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President: Ms. Gatt/Mrs. Frazier (Malta)

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Sierra Leone	Mr. Sowa
Slovenia	Ms. Jurečko
Switzerland	Mrs. Chanda
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Phipps
United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security

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

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Ivor Fung, Chief, Conventional Arms Branch, Office for Disarmament Affairs; and Ms. Karen Kwiatkowski, political commentator.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Fung.

Mr. Fung: I deliver this briefing on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu.

Since the previous briefing on this topic, three weeks ago (see S/PV.9585), the provision of military assistance and transfers of arms and ammunition to the Ukrainian armed forces have continued in the context of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine launched by the Russian Federation in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. According to publicly available information, those transfers have reportedly included heavy conventional weapons such as battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, combat aircraft, helicopters, large-calibre artillery systems, missile systems and uncrewed combat aerial vehicles, as well as remotely operated munitions and small arms and light weapons and their ammunition.

In addition, there have been reports of States transferring, or planning to transfer, weapons such as uncrewed aerial vehicles, ballistic missiles and ammunition to the Russian armed forces and that those weapons have been used in Ukraine. Any transfer of weapons and ammunition must take place within the applicable international legal framework, including, of course, relevant Security Council resolutions.

Reports related to the use of anti-personnel landmines and the transfer and use of cluster munitions in Ukraine are worrisome. As highlighted by the

Secretary-General on the recent International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April, those deadly devices continue to directly threaten people caught up in armed conflict and to contaminate communities for decades to come. I call on Member States to sign, ratify and fully implement the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I also call on all relevant parties to abide by their obligations under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, and not to transfer or use any mines prohibited by its Amended Protocol II.

The influx of weapons and ammunition into any armed conflict can contribute to escalation and presents significant risks of diversion and proliferation even after the conflict has ended. Measures to address the risk of diversion to unauthorized end-users and for unauthorized uses are essential for preventing further instability and insecurity in Ukraine, the region and beyond. Such efforts will also be key to post-conflict recovery. To prevent the diversion of weapons and ammunition, supply-chain transparency and cooperation and information exchange between importing, transit and exporting States is required, as are concrete measures such as marking and tracing, effective accounting and comprehensive record-keeping practices, physical safeguarding of arms and ammunition, customs and border control measures and diversion monitoring and analysis.

The Arms Trade Treaty, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition — the Firearms Protocol — the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and its International Tracing Instrument and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management are some of the international arms control instruments established by States to prevent the diversion, illicit trafficking and misuse of conventional arms and ammunition and regulate the international arms trade. Therefore, their universalization, as well as full and effective implementation, must remain a priority.

Beyond addressing arms transfers, all parties to any armed conflict have a duty to protect civilians in armed conflict and to abide by their obligations under

applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. Parties should also refrain from attacks against critical civilian infrastructure, including energy infrastructure. Since 24 February 2022, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has verified 31,366 civilian casualties, with 10,810 killed and 20,556 injured, in Ukraine. The actual figures are likely to be considerably higher. The vast majority of civilian casualties are a result of the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects in populated areas. The Secretary-General has unequivocally urged all sides to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, as such use is highly likely to result in indiscriminate harm, and to take combat out of urban areas altogether.

I take this opportunity to refer to the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, adopted in November 2022. The upcoming first follow-up conference in Oslo will be a key opportunity for States to work for its full and meaningful implementation, and for States that have not yet done so to endorse the Political Declaration.

Regrettably, the use of armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles is still causing civilian deaths and injuries as well as damage to civilian infrastructure. Just like any other weapons or weapon systems, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles and missiles must not be used in a manner inconsistent with international humanitarian law. Deliberate, direct and indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure violate international humanitarian law. They are unacceptable and must end immediately.

The United Nations will continue working towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in line with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

The President: I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Kwiatkowski.

Ms. Kwiatkowski: I thank you, Madam President, for allowing me to speak. I am a retired United States Air Force lieutenant colonel who began to question the Government that I served in 2002 as I watched my organization within the Pentagon manipulate information to sell an unnecessary and unjustified war, in that case, the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. I want

to make three points concerning how Western supplies to Ukraine continue to be a barrier to peace.

First, Western aid and support has enabled war and opposed peace. It is sent there not for Ukrainians but for a Government in Kyiv that was initially chosen via a United States State Department and Central Intelligence Agency-influenced coup in 2014, in order to militarily confront Russia. That proxy embraced a kind of Ukrainian nationalism that relied heavily on Ukrainian Nazi ideology. Nazism is publicly rare and always condemned, but in Ukraine it unified the kind of people who would do what the United States and NATO desired. History was therefore forgotten, truth was ignored, and Ukrainian culture was denigrated — because a proxy war to weaken Russia politically and economically was desired by some in the West. United States senators and NATO leadership continue to celebrate that so-called good investment.

Western assistance in weapons, surveillance and intelligence, as well as diplomatic help, enabled eight years of Kyiv's assault on the Donbas. The Russian military response, while no doubt violent, deadly and in violation of international law, reminds me of several United States military operations I supported when I was in uniform — except that when the United States invaded, we discovered later that we were not really there to stop a war, liberate anyone, increase their freedom or ensure their prosperity. Without that Western aid and assistance, along with the unabashed United States and NATO hatred for Russia, the Minsk treaties might have been more fully adhered to, and peaceful agreements might eventually have progressed — without war, bringing the blessings of peace and trade.

Secondly, Western arms shipments have turned the Ukrainian military into a massive Rube Goldberg machine. What could have been a coordinated and deeply supplied Ukrainian defence operation became reactive, overly complicated, chaotic, even idiotic. That was predictable. Odd quantities of weapon systems, some defensive, others offensive, many of which required Western maintenance and intelligence inputs, have continued to be used in ways that are wasteful and tragic. Major United States and NATO weapon systems have been lost by deploying them in battle operations where they cannot be fully utilized, maintained or coordinated. We have seen tragedy and loss of life on both sides, but the aid-dependent and logistically impaired Ukrainian Army has become a slaughterhouse for Ukrainian men and a disaster for

their family members, more than 10 million of whom now live outside Ukraine and may never return. Kyiv's frantic demand for more troops to throw at the front is itself a direct result of past Western military assistance.

Western aid — the billions delivered in military and financial assistance — put Ukraine in a position where it did not seek peace two years ago, last year, or earlier this year, and where it cannot seek peace today. Why is that? The West, particularly the United States, has cultivated a dependent satrap in the permanent presidency of Mr. Zelenskyy. As a result, a single rushed visit to Kyiv by former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was capable of extinguishing a very good possibility of peace in the late spring of 2022, without a single thought for what might come later. The West's so-called investment has reduced United States and NATO stockpiles, and it has also reduced Kyiv's ability to negotiate directly with Russia. Western leaders see what they have spent and insist on some sort of return — they do not wish to lose their deposit, so to speak. In effect, the West-by-proxy Ukraine refuses a settled peace under the sunk-cost fallacy.

Thirdly, as billions of dollars in weapons, munitions, supplies and money entered Ukraine, we observed another Rube Goldberg problem — this time with Government accountability. Where does that equipment go, and which bank accounts are fattened? We know, as does INTERPOL, that small arms and other supplies were diverted around the world, some immediately on arrival in Ukraine. Ukraine had been known as the most corrupt country in Europe, something that leaders in the West certainly took advantage of when it suited them. Two years into the war, with half of Ukraine's army dead or missing, we hear stories of widows being sent bills for their deceased husbands' uniforms, to top off already unbearable grief. Yet Kyiv, like the counties surrounding Washington, D.C., appears to be living well, with luxury cars and stores seemingly untouched by the war. The United States is said to be completely financing the Ukraine's Government sector, and that is visible in Kyiv, as my friend Anatol Lieven observed last summer during his visit there. Western aid to Ukraine has accelerated poverty and devastation for the bulk of the population, and has widened the gap between rich and poor throughout Ukraine.

There is yet another problem with the massive Western aid to Ukraine. It is jealously viewed by other NATO members, as they look over the horizon towards some sort of inevitable peace. The massive new United

States military bases being built in Romania and Poland echo the base-building spree the United States embarked on in the Balkans in the late 1990s and later in the Middle East. Does the United States' cash flow to Ukraine truly make sense to Poland, Romania and other NATO members? Western aid has created division in NATO, which has increased the risk of escalation, and silenced common sense and peaceful voices.

What do Ukrainians themselves want? Zelenskyy was overwhelmingly elected five years ago because he promised peace and an end to the war in the Donbas. The West wasted Zelenskyy's mandate and reversed his every promise. He now begs for dwindling dollars and unavailable weapon systems, arrests people for exercising their right to free speech and for practising journalism, shuts down political parties and churches and has suspended the upcoming presidential election. As we note the lack of recruits, the shocking decimation of Ukrainian men, and the large Ukrainian diaspora that will never return home, it is safe to say that Ukrainians who once voted for peace want it more than ever today.

But instead of what most Ukrainians want, they are getting more weapons. Thousands of Iranian machine guns, sniper rifles, rocket launchers and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition confiscated by the United States were sent to Ukraine just last week. Will that patchwork of loose weapons help Ukraine win? No, it will not.

To summarize, Western military aid and money sustains the Ukrainian Government and subsidizes its foreign policy. Haphazard Western and NATO aid and the odd set of western military advisers in country complicated and confused Ukrainian military operations and got more people killed. Former Congressman Ron Paul used to say, "Foreign aid is taking money from poor people in rich countries and giving it to rich people in poor countries." While that is not always the case, this sentiment defines the Ukraine project perfectly. Western war aid has ended Ukrainian democracy, divided the Ukrainian people physically and spiritually, impoverished them and warped their economy. Matthew Hoh recently addressed this organ (see S/PV.9585), and he accurately — and horrifyingly — explained the abject devastation to people and the environment done by our Western assistance. We now have the Ukrainian Government, presumably with United States and NATO aid and assistance, trying to blow up the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant — in order to create an even more monstrous environmental disaster than that created by

expired United States cluster bombs and minefields that litter the land. Conditions for a peaceful resolution have existed for over two years now, yet Western aid continues to prolong the war and make it more difficult for Ukrainians to ever return to their homes.

We see the deliberate destruction of life, property and liberty in Ukraine. The United States Government and NATO blames Russia for all of this, confusing correlation with causation. I believe that the causation was perfidious Western cheerleading for a proxy war that should never have happened, for reasons yet unexplained, beyond a pressing need for just one more member of NATO.

To stop a bleeding wound, one must be still, remain calm and apply a strong bandage. The United States and NATO, like an arrogant Nurse Ratched in the insane asylum, looks at a bleeding Ukraine and says, “Do not be still, fight harder, die more bravely, we will send more money and more weapons.” No one in Ukraine or most of the rest of the world believes that this is good advice, because it is not good advice. I thank the Council for hearing this message and for working, as individuals and nations, for peace.

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

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

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): For some reason, I do not see our colleagues from the European Union who usually sign up in droves for meetings on Ukraine that are convened at the request of our Western partners.

For at least 10 years, there has been an ongoing methodological influx of Western weapons to the Kyiv regime. At first, that was done secretly, under the cover of the Minsk agreements, and the corresponding Western activity was not advertised and even denied. Now, however, all this has been brought to the surface and is no longer being concealed. Thanks to high-profile journalist investigations, we have learned that immediately after the anti-constitutional coup in Kyiv in 2014, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) deployed an extensive network of intelligence centres in Ukraine directly on the Russian border.

Once the special military operation began, this provocative — to put it mildly — activity began to be portrayed as a noble cause, in defiance of basic logic.

Indeed, what is wrong with arming one State against its neighbour for many years and encourage an openly hostile policy against it? After all, that is the customary practice of colonizers, who for decades have pitted neighbours against one another in Africa, Asia and Latin America, arming them and profiting from their wars. The colonizers did not invent anything new in the twenty-first century. Today Ukraine is their victim and Russia is their target. That is the real subtext of the Ukrainian crisis, which reached the hot phase in February 2022.

We have explained many times why we were compelled to begin the special military operation. Those who wished to hear us have heard us, and those who do not will never hear us. Today, however, even our Western colleagues are now using the word “unprovoked” far less frequently to describe our actions. Given what we have learned and seen over the past two-plus years about the Western role in the Ukrainian tragedy, such statements simply do not stand up to scrutiny.

In fact, today the collective West has completely different concerns, foremost of which is to keep afloat the Zelenskyy clique, which is rapidly losing power in the country and is facing a clear military defeat. Weapons, equipment and ammunition available to Ukraine’s leader have long been squandered and although it is becoming increasingly difficult for Western sponsors to help him and turn a blind eye to his actions, Western weapons are still flowing in. At the same time, Western elites are finding it increasingly difficult to keep silent about the rampant corruption in Ukraine, the lack of oversight and accountability with regard to the supplied equipment and ammunition and, consequently, the grave risks of their falling in the hands of terrorists. They are trying to drown out this unsavoury truth by arguing that arms supplies are helping Ukraine defend its independence in the face of Russian aggression.

Is that the truth? What does present-day Ukraine, which the West has been shaping into an “anti-Russia” for 10 years now, really want? We all remember how, exactly two years ago, after organizing an inhumane and mendacious provocation in Bucha, Ukraine — under pressure from its Western sponsors — squandered its obest opportunity for peace ever since the time when Zelenskyy trampled on the Minsk agreements. Western sponsors assured the Kyiv regime that, with their support and weapons, Ukraine could defeat Russia. The Kyiv leader clung to that delusion until recently, when

he changed his rhetoric, announcing that Ukraine will lose without Western weapons and more meaningful intervention. Subsequently, the West also revised its goal. The new goal is to prevent Russia from winning. I am talking about this in detail in order to illustrate the conclusion of many experts that it is Western arms supplies that is preventing the Ukrainian conflict from ending in peace. That is what our briefer, Ms. Karen Kwiatkowski, just spoke about.

If Ukraine had wanted peace, it would have achieved it long ago. Our justified and reasonable demands to our neighbour, which lie at the heart of the special military operation, are well known, and Ukraine is perfectly able to meet them without compromising its sovereignty and statehood. Germany was able to end Nazism and Japan, militarism, without those States disappearing. Why then can Ukraine not do this, why can it not cease to discriminate against the Russian language and its speakers, in strict keeping with European values?

The answer to that question is very simple. Washington, London and Brussels do not need a Ukraine that is friendly with Russia. And it is not for such a Ukraine that they have been investing in it for the past 10 years. As a result, as it is losing on the battlefield, Ukraine is turning into an openly terrorist State. Allow me to elaborate.

We have said on many occasions that the Armed Forces of Ukraine are carrying out attacks on civilian objects in Russia thanks to supplies of Western-made artillery shells and long-range rockets. In the first quarter of this year alone, the Armed Forces of Ukraine fired 22,000 rounds of ammunition, claiming the lives of 201 civilians. But that information does not appear in the Western media, and it has not been condemned by our Western colleagues in the Chamber. Suffice it to recall the targeted shelling, on New Year's Eve, of population areas in Belgorod with the use of Czech-supplied multiple-launch rocket systems. That did not result in any criticism from the West.

But Ukraine wants more and has therefore turned to the tactic of terrorist attacks. That is how the Kyiv leadership is trying to divert public attention from the catastrophic state of Ukrainian troops on the front line and to prove to Western sponsors its ability to harm Russia. We have all heard about the Kyiv regime's crimes, including the murders of the journalist Darya Dugina and the war correspondent Vladlen Tatarsky, the bombing of the Crimean bridge and the downing

of an aircraft carrying Ukraine's own prisoners of war. However, the heinous terrorist attack on 22 March in Crocus City Hall in Krasnogorsk occupies a special place on that list.

Today I would like to share with members the preliminary results of the investigation of that attack. The main thing I want to single out is that even at this early stage there can be no doubt about Ukraine's direct involvement in that revolting and inhuman crime, and that all the evidence enables us to trace those who ordered it to Kyiv. Let me remind the Council of the chronology of events. A Russian band was scheduled to perform at Crocus City Hall on 22 March. Four terrorists carrying firearms broke into the building right before the performance, at 7.58 p.m. On their way to the auditorium they fired at point-blank range on innocent concertgoers, shooting them in cold blood. Once in the concert hall itself, they set fire to the seating and continued shooting indiscriminately. After 13 minutes they fled, leaving behind some of their weapons. As a result of the attack, 137 people died at the site and seven more died later in hospital. More than 500 were injured. After fleeing the scene, the perpetrators all tried to reach the Ukrainian border, but they were promptly detained within a few hours. They admitted their guilt when questioned and said that they were promised 1 million roubles each for carrying out the terrorist attack. At the moment, the criminal proceedings have identified 11 people as being involved in the crime.

Some indisputable facts emerged immediately, testifying to the "Ukrainian connection" and the terrorists' unquestionable links to the Ukrainian secret services. In particular, according to the perpetrators' testimony, they were supposed to proceed to an area near the State border in Bryansk oblast, at which point they were to set fire to their vehicle in a wooded area and inform their contact, who would ensure their crossing into Ukrainian territory and get them to Kyiv. Incidentally, there was a similar escape plan for the murderers of Darya Dugina and Vladlen Tatarsky. The investigation was also able to access data from the suspects' phones that contained information incriminating the Ukrainian security services. It is also in possession of data confirming that the attackers received significant sums of money and cryptocurrency from Ukraine that they used in preparing the crime.

There is also evidence that the Kyiv regime has long been cooperating with and using Islamist radicals for its purposes. We know that there is a recruiting

operation at the Ukrainian Embassy in Dushanbe for mercenaries willing to join Ukraine's International Legion. The perpetrators of the terrorist attack in Crocus City Hall and their accomplices are also mainly of Tajik origin. In connection with those facts, Russia's Ministry for Foreign Affairs has transmitted to the Ukrainian authorities demands under the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism for the immediate arrest and extradition of all persons involved in those terrorist acts.

It is particularly notable that literally one hour after this horrific tragedy occurred, Washington and a number of other Western capitals began vehemently denying Kyiv's involvement in the terrorist attack. That began even before the preliminary results of the investigation arrived and at a time when no charges had been made against Ukraine yet. Immediately afterwards Ukraine also pre-emptively hastened to deny any involvement, while Zelenskyy and his entourage blamed the Russian authorities entirely for the incident. "It is not us", they always say. "It is not us shelling the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant, it is not us bombing peaceful neighbourhoods in Russian cities — it is them, it is Russia, it is a false flag operation". It is hard to imagine a greater blasphemy.

What happened next is utterly incomprehensible. Washington and its closest allies — who have still been unable to find out who was responsible for the Nord Stream explosions in September 2022, right under their noses — began very nervously and insistently imposing on everyone a narrative that it was Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that was behind the attack. A video soon appeared in which its Afghan cell, Wilayat Khorasan, claimed responsibility for what had happened, and which needless to say instantly became the only version put out by Western media. Right now, despite the indisputable evidence of the Kyiv regime's involvement, they are still trying to convince us that it was not Kyiv that ordered the terrorist attack and that it was perpetrated exclusively by adherents of a radical Islamic ideology. Perhaps someone really wants us to believe that, but there are a number of significant facts that do not fit.

First, the mere fact of ISIL's admission that it was involved does not speak to its true responsibility. It has already tried to take credit for "others' achievements", apparently in attempts to reassert itself as an influential player. For example, in 2017 it claimed responsibility

for the explosion of a locker in a grocery store in Saint Petersburg. However, it soon emerged that the explosion was carried out by a mentally unstable person who had nothing to do with Islamists.

Secondly, the character of the crime is inconsistent. Radical Islamists do not commit crimes for money but are guided by their profound world views and beliefs, no matter how inhumane they may be. In doing so, they do not try to save themselves and usually blow themselves up. After all, as a reward for their deeds and their excruciating death, their recruiters promise them that they will reach paradise and eternal bliss. In the case of Crocus City Hall, we saw the cowardly criminals try to escape in the hope of a new life as their reward. It does not take an expert to see that they are in no way radical extremists. On top of that, the video I mentioned was clearly made by amateurs who have no concept of Islam or Islamist ethics.

We cannot ignore the fact that against a backdrop of such ferocious attempts to put the blame on ISIL and protect Kyiv at any cost, regardless of the outcomes of the investigation, the involvement of Western intelligence services in the preparation of the terrorist attack remains an open question, especially since shortly before 22 March the embassies of a number of Western countries put out recommendations for their citizens that they should avoid visiting crowded places in Moscow, especially concert halls. Questions also arise about information on the extremely close cooperation between the Central Intelligence Agency and British intelligence with the Security Service of Ukraine, whose leaders have repeatedly bragged about it. We very much hope to receive answers to all those questions that will address our concerns. In particular, Russia's investigative committee has revealed that the money for organizing terrorist attacks on our territory has come through commercial companies, including the oil and gas company Burisma Holdings, which operates in Ukraine, and of which the not-unknown Hunter Biden has been a board member since 2014. We hope that our United States colleagues will provide us with all the necessary explanations on the matter. We also hope that our Western colleagues will cooperate with us on catching the people who ordered the terrorist attack at Crocus City Hall and bringing them to justice, as well as on punishing those responsible for the terrorist attacks on Nord Stream, which all our Western colleagues unequivocally condemned, just as they did the terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall.

The Kyiv regime clearly has no intention of abandoning its terrorist essence. Just the other day, for example, we thwarted a blasphemous attempt to import 27 improvised explosive devices into Russia camouflaged as Orthodox icons and church vessels. When the car was inspected the total weight of the explosives was found to be 70 kilogrammes of hexogen — enough to destroy a five-story building. It is terrifying to think what might have happened had it not been for the Federal Security Service's highly professional work. The chief of Ukraine's Ministry of Defence intelligence directorate, Kyrylo Budanov, and the head of Ukraine's Security Service, Vasyl Malyuk, have openly and repeatedly announced Kyiv's acts of terror against Russia and the corresponding plots.

To sum up, this is what I want to say to our Western colleagues. In their Russophobic rage, by allowing their brainchild, the Kyiv regime, to do anything it wishes, they have created a monster. And its activity is no longer limited to Ukraine itself, where Zelenskyy's clique, having usurped power and suppressed dissent, has unleashed lawlessness on its own citizens, openly mocking the memory of the victims of German Nazism and glorifying its henchmen. Its terrorist tentacles are now clearly visible beyond the borders of Ukraine, and if today the problems related to that are reaching Russia, that does not mean that they will not emerge somewhere else tomorrow, given that the Ukrainian leader has already lost touch with reality and is clearly incapable of effectively assessing it. They never know whether their Frankenstein may turn on them too in its impotent rage, born of its inability to turn the tide on the battle front in the face of imminent defeat. They have supplied it with enough arms and everything else to do that. Nor should we forget that in destroying itself, it is taking them and what remains of their reputation down with it. They should remember the prophetic words that the President of Poland uttered from the General Assembly rostrum during the high-level week at the United Nations in September (see A/78/PV.4). The sooner they realize that and rein in their Ukrainian clients, the better it will be for them. It is already a matter of months, if not weeks.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing and take note of Ms. Kwiatkowski's remarks. I also welcome the participation of the Ukrainian delegation in today's meeting.

At the outset, I want to reiterate that the international support for Ukraine's efforts to safeguard its people and territory is entirely legitimate, because Ukraine is exercising its inherent right to self-defence against Russia's illegal invasion, a right enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. In that regard, the request by the Russian Federation, which began this brutal war by invading Ukraine, for convening today's meeting on the issue of weapons transfers to Ukraine, is irrelevant. Rather, a more relevant topic for today would be the military cooperation between Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Just yesterday, the General Assembly held a debate on Russia's veto of the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see A/78/PV.68). The veto was cast because Russia did not like the fact that the Panel was shedding light on a dark area for Russia, which is North Korea's illegal supply of ammunition and ballistic missiles to it. The Panel of Experts' recent report (see S/2024/215) stated that it was investigating reports of the arms dealings between Pyongyang and Moscow.

As the war in Ukraine enters its third year, we stand at a pivotal juncture, faced with the choice of upholding our shared principles and global norms or descending into a vicious cycle of escalating violations. Tolerating the erosion of international law and the Charter of the United Nations sets a dangerous precedent, promoting the rule of power over the rule of law. Those repercussions are compounded by the fact that it is a permanent member of the Security Council that is violating the golden rules governing international relations for decades. In that regard, we strongly urge the Russian Federation to choose adherence to the Charter and to international law — from which it has also benefited — by withdrawing its forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. For its part, the Republic of Korea will continue to stand with the Ukrainian people until they achieve a just and lasting peace in their lands.

Mr. Phipps (United Kingdom): I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing this morning.

Russia requested this meeting to yet again talk about the proliferation of weapons to Ukraine. Let us therefore be clear about who is doing what and who is breaking international law and undermining the Charter of the United Nations.

As we are all aware, Russia has repeatedly violated Security Council resolutions by procuring weapons from North Korea and Iran to use in Ukraine. Russia has bought several dozen ballistic missiles and millions of artillery shells from North Korea that have been used in attacks on population centres across Ukraine. Russia has procured thousands of Iranian Shahed drones and has used them in a campaign against Ukraine's electricity infrastructure, intended to beat Ukraine into submission by depriving its civilians of power and heat. Of course, Russia has tried to hide its behaviour by vetoing the extension of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which has provided scrutiny of North Korea's attempts to evade sanctions and advance its weapons programme. As many of us said in the General Assembly yesterday (see A/78/PV.68), the veto cast by Russia undermined the global non-proliferation architecture and the Security Council. Russia listens neither to the Council nor the General Assembly. Instead, let me urge North Korea to stop supporting Russia's unprovoked, neo-imperialist war of aggression against another sovereign State.

Of course, Russia does not care about arms control either. In addition to weapons from North Korea and Iran, it has used Kinzhal hypersonic cruise missiles, dual-capable ballistic missiles, cluster munitions, landmines and countless other weapons from its arsenal. While it may be stripping kitchenware to make those missiles, it is nonetheless inflicting suffering on civilians across Ukraine. More than 40 per cent of Ukraine's electricity infrastructure has been destroyed, and the International Criminal Court has now issued new indictments against Russian military leaders for its campaign of strikes against numerous electric power plants and substations in Ukraine.

What Russia wants is complete freedom to intimidate, coerce and kill the people of Ukraine. We are talking here about unchecked aggression. The Council was created because the world learned the lessons of the first half of the twentieth century — that countries cannot be allowed to invade their neighbours and subjugate their peoples. In that same spirit, global support is helping Ukraine defend itself by providing it with air defences to protect its cities and its people and with weapons to fight back against the Russian army — an army that has been responsible for summary executions, for torture, for rape and for the atrocities committed two years ago in Bucha.

Any country that cares about the Charter, the sovereignty of States and the sanctity of human life should support Ukraine. The United Kingdom will remain by Ukraine's side as it fights against Russia's aggression. We will continue to replenish Ukraine's air defences and provide the weapons needed to defend Ukrainian territory. We will do whatever it takes, for as long as it takes, to ensure that Ukraine wins.

Of course, Russia could stop the war tomorrow if it withdrew its forces from Ukrainian soil. Instead it has begun another round of conscription — rounding up its young people and sending them to fight and die in a war of choice. Currently around 1,000 Russians are being killed or wounded in Ukraine every day. Russia has already suffered 350,000 casualties. This is a tragedy for Russia too.

The Russian delegation has told us countless lies about the war in the Council, but the truth is that today's meeting is perhaps a new low. If I have understood correctly, we heard today from the Russian Ambassador that Ukrainians are Nazis acting under the cover of Islamic State, while simultaneously being led by a democratically elected Jewish president. That is quite the combination, and frankly, it is preposterous.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing and take note of Ms. Kwiatkowski's contribution.

Guyana remains deeply concerned about the tragic human toll of the conflict and its devastating impact on regional stability and international security. Each time the Council meets on this topic, the reports of civilian casualties grow ever more alarming. At yesterday's meeting (see S/PV.9600), we heard that the war has claimed the lives of more than 10,000 civilians. It is equally alarming that civilian infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, continues to be targeted in a manner that disregards the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. As a result, the scale of humanitarian needs in Ukraine continues to rise, with more than 14.6 million people — about 40 per cent of the country's population — in need of multisectoral humanitarian assistance. Guyana deplores the attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure and calls on the parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law.

That is why Guyana is extremely concerned about the issue of weapons transfer. We share the view that the supply of weapons and ammunition in any situation

of armed conflict has the potential to further escalate or prolong the violence and entails a risk of diversion. We call on all parties involved in the transfer of arms to the conflict zone to ensure that the transfers are done in compliance with the relevant disarmament instruments and Security Council resolutions. We further call for controls to prevent their irregular transfer.

As we heard yesterday, the territory of Ukraine has become a veritable minefield. It is now considered one of the countries of the world most contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war. It is worth recalling that mines and explosive ordnance pose a threat to the lives and well-being of civilians, preventing them from accessing critical infrastructure. They also contaminate agricultural land, thereby contributing to food insecurity in the country. Since Ukraine is a major grain exporter, that can also contribute to global food insecurity. As a State party to the Arms Trade Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, among others, Guyana deplores the use of such weapons and urges full compliance with international law and international disarmament instruments and obligations.

In conclusion, Guyana maintains that the only effective means of preventing further escalation or instability in Ukraine and the broader region is to end the war, and to end it through peaceful means. We therefore call for an end to the hostilities and for the parties to commit to a political and diplomatic process aimed at ending the conflict.

Mrs. Chanda (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Fung, of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs. I have also taken note of Ms. Kwiatkowski's remarks.

The last meeting of the Council on today's subject (see S/PV.9585) took place less than a month ago. Switzerland's position remains unchanged. Russia's military aggression against Ukraine violates fundamental principles of international law. We reject any attempt to justify that act, and once again call on Russia to suspend its military operations, as the International Court of Justice ordered more than two years ago. The Charter of the United Nations obliges all of us to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. We also want to emphasize that Ukraine has a right to ensure its security and defend its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

As we heard at yesterday's briefing on Ukraine (see S/PV.9600), the war continues to wreak havoc on the civilian population. The daily attacks all over Ukraine are claiming new victims and exacerbating humanitarian difficulties, not least because of the damage and destruction to essential infrastructure. Switzerland condemns all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. We call on all the parties to respect international humanitarian law and ensure the protection of the civilian population and other non-combatants.

With regard to arms transfers, we reaffirm that it is essential to respect the multilateral conventions and instruments in that area, including the resolutions of the Security Council. We reiterate our dismay at the apparent disregard for applicable resolutions exhibited in past and current illegal arms transfers from Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to Russia. We regret that the use of a veto two weeks ago (see S/PV.9591) ended the mandate of the Panel of Experts supporting the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which investigates this issue.

Finally, all our efforts are needed to achieve a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, in accordance with the Charter. Justice is an essential element of peace. Switzerland attaches great importance to advancing efforts to ensure accountability for atrocities committed in Ukraine.

Mrs. Shino (Japan): I thank Mr. Fung and the other briefer for their presentations.

Yesterday in this Chamber we discussed the humanitarian crisis caused by Russia's aggression against Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations (see S/PV.9600). Today Russia has once again criticized the international community's just and legitimate support for Ukraine while Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues. It is totally unacceptable that the aggressor should criticize defence efforts. The core fact remains the same. Russia is an aggressor in violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

We would like to reiterate Japan's clear position on Russia's repeated nuclear rhetoric. As the only country that has ever suffered atomic bombings during a war, Japan will never accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone any use of nuclear weapons. The catastrophe of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. In addition, we once again condemn in the strongest

possible terms the transfer of weapons from North Korea to Russia, in violation of Security Council resolutions. We continue to monitor closely what North Korea is gaining in return. Let me also draw the Council's attention to another clear violation of its resolutions publicly announced by both sides — a transfer of a Russian-made automobile from Russia to North Korea.

As we have stressed many times, peace in Ukraine must be based on the Charter of the United Nations. That is something that Member States agree on. To allow Russia to remain in the territories of Ukraine that it is temporarily occupying would be to allow the status quo to be changed by force. It is an outright challenge to the international order based on the rule of law, and any attempt to distract the world's attention would not change that reality. That is why we reiterate that Russia's immediate and unconditional withdrawal is the prerequisite for peace. We continue to stand with Ukraine and uphold international law.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretariat for its briefing.

Only 24 hours ago, we met (see S/PV.9600) to discuss the plight of civilians⁴ in Ukraine. Everyone will remember the devastating toll of Russia's strikes against civilians, residential areas and Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Against that backdrop, no one will be fooled by Russia's latest attempt to shift responsibility for the war. But since Russia has once again — for the fourteenth time — wished to raise the issue of arms deliveries, we must once again point out the facts.

It was Russia that chose to start this war, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, when it took the initiative to launch a large-scale aggression against Ukraine, a sovereign State that was not threatening Russia. It is Russia that has chosen to keep this war going for over two years. It is up to Russia to put an end to the conflict, without prejudice to its security. All it would have to do is cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine, as demanded by the International Court of Justice as early as 16 March 2022 and as called for in numerous General Assembly resolutions.

Let us not forget, on the topic of arms transfers, that Russia has chosen to purchase arms and munitions from North Korea. To conceal that fact, Russia has seen fit to veto the renewal of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), which is tasked with verifying compliance with the sanctions. Russia thus chose to attack the

international non-proliferation regime in order to continue its illegal war of aggression and to use its status as a permanent member of the Council to reward a State that violates Council resolutions. Russia has also obtained supplies from Iran, which has delivered thousands of drones, used in attacks against civilian populations in Ukraine since the start of the war, in violation of resolution 2231 (2015). We are concerned about allegations of ballistic missile transfers from Iran to Russia, which would represent an unacceptable escalation and cannot go unanswered.

We will not allow Russia to continue, with impunity, to attack the very foundations of the international order based on law, which is our common good. Allowing Russia to achieve its objectives would send a disastrous signal to all States tempted to revise borders by force.

That is why France, along with its partners, decided to provide political and military support to Ukraine. We will stand by the Ukrainian people and Government for as long as necessary. We do so to enable Ukraine to exercise its right to self-defence, as provided for in Article 51 of the Charter. We do so to help Ukraine preserve its security, independence and territorial integrity. We do so to give it the means to enter into negotiations, when it so decides, that lead to a just and lasting peace, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and international law.

Mr. Sowa (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this briefing. Let me also thank Mr. Ivor Fung for his briefing. We also note the contribution of Ms. Karen Kwiatkowski.

As the Security Council convenes once more to deliberate on matters relating to the conflict in Ukraine, with this meeting focusing on the supply of arms, it is regrettable that the conflict now spans over two years and remains a matter of serious global concern. After two years of death, destruction and suffering, the focus must now be on peace.

Sierra Leone takes note of the differing perspectives presented on the supply of arms, prolonging the conflict, with claims, on the one hand, of the transfer hindering potential peace initiatives and, on the other hand, the cited imperative to protect civilians and self-defence.

Given the prevailing circumstances, Sierra Leone underscores the importance of adhering to international legal frameworks in all weapon transfers. We reiterate that for any transfer of weapons in conflict situations

to take place, it is necessary to conduct pre-transfer risk assessments and end-user verification in order to prevent the diversion of arms and ammunition. In essence, any transfer of weapons must occur within the applicable international legal framework, including all relevant Security Council resolutions.

We continue to reiterate the risks and costs associated the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which has led to a significant loss of life, destruction of infrastructure and mass displacement of civilians. The alarming civilian casualty figures and humanitarian crisis, as verified by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, underscores the urgent need for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Sierra Leone reiterates its commitment to upholding the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, emphasizing the importance of respecting the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and of engaging in the peaceful resolution of disputes.

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

We call for the parties to the conflict to engage constructively in good faith, with a view to finding a political and diplomatic solution, as envisaged in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter. At the same time, we also reiterate our call for the full respect of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. De La Gasca (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Ivor Fung, Chief of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, for his detailed informative briefing. I listened carefully to the other briefer. I welcome the presence of Ukraine in today's meeting.

Yesterday the Council met (see S/PV.9600) to discuss the humanitarian consequences of the crisis in Ukraine. Ecuador reiterates its call to all parties involved to act with the utmost restraint. The use of explosive weapons in inhabited areas must cease immediately in order to preserve the lives of civilians and protect civilian infrastructure, in accordance with the principles and guidelines of international humanitarian law.

In relation to the subject of this briefing, Ecuador firmly believes in the importance of observing the international legal frameworks governing the transfer of arms and ammunition. It is necessary that all Member States adhere to the relevant Security Council resolutions and carry out comprehensive risk assessments in order to prevent the detour, illicit trafficking and misuse of arms.

In that context, I emphasize the importance of strictly respecting the standards of marking, registration and traceability of arms and ammunition. Any distribution of weapons must be carried out within the limits of the applicable international legal framework and be conditioned by guarantee mechanisms that ensure adherence to the fundamental principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution in their use. The use of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, with their lasting and indiscriminate impact on civilian populations, is particularly reprehensible and must cease immediately.

The escalation of violence and the potential for the diversion of weapons exacerbates the suffering of those directly affected and may pose risks to regional and global peace and security. Reflecting on the high human cost of this conflict, with thousands killed and wounded, the urgency for a peaceful resolution has never been more evident.

Ecuador hopes that constructive dialogue will be resumed and that all available means will be used in order to promote a just and lasting peace, on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Gaouaoui (Algeria): I too thank Mr. Ivor Fung for his briefing. I listened carefully to Ms. Karen Kwiatkowski.

The use or threat of use of weapons and ammunition with increasing lethality and destructive power in this conflict remain a source of deep concern.

The flow of weapons and ammunition into conflict areas may pose the risk of proliferation and is likely to undermine efforts towards achieving a peaceful solution. It also represents a high risk of their diversion to criminals and terrorist groups.

Moreover, Algeria has warned several times about the worsening polarization that lies at the heart of those challenges, prolonging the crisis and escalating tensions. That is unfortunately leading to increased arms flows into conflict zones, which will certainly

cause more casualties among civilians, more suffering and reduced prospects for a peaceful settlement. In that regard, Algeria once again calls on the parties to abandon the mindset of confrontation and escalation and to prioritize inclusive and constructive dialogue and negotiations. We also encourage them to attach high importance to preventing the risk of a proliferation of weapons and ammunition and to do their utmost to prevent it. In particular, we urge the parties to prevent them from falling into the hands of criminal and terrorist groups.

Algeria steadfastly maintains that the solution to this crisis lies in achieving a just and lasting peace, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the legitimate security concerns of all the parties.

Ms. Jurečko (Slovenia): I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing, and I also take note of the statement by Ms. Kwiatkowski. Let me make a couple of points on behalf of my delegation.

First, as we continue to discuss the issue of arms transfers, we are compelled to return to the same underlying fact, which is that arms are being supplied in order to support Ukraine as it faces an unjustified war of aggression. That would not be needed if Russia had not launched its full-scale invasion. Earlier this week, the President of Ukraine would not have called for support in air-defence weapons and systems had Russia not aimed more than 80 missiles and drones at Ukrainian civilian and critical infrastructure in a single night. Slovenia will continue to fully support Ukraine's right to self-defence, in line with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and the applicable international legal framework.

Secondly, while we are discussing transfers of weapons that are provided to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a Member State, we cannot overlook the illegal arms procurements that support the Russian aggression against Ukraine. In that connection, Slovenia deeply regrets Russia's veto of a draft technical resolution on extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) (see S/PV.9591). We are deeply concerned about the emerging evidence of Russia's arms procurement, including missiles, from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. That is a violation of multiple Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United

Nations and must be further addressed. As many in this Chamber have stressed on numerous occasions, all Security Council resolutions are binding and must be fully respected.

We must build trust in order to make our future secure. It is therefore important for the Council to engage in bringing peace and security to the Ukrainian people.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the briefers for their presentations.

The crisis in Ukraine continues to drag on, and the war has already caused too many casualties. Continuing the flow of weapons to the battlefield will only exacerbate the risk of worsening the crisis and does not contribute to de-escalating the situation, realizing a ceasefire or bringing an end to the fighting. It will be better to end the war through negotiations rather than gunfire. China once again calls on all the parties concerned to responsibly intensify their diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire and end the fighting, so as to promote a political settlement of the crisis as soon as possible and bring about the dawn of peace without delay.

The historical and practical causes of the crisis in Ukraine are complex. In essence, it is a major outbreak of security conflicts in Europe. China has not manufactured the crisis or been a party to the conflict. We have not provided lethal weapons or equipment to any of the parties to the conflict, nor have we done or will do anything to profit from the crisis. China's position on the Ukraine issue has always been consistent and clear. We have always insisted on advocating for peace and promoting peace talks. We support the timely convening of an international conference, recognized by both Russia and Ukraine, with the equal participation of all parties, to discuss all peace options in a fair manner. Both track one and track two can be explored. We are ready to provide the necessary conditions for Russia and Ukraine to conduct negotiations and will work unrelentingly to achieve a political settlement of the crisis as soon as possible.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): Allow me to start by thanking Malta's presidency for convening today's important briefing and the briefers for their insightful contributions. I also acknowledge the presence of the representative of Ukraine at this meeting.

We have been closely following the developments in Ukraine with deep concern. Since the outbreak of the

conflict, the Security Council has convened multiple times to address the issue, but the warring parties have remained inflexible, adhering to a military logic that has proved to be unrealistic and unsustainable. A shift towards more cooperative and sustainable solutions is a requisite for lasting peace. We believe that finding credible and committed solutions for silencing the guns in Ukraine should be the main issue on the table.

Mozambique is deeply alarmed at the possibility that the current trajectory could lead to strategic miscalculations, potentially engulfing Europe and beyond in a wider conflict. We firmly believe that the massive deployment of arms in this raging confrontation is only exacerbating the situation and undermining the prospects for a peaceful settlement. The increasing supply of weapons and the prospects for a peaceful settlement are fundamentally incompatible. While we recognize the sovereign right to self-defence, we also underscore the importance of responsible arms transfer within the existing international legal framework. With that in mind, we call on all States that have not yet done so to adhere to all the relevant international instruments, such as the Register of Conventional Arms, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, among others, to bring greater transparency and accountability to the flow of weapons.

Embracing diplomacy for peace is critical at this juncture. Mozambique firmly advocates for a political and negotiated solution as the only viable way to end this conflict and lay a foundation for lasting and sustainable peace between the two historically sister countries. We therefore call for re-establishing diplomatic channels and encourage the exploration of all means necessary, including using the Secretary-General's good offices, to end the bloodshed. We implore the parties involved to halt all hostilities, resume direct negotiations without imposing any preconditions and actively engage in constructive and meaningful dialogue in good faith.

The path to peace is arduous, but it is the only way forward. Mozambique stands ready to support all efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank Mr. Fung for his briefing.

The Russian representative has again claimed that Western assistance to Ukraine, provided for its self-defence, is prolonging a war that Russia started. We all heard the Russian representative say in the Security Council yesterday that the only peace discussion it would have would be of Ukraine's "unconditional surrender" (see S/PV.9600).

We listen closely to Russia's words, but let us also look at its actions. Russia is committing an aggression against a sovereign Member State. Russia continues to ruthlessly attack Ukraine in pursuit of territorial conquest. Russia has procured ballistic-missile launchers and dozens of ballistic missiles from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of Security Council resolutions. Since last December, Russian forces have used ballistic missiles supplied by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to strike Ukraine nearly a dozen times, firing upwards of 40 ballistic missiles made in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Since last September, Russia has procured more than 11,000 shipping containers of munitions and munitions-related materiel from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in violation of the United Nations arms embargo on that country. By using its veto against the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), Russia is attempting to hide the full extent of its procurement of arms and ballistic missiles from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for use against Ukraine, undermining the Council's efforts to carry out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Russia also continues to deepen its military relationship with Iran, including through its continued acquisition of armed Iranian uncrewed aerial vehicles used to target Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. We continue to be concerned about reports that Russia is seeking to procure ballistic missiles from Iran. Such an acquisition would represent a significant escalation in Iran's support for Russia's war of aggression. We are also closely reviewing reports that Russian forces are using riot-control agents and chemical weapons to drive Ukrainian troops into the line of fire.

The international community has overwhelmingly condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine. As I have said before, Russia can end this war today. The United States remains committed to providing Ukraine with what it needs to defend itself. We once again call

for Russia to immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine's territory within its internationally recognized borders and to stop its unlawful procurement of materiel originating in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

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

I will begin by thanking Mr. Fung for his briefing.

This is the fourteenth time that the Russian Federation has requested a meeting on this topic since September 2022. It is therefore important to recall the facts one more time. On 24 February 2022, the Russian Federation decided to launch a war of aggression against Ukraine, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. More than two years have passed since then, and this senseless and illegal war persists. It continues to inflict devastating effects on Ukraine and its people.

Today Russia is once again trying to present the case that the inherent right to self-defence that is enshrined in Article 51 of the Charter and applies to all Member States of this Organization should be suspended in Ukraine's case. It is trying to convince us that Ukraine is not entitled to receive any assistance from its allies as it desperately tries to protect its citizens and its territory. According to that reasoning, small countries — in this case, Ukraine — should simply accept their fate when their larger, more powerful neighbours decide to invade them, attack their cities and annex their territory. Such arguments are illogical and reprehensible. A world in which might makes right is an unacceptable proposition.

On this occasion, we once again condemn the massive wave of missile and drone attacks targeting power and essential facilities in Ukraine. The attacks have left more than 1 million people without power in the past few weeks. We stress once again the need for full accountability for all crimes committed against Ukraine. We are deeply worried by reports that Russia is using ballistic missiles in Ukraine that originate in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Such actions violate multiple Council resolutions and the sanctions regime, all of which prohibit any arms exports or imports involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We also deplore the use of anti-personnel landmines and the transfer and use of cluster munitions in Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian authorities, approximately

26 per cent of the country's total area is potentially dangerous, owing to possible mining. We stress that the use of those inhumane weapons has severe and lasting humanitarian consequences. Neither should we forget that Russia's aggression has created more than 6.5 million refugees around the world, while another 3.7 million people remain displaced within the country.

In conclusion, we reiterate that Russia holds the key to ending this war. It can do that right now by withdrawing its military forces from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Until then, Ukraine has a right to self-defence, in line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I am grateful to Mr. Fung, Chief of the Conventional Arms Branch, for his briefing. I also recognize Putin's deputy envoy in the permanent seat of the Soviet Union.

Apparently, the Russian special services' recruitment of a founding member of the veteran intelligence professionals for sanity has not helped the Russian delegation to deal with their own insanity, judging by their torrent of nonsense about the tragic events at Crocus City Hall. We had a substantive and robust discussion yesterday (see S/PV.9600). Wasting resources and time on Russia's propaganda performance today would hardly contribute to fulfilling the Council's mandate. However, the very presence of Russia in this Chamber renders fulfilling the mandate impossible.

Everyone here yesterday heard the briefings highlighting the disastrous situation for Ukraine's critical infrastructure in the wake of Russia's daily strikes. We also heard an update regarding the sharp increase in civilian casualties, including among children, across the whole of Ukraine. We heard about the new war crimes that Russia is committing, in particular by executing Ukrainian prisoners of war. I can assure the Council that nothing whatever has changed over the past 24 hours. Russia is betting on mass terror to break the will of the Ukrainian people over its knee. That is a quote from one of the Russian propagandists I mentioned yesterday. And if Ukraine runs out of weapons and lacks air-defence systems, that bet might pay off. Russia will continue its terror

unimpeded, declaring every power plant destroyed to be a military object and every child killed to be a neo-Nazi militant. Those who fail to distinguish between the defending side and the aggressor, while making out-of-context calls to stop all arms supplies to the conflict area, should realize the real implications of their starry-eyed positions. In the worst-case scenario, it may mean millions of new refugees and hundreds of thousands repressed and press-ganged to the Russian army for new wars of aggression.

In their turn, Putin's allies, such as Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, seem to pay no heed to the Council's meetings on the supply of weapons and related concerns. They continue to diligently supply the Russian army with missiles, drones and munitions. Iranian drones and missiles produced by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continue to kill Ukrainian civilians. We can only guess at what Russia is offering in return.

The recent veto of the draft resolution (S/2024/255) on the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718

(2006) is just the tip of the iceberg — and apparently not the most dangerous threat to global security. I would therefore like to use this platform, which is broadcast around the world, to reiterate the calls of my President and my Minister. We need air-defence systems and fighter aircraft to protect our cities from Russia's terror. Once again, we need air-defence systems to protect our citizens. We all know where they are, and with a few dozen air-defence systems and a sufficient number of modern jets, there will be no problem with Russian jets and bombs. We need artillery to push the front line back and to restore normal life in the territories occupied by Russia, and we need accountability in order to prevent the Kremlin from restoring its military potential for new attacks in the future.

An air shield for Ukraine is absolutely realistic and dependent only on the political will of responsible nations. If solidarity with Ukraine is upheld and strengthened, it will only sober the aggressor. If it is undermined, the aggressor's appetites will only grow. I therefore urge everyone to make the right choice.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.