternity hospital in Mariupol, missile attacks on a busy train station in Kramatorsk and a crowded shopping centre in Kremenchuk have been but a few of the most visible cases of Russia's blatant disregard for human life in its savage campaign against Ukraine's freedom, independence and statehood, as well as its sovereignty and territorial integrity. According to the most recent report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a total of more than 5,200 civilian deaths have been documented in Ukraine. The numbers are growing every day, since new crimes against civilians are discovered and new attacks on civilians are executed regularly by the Russian military.

Make no mistake: Russia's warfare against the civilian population of Ukraine is not a coincidence, nor is it collateral damage. It has been a deliberate and consistent approach in Russia's war aimed at breaking the resistance and spirit of Ukrainian people. Unable to defeat Ukraine on the battlefield, the Russian military seeks to achieve its aims by terrorizing Ukraine's civilian population.

One has the right to ask how it is possible that such actions, which clearly amount to war crimes, are permitted to be systematically carried out for months in direct violation of international law, including international humanitarian law. The answer lies in the sense of impunity that characterizes Russia's approach to its international obligations. Russia must believe that it can get away with its bloody crimes. It should be recognized that this sense of impunity is emboldened each time that members of the international community, including those sitting around this table, fail to condemn Russia's actions and take steps to respond to its aggression.

It is high time for the international community to demonstrate that the norms that have been established over decades to ensure peace and stability, as well as the protection of civilians, including the United Nations Charter, are not empty statements that can be trampled down by dictators and bullies, but ironclad obligations that we are collectively determined to uphold. The only way to achieve this is by ensuring accountability at all levels for atrocities committed against Ukraine and its people.

In this regard, it is of utmost importance to provide all necessary support for the work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine mandated by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the expert missions under the Moscow Mechanism of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as well as in the investigation being undertaken by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine. Justice must prevail. The perpetrators must and will be held accountable.

Last but not least, Russia has added a global dimension to its campaign of terror by deliberately blocking the export of Ukraine's grain in order to cause a global food crisis. This is done with the clear aim to exert pressure on the international community and Ukraine. We welcome the agreement reached in

Istanbul on 22 July to unblock Ukraine's Black Sea grain exports. However, Russia's missile attack on Ukraine's port city of Odesa the very next day after the deal was signed once again proves that Russia cannot be trusted. The international community must closely follow Russia's adherence to the deal and maintain pressure to ensure its implementation.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Ms. Leendertse (Germany) I would also like to thank the Brazilian presidency for organizing this meeting and for this opportunity to speak in the Security Council today. I am grateful for Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo's briefing, which was very insightful. Further, I want to commend the Secretary-General and the Republic of Türkiye for their good offices to ensure, through the Black Sea initiative, the safe and secure export of Ukrainian food.

Germany strongly supports all efforts aimed at providing unhindered access of Ukrainian and Russian grain, foodstuffs and fertilizers to global markets. These products are vital to addressing a worsening global food crisis.

The agreement brokered last Friday in Istanbul by the United Nations and Türkiye offered a faint glimmer of hope for those around the globe suffering the most from the devastating consequences of the war. Yet missile strikes by Russia on the Ukrainian port of Odesa have impaired the full and swift implementation of these agreements. As we have publicly expressed in the strongest possible terms, Germany firmly condemns these attacks, which resulted in at least 19 civilian casualties.

Despite these inhumane strikes, we are seeing hopeful signs that the first batch of grain exports might be able to leave Ukrainian ports soon. And while Russia does not miss out on any given opportunity to distort the facts and blame Western sanctions, there can be no doubt ever that, since Russia invaded Ukraine, food and energy prices around the world have increased, sowing chaos in supply chains, worsening global inflation and inflicting economic and humanitarian suffering on millions of vulnerable people.

While humanitarian needs are at an all-time high, Germany is continuously engaged with its humanitarian assistance, especially through the World Food Programme. The Berlin conference entitled

“Uniting for Global Food Security”, held on 24 June, highlighted the current challenges and the urgency to provide additional assistance as quickly as possible. At the summit in Elmau on 28 June, the Group of Seven stood firm against Russia’s weaponization of grain and provided an additional \$4.5 billion, thereof \$476 million in new commitments from the German Government, to protect the world’s most vulnerable from hunger and malnutrition. My message to the countries and people affected by the repercussions of Russia’s war of aggression is, once and again, that they can count on our full support and solidarity.

We once again call on Russia to stop its aggression immediately. Let us join hands against Russia’s unprovoked and illegal war of aggression, not only in defence of the Charter of the United Nations, but also in the interest of global food security and equitable energy prices. In the end, it is about saving innocent lives in Ukraine, as well as in other parts of the world.

Let me conclude by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your successful presidency in the month of July.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Szczerki (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her informative briefing on the very difficult situation brought upon Ukraine and the Ukrainian people by the aggression of the Russian Federation. The brutal war of attrition that Russia continues to wage against Ukraine, in spite of the repeated appeals made by the United Nations membership, affects us all and is felt in most corners of the world. Poland is appalled by the tragic human impact of the Russian aggression, and will continue its support to Ukraine as long as it is necessary.

Ukraine can count on the genuine and generous support of Polish society, as well as the Polish Government and local authorities. A recent report by the Polish Economic Institute indicates that, just in the first three months of the war, as many as 70 per cent of Poles became involved in helping Ukraine. That is 26.6 million people who opened their hearts to those in need. According to cautious estimates, my compatriots spent close to \$2.2 billion out of their own pockets for that purpose. The total value of assistance for refugees and victims of the war assigned by the Polish authorities and provided by Polish citizens during just the first

90 days of the war amounted to almost 1 per cent of Poland’s gross domestic product.

With its invasion of Ukraine, Russia has violated the most fundamental principles of international law and the obligations that it assumed on the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. We have heard that simple statement of fact several times today and hundreds of times since 24 February. However, it is worth repeating as long as the Kremlin keeps spreading its outlandish pseudolegal justifications for starting, and persisting in, that aggression.

First, what Russia offers to the world today can by no means be defined as an alternative to the rules-based international order, as the Russian authorities claim. Rather, what they are trying to do is to destroy the multilateral system by demolishing the legal principles safeguarding us all from the scourge of war. If Russia is proposing anything, it is not an alternative, but a *Russkij mir* — a model based on imperialism, colonialism, anarchy, the law of force and spheres of influence. Let us have no doubts: such reshuffling is no better deal for the general membership of this Organization. Would we really be better off in a world where there are no laws but the law of force?

Secondly, when a country violates international law, it is difficult for the international community to treat it as trustworthy and dependable. Such a country undermines itself as a genuine party to international agreements and treaties. Just like the rest of the international community, Poland is grateful for the efforts of the Secretary-General and Türkiye, crowned with the grain deal signed in Istanbul on 27 July. We fully support all initiatives aimed at mitigating the food crisis arising from the Russian aggression. However, how can we trust the sincerity of Russia, which, being a party to the agreement, one day signs a deal and, in less than 24 hours, shells an area that is supposed to be a part of it? Such behaviour by Russia amounts to nothing less than an act of self-exclusion. Unfortunately, it speaks volumes about the potential fate of any future peace negotiations. That is why we call on all Security Council Member States to help to secure the implementation of that agreement.

I would like to recall the words of the Polish Foreign Minister, Mr. Zbigniew Rau, who, during the recent accountability for Ukraine conference in The Hague, recalled the concept of civilized nations, to which the Statute of the International Court of

Justice refers. It used to be considered as an obsolete and outdated concept. However, the ongoing barbaric aggression of Russia against Ukraine seems to have revived it and, at the same time, question it, together with the laws and values that we have long considered to be established ones.

It is of paramount importance to ensure that violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law not go unpunished and that justice be delivered to the victims. Poland fully supports the investigations carried out by Ukrainian prosecutors and those initiated by other States by making use of universal jurisdiction or other concepts, as well as the investigation of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

In the name of the United Nations Charter and the rules-based international order, we call on Russia to immediately stop its military aggression, withdraw its forces from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognized borders. We are saying *niet* to a *Russkij mir*.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Massari (Italy): I would like to thank Brazil for organizing this timely briefing. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for her insightful update of the situation on the ground.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, and would like to add some remarks in its national capacity.

Italy welcomes the agreement reached in Istanbul to resume the crucial export of grain from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. Its full, swift and effective implementation is of the utmost importance to the entire international community. It is a key mechanism to ensure access to food and prevent a worse food crisis, especially in the most exposed and vulnerable countries in Africa, the Middle East and South-East Asia, which cannot afford additional risks of famine.

Let me first commend the personal commitment and leadership of the Secretary-General, as well as the action and key tireless efforts of Mr. Martin Griffiths and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan Mayufis and their teams, which proved decisive in reaching the agreement. We also thank Türkiye for its outstanding engagement

to effectively channel diplomatic efforts, while also hosting the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul, which will oversee departures from three Ukrainian ports and the implementation of the provisions of the agreement. We hope that it will also be a positive step towards a wider diplomatic engagement.

While reaffirming its unwavering support to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, Italy stands firm in the strongest condemnation of the unjustified and unprovoked aggression by the Russian Federation. We are profoundly disturbed by the continuing attacks on civilians, including women and children, as underlined by Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo, and by the testimonies and reports of the war crimes, grave breaches of international humanitarian law and serious violations of international human rights law perpetrated by the Russian armed forces.

The global impacts of the Russian aggression are also becoming increasingly evident by the day due to the constraints on agricultural production and distribution. Price rises are exposing developing and vulnerable countries to multidimensional crises, as reported by the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance. Since the beginning of the war, millions of tons of grain have been stuck in Ukraine's Black Sea ports and even targeted by Russian shelling, triggering enormous humanitarian consequences for developing countries, condemning children, women and men far from the front line of the conflict to starvation. We will do everything in our capacity to mitigate, limit and address all the effects that that aggression is having on developing countries all over the world.

While we blame the Russian missile strikes in Odesa the very same day after the signing of the Istanbul agreement and again three days ago, we particularly call on Russia to implement the agreement swiftly, fully and in good faith in order to allow grain exports to quickly resume with the safe and secure passage of ships. Ultimately, to avoid further disruptions in food distribution, we urge Russia to stop the war without further delay.

Italy will continue to actively support global food security, including by building on the effective implementation of that agreement and as the host country and a major partner of the United Nations Rome-based agencies.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Romania.

Ms. Mocanu (Romania): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on steering the work of the Security Council during the month of July, including in deciding to remain focused on the topic of peace and security in Ukraine. I would also like to thank Ms. DiCarlo for her comprehensive and sobering briefing on the latest developments regarding Ukraine.

Romania aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the representative of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in condemning in the strongest terms the violation of the Charter of the United Nations by a permanent member of the Security Council and the blatant attack on the rules-based international order.

A neighbour to Ukraine, Romania has not only “followed closely the ongoing event”, but set in motion a wide range of concrete measures to tackle the consequences of the unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the members of the Security Council of such actions taken in the areas of refugees, food security and accountability.

While the war is entering its sixth month, we have not forgotten our commitment to providing assistance to Ukrainian refugees seeking shelter in Romania. In order to provide predictability for the future of the Ukrainian refugees who enjoy temporary protection on our territory, this Tuesday a national plan for the medium- and long-term integration of Ukrainian refugees in Romania was released by my Government. The plan was put together with the help of partners from the United Nations agencies in Romania, civil society and the relevant ministries.

The plan has the full support of our Prime Minister and highlights Romania’s commitment to helping Ukrainian refugees integrate smoothly in our country and be able to acquire personal independence without feeling all the effects of the war. The areas targeted in the plan are education, health care, employment, housing, childcare and vulnerable groups, while both European and national funds will be employed to implement it.

We commend the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, under the direct and personal guidance of the Secretary-General, as well as the efforts of Türkiye, throughout the past months, which culminated in the signing of the

Istanbul agreements and the inauguration of the Joint Coordination Centre in Istanbul two days ago.

Awaiting the meaningful implementation of the Istanbul agreements, Romania will continue to lend its support to ease food crisis pressures by continuing to facilitate the export of grain via alternatives routes, including land, rail, the Danube River and the Black Sea port of Constanta. So far, 2.7 million tons of Ukrainian cereals have already transited our territory.

Romania hopes that the transport of grain and fertilizers from the Black Sea region to other countries will not be jeopardized. Good faith is essential in upholding and implementing what was agreed, as that is the best way to alleviate the current food crisis, increase humanitarian assistance and support food production. The Russian missile strikes on Odesa’s seaport, a crucial infrastructure for grain export, which took place a day after the signing of the Istanbul agreements, were strongly and widely condemned.

Another dimension of the consequences of the war in Ukraine can be seen in the field of accountability. Almost all available judicial avenues have been activated to address the consequences of the unprovoked and unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. A mobilization of that scale is extraordinary and requires a creative approach to coordinate efforts taking place at the international, regional and domestic levels in order to maximize efficiency.

All initiatives aimed at ensuring accountability must be well balanced so as to avoid duplication of actions, make good use of resources and, not least, protect the interests of the victims, who should not be further traumatized by multiple interviews during investigations and trials.

There is clearly a momentum for international law and international humanitarian law, as the world is more united than ever by the goal of safeguarding the relevance and integrity of fundamental legal norms. Such developments reinforce Romania’s traditional stance on the matter, given that promoting respect for international law is one of the pillars of our national foreign policy.

It is in that spirit that Romania already announced its intention to join the proceedings initiated by Ukraine against the Russian Federation before the International Court of Justice in the case concerning *Allegations of genocide under the Convention on the Prevention*

and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Ukraine v. Russian Federation).

The Romanian judicial authorities have also opened in rem investigations into the crimes against humanity allegedly committed on the territory of Ukraine based on the passive personality principle, in conformity with our criminal code.

To conclude, Romania would like to reaffirm its full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people, while recalling the necessity to uphold the very principles of the United Nations Charter in preserving the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.