



General Assembly

Eleventh Emergency Special session

12th plenary meeting
Monday, 10 October 2022, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

The President: I declare the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly resumed. Members will recall that, in paragraph 3 of its resolution ES-11/3, of 7 April 2022, the Assembly decided

“to adjourn the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States”.

In that regard, I should like to draw the attention of delegations to document A/ES-11/8, which contains the text of a letter dated 3 October 2022 from the Permanent Representatives of Albania and Ukraine to the United Nations, requesting a resumption of the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly.

I intend to conduct the proceedings of this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and the past practices of its emergency special sessions. In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the President and Vice-Presidents of the seventy-seventh session shall serve in the same capacity at the resumed eleventh emergency special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to decide that the Credentials Committee of the seventy-seventh session should serve for the resumed eleventh emergency special session?

It was so decided (decision ES-11/102).

Agenda item 142 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Letter dated 7 October 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/ES-11/9)

The President: In keeping with established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-11/9, concerning Member States that are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the Assembly takes due note of the information contained in the document?

It was so decided.

The President: In that connection, may I further take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to follow the provisions of resolution 77/2, of 7 October 2022, by which the Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe and Somalia are permitted to vote in the General Assembly until the end of its seventy-seventh session, and to also allow those Member States to vote in the eleventh emergency special session?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 5 (continued)

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



**addressed to the President of the Security Council
(S/2014/136)**

Draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.5)

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Albania on a point of order.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I have a point of order to raise before we proceed with agenda item 5 of the eleventh emergency special session. We would like to propose that the General Assembly adopt a decision confirming that it will apply rule 87 (b) of the rules of procedure, in order to take action on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 through a recorded vote by electronic means and to ensure that the action will not be by secret ballot. The reason for this proposed decision is that Russia has circulated a proposal to all Member States formally requesting that action on the draft resolution be through a secret ballot. In the interests of avoiding confusion, the Assembly should clarify this issue now. Russia's proposal is an attempt to threaten transparency in the General Assembly. Do we not all want transparency from the international community? If a neighbouring country invaded and attempted to annex a portion of its territory, would any Member State of the General Assembly support a secret ballot if it was its own territory that someone was trying to annex?

The Russian Federation is citing as precedent a 1977 decision to hold a secret ballot in the General Assembly. That decision applies only to the narrow choice of venue for a United Nations session. The rest of the resolution in that case was not decided by secret ballot, and in fact was adopted by consensus. The decision that the Russian Federation cites is not applicable as a precedent. A decision on a venue is similar to decisions to elect Member States or individuals to United Nations bodies, which are held by secret ballot. There is no precedent for the Assembly to hold a secret ballot on a non-venue issue, let alone on an important question of international peace and security. For the entire history of the United Nations, substantive resolutions such as the one we have before us today have been held by a recorded vote, as provided for in the rules of procedure. There is therefore no basis for suspending the rules of procedure on voting. We should not play with words, and we should not establish dangerous precedents. Even if it were legally possible to suspend the rules of procedure, it would be entirely unjustified for this draft resolution. To conduct a secret ballot on a General Assembly decision would go against

decades of precedent and undermine the practices of the world's most representative deliberative body. In this case, we request all Member States to vote in favour of our proposed decision to confirm that rule 87 (b) will apply when action is taken on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 and that action will not be taken by secret ballot.

The President: The representative of Albania has moved that the decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 be made by a recorded vote, pursuant to rule 87 of the rules of procedure, which provides that "any representative may request a recorded vote", and not by secret ballot.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I do not entirely understand what the representative of Albania is referring to, much less what it is about a secret ballot that the representative of Albania does not like or how it contradicts the principles of democracy she is preaching about.

I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the fact that the Russian Federation has not yet raised the issue of a secret ballot on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5. We were planning to do that immediately before the draft resolution's adoption. However, the point raised by the representative of Albania concerns a single procedural possibility, provided for in rule 87 (b), which is a request for a vote with the results to be inserted in the record. What my delegation was and is planning to raise is the issue of taking a decision by secret ballot by suspending rule 87 as a whole. In order to understand whether or not the procedure under rule 87 (b) can be used, we need to first establish whether that rule is in effect or suspended.

The first proposal that should therefore be considered is of course Russia's proposal. Any other order of consideration would make no sense. But even if against all logic a decision were taken to first vote on an individual point under rule 87 (b), we would like to immediately emphasize that this in no way prejudices or cancels the consideration of my delegation's independent proposal to suspend rule 87 as a whole in order to conduct a secret ballot, a proposal that we will indeed introduce.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has made an objection to the motion. Pursuant to rule 71 of the rules of procedure, the point of order shall be immediately decided.

I shall now put to a recorded vote the motion by the representative of Albania that the decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 be made by a recorded vote and not by secret ballot. The recorded vote on this motion will be decided by a simple majority of members present and voting.

I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic on a point of order.

Mr. Sabbagh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): What I understood from the request made by the Russian Federation is that its proposal is to hold a vote on the suspension of rule 87, not on a secret ballot. However, what you are putting to a vote, Sir, is a vote on a secret ballot, an idea that Albania rejected. If I understood correctly, the Russian Federation requested something different, not whether to vote on a secret ballot. I hope that we can clarify the issue.

The President: So, let me continue. The recorded vote on this motion will be decided by a simple majority of Member States present and voting. We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen

The motion by the representative of Albania to take the decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 by a recorded vote rather than by a secret ballot was adopted by 107 votes to 13, with 39 abstentions.

The President: The General Assembly will therefore take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 by a recorded vote after the debate on the item.

We shall now continue with the debate on agenda item 5.

Statement by the President

The President: The war in Ukraine should never have been started. But it will end one day. The guns will be silent. But when? And at what cost? How many people will have died? How many families will have been separated? How much more suffering will have been endured? What will Ukraine look like when peace returns? What will the world look like?

(spoke in Russian)

So many lives have been lost. So much destruction has been inflicted. There will be no winners in this war. Everyone is losing.

(spoke in French)

Food prices are soaring. Hunger and famine are threatening communities all around the world.

(spoke in English)

I thank the Secretary-General for leading on the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

(spoke in Arabic)

This United Nations-brokered deal has freed up at least 6 million tons of food, with more than a quarter going directly to low-income countries.

(spoke in English)

We shall act together to achieve the full implementation of the Initiative. And it is imperative that we secure its renewal beyond mid-November.

As if the horrors in Ukraine were not enough, we are forced to live with the constant fear of nuclear disaster. I commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure the safety of nuclear plants in the war zone. The IAEA has warned that people there are “playing with fire”. When it comes to nuclear issues, any irresponsible action or statement is unacceptable. And any threat of using nuclear weapons should be universally condemned. The Charter of the United Nations is clear. The General Assembly has been clear. The Secretary-General has been clear.

Aggression is illegal. Resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974 defines aggression as the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State. Such acts are considered to be inconsistent with the Charter. Invading a neighbour is illegal. Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations states that:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State”.

Annexing the territory of another country by force is illegal. Resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, has reinforced the principle that the territory of a State shall not be the object of acquisition by another State resulting from the threat or use of force. It is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter. And as the Secretary-General has pointed out, the referendums in the occupied regions “cannot be called a genuine expression of the popular will”.

When it becomes a daily routine to watch images of destroyed cities and scattered bodies, we lose our humanity. We must find a political solution based on the Charter and international law. We need to keep the door open for diplomacy. The fighting between Russia and Ukraine must stop. As the General Assembly decided in resolution ES-11/1, adopted on 2 March, the troops of the Russian Federation must be withdrawn from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. The alternative is a world without shared rules, without peace, without a future. We must recommit to the values, principles and purposes of the Charter. If we want to move forward as a global community, we must provide answers. The world is looking to us.

I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): This is going to be a very difficult task for me today for many reasons. It is barely 4 p.m. in New York, but my day started almost 14 hours ago, because my country was under attack. My immediate family was in a residential building under attack and was unable to go to a bomb shelter because there was no electricity. Russia has already killed some of my family members, and we see no end to that cruelty. But let me start with a quote from a gentleman who was very respected in his country, its first directly and democratically elected President. That man was Mr. José Serrato, then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, who, on 1 May 1945 at the sixth plenary meeting of the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco, said,

“A stable and sane peace cannot be attained if nothing is done for the democratization of the world and the rule of freedom. [P]eace and democracy constitute complimentary objectives, each of which is a guarantee and a motive for the other... In this regard... in the proposed International Organization there should not be admitted nations professing doctrines of aggression and war, which are inclined to undermine or destroy the order of juridical peace in the world. However, in order to be a member of international society, it is not enough... to present the titles of ‘peace-loving nations’, it is also necessary to be a freedom-loving nation.”

That is how our predecessors saw the way to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war at the dawn of our Organization 77 years ago. Unfortunately, there can hardly be hope for a stable and sane peace as

long as an unstable and insane dictatorship exists in one's vicinity, a dictatorship that actively uses missile terror against the civilian population and infrastructure of another State. Today terrorist Russia shelled Ukraine's capital city of Kyiv and many other cities throughout the country with at least 84 missiles and two dozen unmanned aerial vehicles. Energy facilities, residential buildings, schools and universities, museums and crossroads in the city centres were among the targets that the Russian Defence Ministry later declared legitimate. The entire world has once again seen the true face of the terrorist State that is killing our people. Suffering defeats on the battlefield, Russia takes it out on the peaceful residents of Ukrainian cities. Today's strike killed at least 14 civilians and wounded 97. The deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime. By launching missile attacks on civilians sleeping in their homes or rushing to work, or on children going to school, Russia has proved once again that it is a terrorist State that must be deterred in the strongest possible way. We need that to prevent further heinous atrocities and to secure our achievements within this Organization.

The United Nations has survived many challenges, including confrontations between blocs and Soviet threats in this very Hall, addressed to the world, to the United Nations and its Secretaries-General. As King Hussein of Jordan said in 1960, standing exactly where I am right now,

“yet almost from birth, the Soviet Union has sought to destroy the United Nations, to hamper its deliberations, to block its decisions... to damage the reputation of the Security Council and the General Assembly” (*A/PV.882, p.322, para. 75*).

I am emphasizing each of these words in 2022, standing exactly where the leader of Jordan was, 62 years ago.

What we are witnessing now is an attempt by Russia to revive the so-called Brezhnev doctrine, envisaging that the Soviet Union could limit the principle of the prohibition of the use of force if its interests in other States within its so-called “zone of influence” were challenged. The incompatibility of that doctrine with the Charter of the United Nations was clear even for the Soviet Union, and at the end of the day the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had to officially give it up. To quote President Gorbachev,

“it is obvious, for instance, that the use or threat of force can no longer be, and must no longer be an instrument of foreign policy” (*A/43/PV.72, p.11*).

The then-Soviet President said that in this very Hall in December 1988. Those words, however, mean nothing to modern Russia, which is occupying the permanent seat of the Soviet Union on the Security Council and therefore is allowed to block any action by the Council to restore international peace and security. Russia is now doing its best to bring us back to the 1930s — not even the 1940s — when Hitler destroyed sovereign nations through invasions, fake referendums and the Anschluss. And we are now at a tipping point where the United Nations will either regain its credibility or will ultimately fall in failure. And if the latter happens, we should blame nobody but ourselves because it is our responsibility to defend the principles of the Charter.

The Russian delegation leaves a trail of blood behind it when it enters the General Assembly, and the Hall is filled with the smell of smouldering human flesh. That is what we have tolerated too long in Syria, and it is what is happening today in Ukraine. It is the same dictator in the Kremlin, the same Russian generals well known for scorched-earth tactics in wars conducted in Syria, in Chechnya, and now in Ukraine. Since 23 September, Russia has been committing another crime against international law and its principles. It has been committing that crime in an attempt to revive the world of the past, where sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders were privileges with limited access and not the right of every nation.

The sham referendums in four Ukrainian regions, followed by unlawful decisions by the Russian President and Parliament, served that very purpose and thereby pose an existential threat to the United Nations and its Charter. Ukrainians can tell Member States what our world will look like if this erosion of the credibility of the United Nations is not stopped and if the complete disregard for the Charter by a country occupying a permanent seat in the Security Council meets any response but zero tolerance. Death, human suffering and destruction are the immediate outcomes, as they were in the city of Zaporizhzhya on the night of 9 October when Russia fired more than 20 missiles on residential areas, killing at least 13 civilians and injuring 60, including six children. And let me remind the Assembly that Zaporizhzhya is the main city of one of the four regions that Russia has claimed following the sham referendums. Moscow has even included the reference to Zaporizhzhya in its constitution. Please forgive my use of the term “constitution” to describe that worthless piece of paper.

It is indeed hard, if not impossible, for a normal human being to comprehend the logic of Putin and his cronies. First they claim to have seized an area of a neighbouring sovereign State under the pretext of what they call the protection of the local population, and then they kill that population with dozens of missiles. It is clear, however, that the sham so-called referendums served as an element in Russia's aggression against Ukraine, an element that was hastily prepared and implemented in response to the Ukrainian army's successful process of liberation of the occupied territories. The so-called referendums bore no relation at all to what we are accustomed to call the expression of the popular will, whether from a legal perspective or from one of technical modalities. We are grateful to Secretary-General António Guterres, who was very clear and explicit in his condemnation of Russia's actions. As he said,

“any decision to proceed with the annexation... would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned. It cannot be reconciled with the international legal framework. It stands against everything the international community is meant to stand for. It flouts the purposes and principles of the United Nations... It must not be accepted”.

Ukraine is indeed the immediate target of Russia's attacks on the ground, but Ukraine is not Russia's ultimate aim. Let me reiterate it again. It is our future that is at stake, a future that cannot be secured by individual countries or regional arrangements if the United Nations is relegated to the backstage of global processes. Let me recall that the very first purpose of this Organization, enshrined in Article 1 of its Charter, is to maintain international peace and security, and to that end to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression. Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter constitutes the most important principle with regard to that purpose. In particular, we are talking about the threat and use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of Ukraine. A violation of paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter is a violation of the cornerstone of peace in the Charter, the heart of the Charter, and even the basic rule of contemporary international law as it has been labelled in legal writings.

The only thing that Russia is afraid of is our strong unity of purpose in defence of the Charter and the right of every country to benefit from respect for

its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We have to save the United Nations. It is not for the sake of this Hall, for high-level weeks or the other procedural and protocol issues that have been features of our routines since 1945. We need to do it for our own sake, because most of us will find ourselves extremely vulnerable and unprotected if Russia's vision of the future prevails. It is a future where only nuclear power, the size of a country's armed forces and the numbers of its warships and aircraft matter. How many of us would feel safe and secure in such a world? How many of us would deprive our children of the right to freely decide their own future? The answer seems obvious, and we have to rally around the Charter and reaffirm that its principles remain a strong shield for protecting all nations, large or small, members of alliances or neutral countries, on every continent. That was the spirit of our common commitment to saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, the spirit that guided our predecessors in San Francisco 77 years ago. The same spirit should guide us now, especially in the vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, entitled “Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations”.

I started my statement with a quote from Uruguay to illustrate what unites us all, even if our countries are 10,000 kilometres apart. Let me finish with a quote from the-then French Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, at the Conference in San Francisco in 1945:

“Justice is another word we must reinstate in all its loftiness — justice in keeping with international democracy... justice which gives full recognition to the rights of all countries, including those which do not come under the generally recognized term of great Powers — a point I would particularly stress.”

It will be a vote for the United Nations Charter, for every country, for each of our citizens, for our families and children, a vote for justice. I urge States to support the draft resolution.

The President: I now call on the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to start with procedural issues. We in the Assembly have all just witnessed an outrageous fraud in which, to our great regret, the President of the General Assembly played a key role. We were not given the floor on a point of order, despite the fact that the light is still on behind our nameplate. Our statement

was distorted and now an attempt is being made to rob the Members of the United Nations of their right to express their opinion. That is an unprecedented act of manipulation, undermining the authority of the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole. Needless to say, we opted to not take part in the vote under such conditions. We protest resolutely against this flagrant violation of the procedural order of the meeting. As I said, the Russian delegation was not given the floor when our primary purpose was the issue that our Syrian colleagues referred to. We were not protesting the President's decision. We had a different issue, and we did not make the proposal that Albania was contesting. And therefore it was you, Mr. President, who deprived the Russian delegation, as the author of the proposal, of the possibility of actually presenting it and explaining its logic. Our opponents got to do it instead. Is that the kind of transparency and practice that the delegation of Albania spoke so bombastically about? Is it fair play? We demand that the issue be presented as we requested. It makes no sense to argue against something we did not introduce, and I will come back to that later.

The General Assembly was created to be universal and the most inclusive possible platform for a dialogue among sovereign States on an equal footing. Many a momentous decision has been taken in this Hall to form the legal, socioeconomic and cultural outlines of the international community, and those decisions were formulated based on the quest for common denominators and compromise and in a spirit of cooperation and interaction. Unfortunately, today we see a completely different narrative being promoted within the walls of the United Nations. The cynicism, confrontation and incredibly dangerous polarization are now on a scale that we have never seen in the history of this world Organization. This fact is most vividly illustrated by this session, the politicization of which flows from the fact that it was specifically convened to promote a narrative aimed against one State, the Russian Federation.

All the other aspects of the Ukrainian crisis, the premises of which were systematically laid out by the Western States at least as long ago as 2014 — but actually long before then — are being deliberately left outside the scope of discussions. It is as if the unconstitutional Maidan coup, the tragedy in Odesa, the methodical deprivation of the Russian-speaking population's rights, the Kyiv regime's aggression against Donbas and the mass murder of its civilian inhabitants had never happened. In Washington, London, Brussels and

many other capitals, they are trying to stop the clock to make it seem as if history only began in February 2022. In fact for the West in general, any period of history starts when it works for them.

The pretext for resuming the special session has been served by a pathetic and unprecedented act of provocation in the Security Council whereby it was proposed that we vote for a draft document in which we were supposed to condemn ourselves. What does that have to do with peace and security or the quest for ways to settle the conflict? It was one more step towards division and escalation, which we are certain is not something that an overwhelming majority of States represented in this Hall need. Anyone following the discussion in the Security Council knows that we were ready to agree on a balanced and constructive draft that included a proposal appealing for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis. Our proposals had positive reactions from many of our partners in the Security Council, but of course the Western camp did not want them. We can hear in their statements that they do not want peace in Ukraine on principle.

NATO, which is what we have really come up against in Ukraine, only needs the escalation of the conflict to get closer to fulfilling the cherished plan it has been nurturing and preparing for years — defeating or at least weakening Russia as much as possible. To that end, Ukraine was long ago chosen by these countries and brought under their control, and today it is a testing site for NATO weaponry and for a proxy fight against Russia down to the last Ukrainian. They are trying to involve as many countries as possible in their geopolitical projects, which are designed to preserve the domination of Western States and maintain the well-being of the so-called golden billion.

As we were once blamed when we tried to protect the rights of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America from colonialism and exploitation, now we are being criticized for protecting the rights and freedoms of our brothers and sisters in southern and eastern Ukraine — their right to life, first and foremost, but also their right to speak their native language, to teach their children in it and to honour the heroes who liberated their land from fascism, rather than those who collaborated with the fascists and helped to kill peaceful citizens. We are protecting those whom the current Ukrainian leadership has called “specimens” and “subhuman”, who were told to get out and go to Russia for the sake of their children and grandchildren's

future, and who listened to the call and took the decision to stand with Russia. That was vividly demonstrated by the choice made by millions of civilians who voted in the referendums in the Donetsk People's Republic, the Luhansk People's Republic and the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions, in which an overwhelming majority voted for uniting those regions with Russia.

We live in a time when hundreds of thousands of videos and comments can be accessed on social media, and it is very difficult to argue with the fact that this was the free and legitimate expression of the people's will, fully in line with the norms and principles of international law. That was confirmed by hundreds of observers, including from Western countries. Internet users mostly agreed, and independent surveys on Twitter showed that a majority of the respondents considered it essential to respect the right of the residents of the regions concerned to determine their own future. It is primarily Kyiv and its Western backers, who have been covering up the crimes of the Maidan authorities for the past eight and a half years, who disagree. Those who now claim that the referendums are allegedly illegitimate because the Kyiv regime did not agree to hold them took the exact opposite position when they spoke out in the International Court of Justice in support of Kosovo's separation from Serbia. That occurred without any referendums and based solely on assertions about mass killings of Kosovo's Albanian civilian population that we now know were as far from the truth as the glass vial that United States Secretary of State Colin Powell brandished in the Security Council when he talked about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq (see S/PV.4701).

The cynicism in this situation also consists in the fact that those who are wringing their hands and lamenting today about Russia's alleged violations of the Charter for years disregarded it and international law generally while trying to replace it with their so-called rules-based order. Unlike the situation in Kosovo, the rights and lives of people in the Donetsk People's Republic, the Luhansk People's Republic and the Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions are truly threatened today. They can be protected and assured of certainty for their future only by granting those regions a clear legal status and admission as part of the Russian Federation, just as in 2014 when we saved the people of Crimea, whom Kyiv had directly threatened with Ukrainization or a crackdown. That is why we took that step, while well aware of the outrage it would arouse in our opponents.

And today the threat from the Ukrainian nationalists looks even more serious amid the efforts to supply the Kyiv regime with more and more new Western weapons that can hit residential areas that the Armed Forces of Ukraine could never reach before. Another essential aspect playing a role in the referendums was the open terror unleashed by Kyiv on the civilians whom they declared to be collaborators. Kyiv's fighters openly admit to that to the Western mass media, bragging that they "shoot Russian collaborators as though they were pigs". That is by no means a metaphor, as we saw in a video posted by Zhorin, a Ukrainian neo-Nazi and former commander of the neo-Nazi Azov Battalion, in which civilians in Kupiansk were tied up, shot and thrown into pits. Has anyone heard about the Ukrainian forces' strike aimed at a queue of people heading to the Russian-controlled territory in Zaporizhzhya oblast, a strike that Ukraine's disinformers, in the spirit of Dr. Goebbels, ascribed to Russia, as they did the strikes on the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and the city of Enerhodar? The Ukrainian nationalists have left a trail of bloody provocations behind them in Irpin, Bucha and other areas, where in April Russian forces left as a goodwill gesture. The same is true of Izyum, where Kyiv tried to play out the same scenario as it did in Bucha. Yet the people of the Donbas, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions know too well who really stood behind the killings of people in southern and eastern Ukraine. That is why they decided to opt for a future with Russia — a choice that we intend to respect. And we call on members to follow suit.

We call on the international community to pay attention not just to these criminal acts but also to the irresponsible steps and statements made by the Kyiv regime. Those steps are an attempt to directly involve the countries of NATO in the military activities against Russia. By this I mean the reckless calls of Zelenskyy to launch preventive nuclear strikes against Russia. Clearly, Kyiv expects that, should that happen, then it will avoid the inevitable defeat on the battlefield and avoid responsibility for all its crimes. However, what those appeals do is threaten us all with a third world war and nuclear disaster.

The evidence of what the Kyiv regime can do can be seen in the sabotage of the Crimea bridge. We warned that this and any other actions of this kind will not be without consequences. In carrying out such acts of sabotage and in terrorizing and killing those officials and political activists who are unfavourable to it, the Kyiv regime descends to the same level of the most

outrageous terrorist organizations. The Kyiv regime and the Western backers who are trying to pushing the regime towards a war that continues until the very last Ukrainian bear responsibility for the retaliatory measures we have to take.

I would like to underscore once again that Russia acts in alignment with the Charter of the United Nations and respects the principles enshrined in it, including the principle of the territorial integrity of States. However, that cannot be considered separately from other principles, first and foremost the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1970, and to which the sponsors of the draft resolution refer, quoting it selectively, as usual, states very clearly that territorial integrity applies to those States that, in their acts, abide by the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and who therefore have Governments that represent all the people living in their territory.

The Kyiv regime has been devoid of this legitimacy with respect to the Russian-speaking people in Ukraine since 2014, after the anti-constitutional Maidan coup. Over the past eight years, we have provided thousands of pieces of evidence of its violent crimes against its own people, including how it has infringed upon and directly violated the rights of the Russian-speaking people of Ukraine, who represent at least 40 per cent of that country. We have also provided evidence of that country's attempts to forcibly Ukrainize the Russian-speaking population there. These are inconvenient facts that are not in line with the unilateral Western narrative that is being imposed on members, who are simultaneously having their arms twisted for having their own opinions that differ from the Western viewpoint. Those who have managed to withstand this unprecedented pressure have proved that they have and express their own opinion and are conducting a policy that is truly independent. They are the ones that abide by the most important principle of sovereign equality of Member States, and they consider others to be their equals, not their dependents. This special session has demonstrated that the growth in the number of such States is what our Western opponents are most afraid of and what they are willing to do whatever it takes to prevent.

Mr. President, since you did not enable us to do this in a normal fashion when we asked for it, we demand that our proposal to suspend rule 87 of the rules of procedure as a whole, including its paragraph (b), be put to a vote now, so as to conduct the voting on the draft resolution before us through secret ballot.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has moved that rule 87 be suspended in order to take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 by secret ballot. That would constitute a reconsideration of the decision taken by the General Assembly to adopt the motion submitted by Albania.

I wish to recall rule 81 of the rules of procedure. Rule 81 provides for the following: when a proposal has been rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two speakers opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

Pursuant to rule 81 of the rules of procedure, up to two speakers opposing the motion by the Russian Federation for reconsideration may make statements. Does any delegation opposing the motion by the Russian Federation wish to take the floor?

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): I take the floor to object to the request from the Russian Federation to hold a motion on this issue. As we already said, the decision is already made, and we do not see any reason to revisit this decision. The motion was approved with 107 votes, and we do not see at this point any reason to vote on a new motion. We object to the Russian proposal to suspend the clearly applicable rules of procedure on voting.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): I believe this is a clear case of abuse by one delegation of the General Assembly and manipulation of the rules of procedure. I think that the wish of the General Assembly was overwhelming. We therefore call on the Russian delegation to stop putting hurdles in the way of the General Assembly carrying out the decision of the very important debate that we have in front of us.

The President: Before proceeding to the vote, I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): That is absolutely correct. I want to speak on

a point of order. We disagree with the ruling that you have just voiced. Rule 81 of the rules of procedure does not apply to the situation we are talking about. We are talking about two different proposals. The proposal by Albania was to vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 under rule 87 (b) of the rules of procedure, and an artificial connection was made to the secret ballot. We, on the other hand, are proposing that rule 87 be suspended as a whole. These are two different unrelated proposals. Rule 71 of the rules of procedure is the one that applies to our proposal.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has challenged the President's ruling that this is a reconsideration of the decision just taken. Rule 71 is applicable in this case, and the relevant parts of the rule reads as follows: "a representative may appeal against the ruling of the President. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the President's ruling shall stand unless overruled by a majority of the members present and voting".

I shall now put to a recorded vote the appeal that is a challenge against the President's ruling. May I point out that those who vote yes will be voting in favour of the challenge submitted by the representative of the Russian Federation. We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belarus, Central African Republic, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Mali, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Zimbabwe

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Netherlands, New

Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen

The appeal against the President's ruling was rejected by 100 votes to 14, with 38 abstentions.

The President: The ruling of the President is upheld.

The General Assembly will now vote on the motion to reconsider the decision adopted by the General Assembly. Those in favour of reconsidering the decision should vote yes. Those that are not in favour of reconsidering the motion should vote no.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Belarus, Central African Republic, China, Comoros, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Eritrea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mali, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic

Against:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India,

Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kiribati, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu, Zambia

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Honduras, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen

The motion by the representative of the Russian Federation to reconsider the decision taken earlier on the motion submitted by Albania was rejected by 104 votes to 16, with 34 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of the Comoros informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote against.]

The President: The General Assembly has therefore decided not to reconsider the decision.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): That is absolutely correct. We will have another opportunity to comment on the procedural points of this meeting. I am not going to spend more time on that. We have addressed that partially.

However, I wanted to say the following. We are convinced that we need to move on to take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5. This has extended over several days, and we have a very long list of speakers. Determining the issue of voting and then taking a decision on the draft resolution is a highly illogical step.

Such an approach would give additional opportunity to exert targeted pressure on those countries who had supported the secret ballot against Western wishes, and the General Assembly should not go along with those who are twisting people's arms. Therefore, we propose — and this is an official motion — that we vote on the draft resolution now and not after we listen to all the speakers.

The President: I intend to conduct the proceedings of this meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and past practice at its emergency special sessions. The practice of the General Assembly, including at emergency special sessions, has been to proceed with the debate and then move to action on the draft resolution.

I give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation on a point of order.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): While we admire your courageous decision, we would like to know if, in the past practice of the General Assembly — I refer here to the rules of procedure, the practice you just mentioned — there have been instances in which decisions on procedural matters, including the voting, took place at the beginning of the debate, and then the voting took place following the debate.

We cannot agree, Mr. President, with the approach that you just put forward. It is illogical and inconsistent. Voting on a decision basically means that the Assembly moves to consideration of the draft resolution. Instead of doing that, we are going to have to wait for several days, possibly until Thursday, and only then will we be able to vote on the draft resolution. We know who benefits from such a scenario, and it is unfortunate that you are playing into their hands. Unfortunately, the only thing left to us at this stage is to express our regret at the decision that you made. We also deplore all the ways in which you have conducted the proceedings today.

The President: I have heard the views of the representative of the Russian Federation, which will be duly reflected in the records of the meeting.

We shall now proceed with the debate.

Mr. Pildegovičs (Latvia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the eight Nordic-Baltic countries: Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Latvia.

On 24 February, Russia launched its brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine, in blatant violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. By that war of aggression, Russia, aided by Belarus, has deliberately violated the fundamental right of all States to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia's military aggression and systematic violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, and the atrocities committed against the people of Ukraine, continue to cause grave human suffering in Ukraine as well as globally.

Moreover, Russia has chosen further escalation. We resolutely condemn today's barbaric missile attacks on residential areas, power stations, railways, trade centres and bridges in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhya, Lviv, Dnipro and other Ukrainian cities launched by Russia. There is no military purpose there. The only goal of Russia's deliberate attacks is to bring death and destruction to civilians.

Using its military force, Russia has organized sham referendums as a pretext for a subsequent illegal attempt to annex four Ukrainian regions: Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya, following the pattern of the attempted illegal annexation of Crimea, Ukraine, in 2014.

We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The unlawful Russian attempts to change the status of the temporarily occupied Ukrainian regions have no legal validity.

We will never recognize the so-called results and claimed consequences of those sham referendums. Russia's wrong-minded attempts to validate voting at gunpoint go against the core principles of international law, as also reiterated by the Secretary-General on 29 September. They are null and void and cannot produce any legal effect whatsoever.

There is no such thing as a legitimate referendum amid brutal warfare and widespread and systematic violations of international humanitarian law, human rights violations and abuses. There is no such thing as a valid annexation of a State's territory by another State as a result of threats or the direct use of force. In that respect, we recall that under international law, all States are obliged not to recognize Russia's attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory.

Russia's unlawful war on Ukraine constitutes a direct attack on the rules-based international system and a threat to international peace and security. We will not accept this blatant violation of the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the suffering of millions in its wake. We will not accept Russia's unlawful behaviour, which jeopardizes international peace and security.

We reject Russia's brutality in the strongest possible terms, and the international community will hold Russia accountable for its actions. There shall be no impunity.

On Friday, 30 September, the Security Council draft resolution (S/2022/720) on the sham referendums failed to be adopted owing to a single member, Russia, having cast its veto (see S/PV.9143). We deeply regret that. However, we acknowledge the special report of the Security Council on the use of the veto (A/77/551), which informs our discussions today.

Our stance is clear: a world without respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the rules-based international order cannot stand. We must therefore firmly and collectively reject Russia's sham referendums and illegal attempts to annex any part of Ukrainian territory. We must collectively continue to insist that Russia completely and unilaterally withdraw its troops from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders. Russia must comply with the 16 March order of the International Court of Justice, which is binding on the parties, and stop its aggression against Ukraine.

We must uphold the core principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and we must underline that Russia's unacceptable threats of the use of nuclear weapons are in clear violation of the Charter and threaten international peace and security.

We will continue to firmly stand with Ukraine and to provide support to it for as long as it takes. In line with the Charter of the United Nations and international law, Ukraine has the inherent right to defend itself against Russia's aggression and to restore its sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders.

We know what annexation and occupation are. We experienced them during and after the Second World War. We must therefore do everything possible to defend the Charter.

The Nordic and Baltic countries will therefore vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 and call on Member States to do the same.

Mr. Prasad (Fiji): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Pacific Islands Forum with a presence here at the United Nations.

This is the third time that our Forum members have addressed an emergency special session of the Assembly regarding the ongoing illegal invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. We spoke out to condemn the invasion; we spoke out in defence of civilian lives and humanitarian access.

Today we are here once again to speak in defence of Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and integrity in the light of the Russian Federation's attempt to illegally annex four regions of eastern Ukraine — namely, Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya.

The many islands and countries of our Blue Pacific continent are diverse, with their own unique histories. However, there is much that unites us, including the values of justice, fairness and shared prosperity. Underpinning that unity is a shared belief in the value of the multilateral system enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. The Russian Federation's attempted illegal annexation of parts of Ukrainian territory is a clear violation of the principles of the Charter and of international law.

The Charter cannot simply be worn like a prestigious cloak only to be discarded when perceived geopolitical interests are at stake. Every instance of such behaviour risks wearing it thin, dirtying it and potentially even destroying it.

Like our very air, water and land, the Charter must be treasured if it is to in turn provide sustenance to our global family. The many States of the Blue Pacific continent understand that intimately.

We also understand the terrible human and environmental costs of nuclear weapons in the light of our region's history regarding nuclear testing. It is unacceptable that a nuclear-weapon State is openly threatening the use of nuclear weapons. We therefore strongly condemn Russia's latest threats to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

We also strongly support international efforts to safeguard Ukrainian nuclear facilities against damage, intentional or otherwise.

As a member of the Security Council, the Russian Federation has an even greater responsibility to uphold the Charter and the principles of sovereignty, dignity and the peaceful resolution of all disputes. Our Pacific Islands Forum family thus calls for the Russian Federation to cease its attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory, to de-escalate the current situation and to withdraw to behind its internationally recognized borders in order for a peaceful resolution to the conflict to be achieved.

Such a resolution will not be found through coercion, violence, torture, bullets or bombs. It will come through diplomacy, justice and respect for the values, rules and norms that sustain our global community and that animate these hallowed halls.

From climate change to coronavirus disease recovery, hunger and intractable conflicts, there is simply too much at stake for this needless, illegal war to continue to undermine our shared work.

My full statement has been made available to the General Assembly.

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

Mr. Gonzato (European Union): Allow me at the outset to say how appalled we are by the attacks carried out today by Russia against Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine. Such indiscriminate attacks on civilians are war crimes, and we are committed to holding the perpetrators to account.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Georgia, Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

We welcome the decision to reconvene this emergency special session. In the past week, the European Union facilitated a resolution to condemn Russia's organization of the illegal so-called referendums in regions within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, as well as its subsequent attempted illegal annexation of Ukraine's regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya.

We want to sincerely thank all the delegations that engaged with us on this text. During a transparent and

inclusive process, we made every effort to include the proposals we received from other delegations. We believe that the result is a concise and focused text that all of us should be able to support. We therefore strongly encourage all States Members of the United Nations to co-sponsor and vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5.

In that respect, let me say that we are very grateful that the Assembly decided to follow its long-established tradition of voting in a transparent manner.

This debate concerns every single one of us. Today's discussion is about upholding the Charter of the United Nations and the core principles of our Organization. It is about respecting the most basic principles of international law.

By wilfully undermining the rules-based international order and blatantly and repeatedly violating Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Russia is putting global peace and security at risk. If we do not condemn the actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine today, we will end up condoning similar blatant attacks on any and all of our countries tomorrow.

We therefore firmly reject and unequivocally condemn the attempted illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions. The acquisition of territory through the use of force is a matter of concern for all of us. Protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States Members of the United Nations, regardless of their size or power, is our collective duty and a core principle of the Charter of the United Nations.

We do not and will never recognize the illegal so-called referendums that Russia has engineered as a pretext for this further violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, or their falsified and illegal results. We will never recognize that attempted illegal annexation. Those decisions are null and void and cannot produce legal effects under international law. Crimea, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk are Ukraine. We call on all States and international organizations to unequivocally reject that attempted illegal annexation.

The draft resolution we are discussing today is entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". That is the only thing we are voting on, and I strongly encourage all Member States to stand up for the Charter.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Türkiye): We thank you, Mr. President, for having convened yet another historic emergency special session of the General Assembly — a session that was called because of a war that must cease immediately and because the Security Council failed once again to fulfil its primary responsibility.

Even as the whole world is calling for an end to the war, we woke up once again to shocking news this morning. The attacks by Russia against several cities of Ukraine that resulted in civilian casualties today are deeply worrying and unacceptable. In the face of that news, we reiterate once again our strong support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty.

We also unequivocally reject the illegitimate referendums. Russia's decision to annex the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions of Ukraine is illegal. It constitutes a grave violation of international law and cannot be accepted. It has been eight years since the illegal annexation of Crimea. Since 2014, the human rights situation on the Crimean peninsula has severely deteriorated. In particular, the human rights of Crimean Tatars have been systematically targeted. The annexation of Crimea led to nothing but further damage to and escalation and instability in the region. It will not be different this time.

The decision to annex Ukrainian territory will serve only to further jeopardize prospects for peace. We call upon the Russian Federation to reverse its decision and to return to diplomacy.

We all need international law and a global rules-based order. It is our duty as Member States to defend legality. It is our obligation to ensure that conflicts are resolved through peaceful means. We must collectively ensure that the founding principles of the United Nations, enshrined in its Charter, are upheld. That is the only way to save ourselves from the scourge of war. With that understanding, Türkiye sponsored draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, which will be put to a vote this week.

Let me make it clear once again that we do not need or want war in our region. This war should not have started. It should stop now. It should be brought to an end through negotiations. Together with the Secretary-General, we helped the parties to reach a common understanding on the grain corridor initiative. We can do more. As a neighbour of both parties, we call on

them once again and reiterate our readiness to support and facilitate a peace process to end that war.

Mr. Gafoor (Singapore): It has been more than seven months since the Russian Federation, a permanent member of the Security Council, launched its invasion of Ukraine, an independent and sovereign nation and a Member of the United Nations. Singapore has taken a consistent position on the need to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all countries. The unjustified invasion of Ukraine by Russia is a flagrant violation of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations.

On 2 March, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-11/1, with the support of an overwhelming majority of countries, reaffirming its commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That resolution also demanded that Russia immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and completely and unconditionally withdraw all its military forces from the territory of Ukraine.

We are deeply disappointed and extremely concerned at the fact that after seven months, the war in Ukraine continues unabated. In fact, it is escalating, with mounting casualties. Russia's recent decision to organize referendums in four regions and its decision to subsequently annex those four regions within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders is not only a further escalation of the conflict; it is also a clear violation of international law and the principles of the Charter. The indiscriminate attacks launched by Russia last night on civilians across Ukraine are also clearly unacceptable.

We entirely support and endorse the views of the Secretary-General when he said that the annexation of a State's territory by another State resulting from the threat or use of force is a violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law. The Secretary-General added that any decision to proceed with the annexation of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions of Ukraine would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned.

Singapore would like to reiterate its position that the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected. The rules-based multilateral system is built on respect for international law and for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. For small States such as Singapore, the principles of the Charter and international law are not matters of academic debate; they are a matter of

life and death. A system based on the idea that might is right is simply unacceptable.

Singapore co-sponsored draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, which is before the General Assembly, and will support its adoption by voting in favour. We will do so as a matter of principle. We believe that it is important for the General Assembly to adopt this draft resolution by a clear majority and to send a clear signal to the world that international law must be respected, sovereignty must not be violated, and territorial integrity must be protected.

Singapore would therefore like to urge all members of the General Assembly to vote in support of the draft resolution that has been placed before us today in the interest of upholding international law, the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules-based multilateral system.

Ms. Chan Valverde (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): There is a reason why we are meeting at this time in the General Assembly and not in the Trusteeship Council: because States can no longer occupy other States. The prohibition of aggression and of the forced annexation of territory are peremptory norms of international law.

The farcical 30 September referendums do not change the status of any Ukrainian territory. The right of peoples to self-determination, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in resolution 1514 (XV), is inalienable and the fundamental basis of the very existence of this Organization.

Let us be clear: Donetsk is Ukraine, Lugansk is Ukraine, and Kherson, Zaporizhzhya and Crimea are Ukraine. To aid and abet such violations is itself an international crime. Ukraine is its own State, with its own people and its own democratically elected Government. Costa Rica condemns in the strongest terms the shelling that ravaged Ukrainian communities across the country this weekend. Throughout the invasion against Ukraine, those attacks have reflected continued and complete disdain for human rights, humanitarian law and international norms.

Thus what we as the international community must fear most at this time is power with impunity. But we must not only fear it; we must also vanquish it through bravery — impunity for not abiding by international law, impunity for relying on military might, impunity for sending thousands of civilians to a war that is not theirs and turning the country's people into pawns in a cruel and self-defeating charade. Costa

Rica stands in solidarity with Ukraine and with the Russian people, who in no way benefit from this neo-imperial transgression but who are being sent to die in its trenches.

Impunity is also a failure to confront the painful and unjust truth of this war. We can see that in the way in which media rights and freedom of speech have been severely curtailed since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine. Journalists and media workers have been murdered or injured, unable to carry out their vital work owing to the ongoing hostilities, displacement and threats. Media outlets have been blocked, and freedom of expression has been censored. Journalists and media representatives are the eyes and the ears on the ground that make it possible for us to have a meaningful debate here in New York. Their freedom of opinion and expression is precious and must be preserved.

Of course, freedom of expression is not the only human right to fall victim to that aggression. Recent reports of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine have documented thousands of civilian deaths as well as the mass destruction of civilian infrastructure, summary executions, enforced disappearances, torture and sexual violence. I could list many more offences, but at this time there are just too many to count. In 2022 we should not have to explain that the prohibition of torture, of the arbitrary deprivation of life and of sexual violence is absolute in nature.

Costa Rica calls upon all parties, no matter their affiliation, to comply with international law. Human rights violations must never be used as political means to an end. When they are used as such, they must be documented, and the perpetrators must be held accountable. For that reason, Costa Rica stresses its support for the investigation being conducted by the International Criminal Court on war crimes in Ukraine.

The threat of nuclear force typifies that impunity. It is all the more outrageous that the use of nuclear weapons is being used as a threat in an attempt to weaken resistance to that brutal invasion. Threatening to use nuclear weapons is also illegal. Paragraphs 4 and 3 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations prohibit the threat of use of nuclear force and the use of force in general.

For years we have called for the reduction of nuclear stockpiles and for full compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Those

calls have fallen on deaf ears. Nuclear weapons are not abstract concepts; they are concrete threats against all of us. The Ukrainians huddled in bomb shelters and subway stations know this all too well. When will the rest of us understand this fact? Consequently, we urge the Russian Federation to put an end to nuclear blackmail and to abide by its obligations under international law.

All wars are wars lost. Costa Rica calls on States to not only reject or refuse to recognize these supposed annexations but also to cooperate to bring them to an end. We demand the prevalence of law over force, the absence of impunity and peaceful and negotiated solutions to conflicts. We also demand compliance with international law and respect for human rights and the Charter of the United Nations; that is the only way to solve our problems. It is time to abandon the aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Szczerski (Poland): Since early this morning, we have moved further away from a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine. Massive Russian strikes against civilian infrastructure in multiple Ukrainian locations, justified by the spiteful rhetoric of revenge of the Kremlin regime, constitute yet another grim chapter in the escalation caused by the aggressor. We cannot remain indifferent to those unacceptable acts of a terrorist nature.

The Charter of the United Nations once again desperately needs us to defend it. That is why our countries, one by one, big and small, are taking the floor today to strongly declare our commitment to the Charter's values. That is why we are reiterating our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. That is why we are condemning the latest blatant violations of the core principles on which our international order is based.

The Polish position is clear: sham referendums are evidently illegal, they cannot produce any legal effect, and they cannot lead to any binding action. A single vote in the Security Council more than a week ago (see S/PV.9143) managed to obscure that reality. Fortunately, in this Hall there is no veto right. All members are equal and have the identical power of one vote. Let us make good use of it, which is all the more important given that the Russian Federation tried only moments ago to deprive us all of the freedoms of speech and expression before the voting.

In principle, the upcoming vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, submitted by Ukraine, should be

indisputable — a strong and resounding “in favour”. Those States that do not recognize the independence of the so-called Donbas people’s republics should not recognize their attempted illegal incorporation into Russia. The former was just a pretext to accomplish the latter. Such behaviour is clear proof of the policy of fait accompli pursued by the Russian occupiers and their proxies, both in the past and at present.

Not condemning the attempted annexations would mean weakening the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations system as a whole. One cannot expect United Nations institutions to function efficiently if one does not vote in accordance with the very foundations on which they were established. Those who undermine the Charter cannot at the same time expect the United Nations system to deliver in fields such as peacekeeping, development aid or humanitarian assistance, to name just a few.

On the other hand, voting in favour of the proposed draft resolution is a much-desired sign of solidarity — solidarity not only with Ukraine but with all those who could share the same fate in future. To us in Poland, that is the very embodiment of the Golden Rule of the United Nations: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

Poland therefore once again calls on all Member States to demonstrate their determination in defending the basic principles of the international order. Let us reaffirm our enduring support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine.

The non-recognition of the Russian policy of fait accompli is a precondition for diplomacy to work and peace talks to begin. A just peace is all that we desire, so let us reject the attempted illegal annexations and give peace a chance. Let us show that we stand by the Charter of the United Nations. Let us close ranks and vote in favour — in favour of the United Nations system and of international solidarity.

Mr. Nasir (Indonesia): Respect for and adherence to international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity are fundamental and a principled position for Indonesia. It is crystal-clear to us that the settlement of disputes between countries can and must be resolved only through peaceful means, in accordance with international law. Only genuine dialogue can bring a lasting solution. War brings us nowhere.

The war in Ukraine is evidence that only death, destruction and human misery are winning. The events

of the last few hours and days further confirm that. We therefore reiterate our call to stop the war.

While we welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and of some countries to bring the parties to dialogue and to the negotiating table, the international community must work harder to ensure that peace prevails. We must aggressively wage peace. Peace must be our ultimate aim and priority.

As the war in Ukraine persists and the response thereto continues, the number of casualties and refugees continues to surge. Moreover, the war has also had far-reaching consequences. Billions of people, particularly the poor around the world, have become its unintended victims. The increasing costs of grain and fertilizer perpetuated by the war are contributing to the worsening of the global food, energy and financial crises. The Secretary-General has referred to this as a once-in-a-generation global cost-of-living crisis, in which developing countries are disproportionately affected.

It is not too late for us to choose an alternate path. Ending the war is the only way to save lives and to ease the suffering of innocents around the world. The unity of the General Assembly is needed now more than ever in addressing the wider humanitarian impact of the war.

The referendums on four regions in Ukraine not only violates the principle of the Charter of the United Nations and international law; it also further complicates efforts to peacefully resolve the conflict. As the highest decision-making body of the United Nations, the General Assembly must resolutely demonstrate its political leadership, including in the outcomes and resolutions it produces. We must ensure that the General Assembly does not represent only the political aspirations of the few.

We must also avoid a take-it-or-leave-it approach. We therefore deeply regret that inputs calling for an end to the war and for the immediate and peaceful resolution of the conflict in Ukraine failed to be reflected in the final draft of today’s draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.5).

We remain convinced that lasting peace can be achieved only at the negotiating table. We should not let efforts to find a peaceful solution be held back by divisions and distrust. Indonesia stands ready to engage constructively, including through the promotion of an environment conducive to peace.

Mrs. Frazier (Malta): Malta fully supports the resumption of this emergency special session following

the use of the veto by the Russian Federation on 30 September (see S/PV.9143).

Malta aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

At the outset, Malta condemns the most recent attacks by Russia against Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine. Such indiscriminate attacks on civilians are war crimes, and the perpetrators must be held to account.

As a member of the core group on the veto initiative, we remain firm in our belief that the General Assembly has a duty to react to the violations of international law that are being committed in Ukraine. Malta strongly condemns and rejects the attempts by Russia to illegally annex the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and Kherson regions of Ukraine through the holding of sham referendums. Those so-called results constitute a serious and dangerous escalation and are a blatant violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and they show complete disregard for the fundamental principles of international law.

The Security Council is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. That is a responsibility that it cannot share. The use, or rather the abuse, of the veto by the aggressor in an attempt to consolidate its acts is reprehensible. That is something that the rest of the United Nations membership must strongly reject. As an incoming member of the Security Council, we stand committed to safeguarding those principles.

Equally reprehensible are the rhetoric and threats concerning the use of nuclear weapons. Together we need to reaffirm our steadfast commitment to the rules-based international order. We must act in a decisive and unequivocal manner to protect the Charter of the United Nations. That is our collective responsibility. We urge all Member States to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, which is before us today. It is concise and to the point and addresses recent developments in a factual manner.

The costs of the war in Ukraine have reached far beyond Europe and are being felt worldwide, most acutely when it comes to the unfolding food and energy crisis.

Today the General Assembly has the opportunity to send an important message to the world that violations

of international law and the sovereignty of States will not be tolerated. Those are the principles to which the founding Members of the United Nations agreed 77 years ago. They are the principles that we have all signed up to. Today it is our duty to reaffirm them and counter contempt for them.

Ms. Brandt (Netherlands): The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement just made by the representative of the European Union.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having reconvened this emergency special session and for recognizing that these are not ordinary times. We are here nearly eight months after Russia unleashed its war of aggression against Ukraine. It has been eight months since the Assembly demanded, in the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution ES-11/2, that the Russian Federation:

“immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders”.

Those eight months have brought hardship and food insecurity to people across the globe, plunging millions of the world's most vulnerable into hunger and poverty. We are here because just like eight years ago, with its illegal annexation of Crimea, Russia decided to ignore the calls of the international community and went ahead with the organization of illegal referendums in areas temporarily under its occupation. Russia did what the Secretary-General warned it not to do and proceeded with the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory.

I want to state clearly that the Kingdom of the Netherlands will never recognize the sham referendums and the attempted illegal annexation of Ukrainian territory. Crimea, Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Donetsk and Luhansk are Ukraine. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands firmly with Ukraine and will continue to provide support for as long as it takes, as we will continue to support people all over the world who are suffering the effects of that war indirectly, from hunger and poverty to economic instability. We must hold Russia to account for that suffering as well.

It is up to us, the States Members of the United Nations, to stand firm for the principles we laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, to make clear that might is not right, that all of us are bound by the same fundamental principles and that a veto does not provide a blank cheque. Our international rulebook is no longer

just in jeopardy; it has been trampled by a permanent member of the Security Council. That is something that none of us should accept.

Today's meeting is about defending the principles of that international rulebook and the Charter, about protecting the legal frameworks aimed at securing peace, justice and human rights. Those responsible for violating the Charter and for committing atrocities must be held to account. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, with The Hague as the legal capital of the world, feels a special responsibility in that regard. We will not waver in our efforts to achieve justice for those who suffer from sexual violence, deportation, torture and random killing.

In conclusion, this is a war of destruction — destruction, as we have sadly seen again early this morning, with horrific missile strikes on cities across Ukraine, including the capital, Kyiv, targeting innocent civilians and civilian infrastructure, which we condemn in the strongest terms. As you just stated, Mr. President, the fighting must stop, so we renew our call on Russia to abide by the legally binding provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice to immediately suspend its military operations and respect internationally recognized borders.

As I said in this very same Hall seven months ago, this war needs to end, and it needs to be ended by those who started it. I therefore call on all States Members of the United Nations to vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, to vote to respect the territorial integrity of our fellow State Member of the United Nations Ukraine and to vote to defend the principles of our own Charter.

Mrs. Dostert (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union. Allow me to supplement that statement with some remarks in our national capacity.

I wish to reaffirm the full solidarity of Luxembourg with the Government and the people of Ukraine. Luxembourg condemns in the strongest terms the Russian aggression against Ukraine. We condemn the deadly missile attacks launched by the Russian Federation against civilians in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. The atrocities committed by Russian armed forces in Ukraine may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must do everything in our

power to hold the perpetrators accountable and to bring justice to victims.

Luxembourg also condemns the attempted illegal annexations of the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya by Russia. Those regions, like Crimea, constitute an integral part of Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders. As a result of the Russian veto cast during the voting held on 30 September (see S/PV.9143), the Security Council was once again unable to take the decisions necessary to shoulder its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I thank you, Mr. President, for having resumed this emergency special session of the General Assembly, which allows all States Members of the United Nations to speak on a subject that is of concern to us all: the respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for international law.

Faced with the Security Council's paralysis, it is now up to the General Assembly to rally for an international order based on the rule of law and not on the principle of might is right. The illegal annexation orchestrated by Russia and the sham referendums that preceded it constitute a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

In these very difficult times, we cannot recall often enough the text of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, which states:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations”.

The Secretary-General has expressed his views unequivocally, stating that any annexation of the territory of a State by another State as a result of the threat or use of force constitutes a violation of the principles of the Charter and of international law, and any decision taken by Russia to move to the annexation of the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya has no legal value and must be condemned. It has no place in the modern world.

Luxembourg co-sponsored and will vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, entitled “Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the

Charter of the United Nations". It is a concise and targeted text that is the fruit of a transparent process. Luxembourg calls upon all States that hold dear respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law to support this draft.

What is taking place in Ukraine today could happen in other countries tomorrow if the perpetrators of that aggression are not held accountable for their acts and if there is no resolute and united response on the part of the international community in the face of that flagrant violation of the territorial integrity of a sovereign country.

Mr. Blanco Conde (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Dominican Republic reiterates its commitment to the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. To accept and see almost normalized an international landscape in which the Charter is consistently violated is a source of grave concern. Violations of the Charter lead to one thing and one thing only: suffering and human desperation.

In his recent statement during the general debate in the General Assembly, our Minister for Foreign Affairs said:

"[U]nfortunately, events such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine have created not only distress due to the loss of human lives but also a dangerous increase in hunger in various regions, many of which are far removed from that conflict" (A/77/PV.7, p.39).

Recent events confirm that far from letting up, the conflict threatens to expand, and, worryingly, spaces for dialogue and the negotiation of a peaceful solution to the conflict continue to narrow. That began to occur once Russia moved to decree the annexation of territories that are part of Ukraine and declared that any negotiation would not include Russian recognition of Ukrainian sovereignty over the annexed territories.

For the Dominican Republic, as must be the case for the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations, having to discuss this issue is painful, not only because it involves violations of human rights in general, which are affecting more directly the people in the area of the conflict unleashed by the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, but also because the situation has put the entire world on the brink of disaster.

In this tragedy, what is most difficult to endure is the unbearable fact of human rights violations and the

impossible situation facing the Security Council, which does not have a safeguard that allows it to condemn those violations. That situation has been termed an abuse of the right of veto.

As such, we have no alternative other than to use the General Assembly to appeal to the common sense and good conscience of the parties involved so as to negotiate a peaceful solution to the conflict and ensure respect for the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and for human rights in their entirety.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): We are meeting again at this special emergency session because the unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression in Ukraine has not stopped but, in fact, has worsened. The sham referendums in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya, organized in a rush and at gunpoint, and the follow-up annexation have demonstrated to everyone, including the most sceptical, that for Russia there is no international law, there is no Charter of the United Nations, and there is no Ukrainian Constitution.

Albania will not recognize the sham referendums and their supposed results. No one should. They have no legitimacy and no legal effect. Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya are and will remain Ukrainian territories, and we stand in full support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

We heard today once again the Russian Federation trying to show similarities between the independence of the Republic of Kosovo and the sham referendums and its illegal annexation of four regions in Ukraine. That is wrong and cynical. Comparing an international effort to end a conflict, protect civilians and establish a peace process so as to find a lasting solution, as was the case in Kosovo, to the pure and unprovoked aggression and the sham referendums engineered in Moscow and carried out in Ukraine is beyond artificial.

No attempt to compare the incomparable, no easy shortcuts taken out of any historical and political context will help Russia divert attention from its war of choice in Ukraine or mask its blatant breach of international law.

In defence of the Charter of the United Nations a few days ago, Albania and the United States submitted a draft resolution (S/2022/720) in the Security Council. Again, only one country voted against and blocked the Council from acting (see S/PV.9143). Only one country

was on the other side, isolated, disconnected from reality, hiding behind the misuse of the veto. It was the aggressor country.

That is why we are here today in the General Assembly — we, the community of peace-loving countries that respect the Charter and uphold international law. Russia cannot veto the General Assembly.

By voting in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, we will be voting for rules, for order, for justice, for core principles, for peace and security. We cannot allow ourselves to be indifferent, and abstention cannot be a choice. We should say no to the aggression. We should say no to the annexation of territory by force. We should say no to that behaviour. That is why we call on the members of the Assembly to vote for the draft resolution as submitted.

Mr. Almoslechner (Austria): Austria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

We meet here today to discuss yet another attempt by the Russian Federation to undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbour Ukraine. It is an attack on not only one nation but also on the Charter of the United Nations, on international law and on the foundations that have guided the relations between States for more than seven decades.

The Secretary-General has made it crystal-clear: this is a matter that concerns us all. Those annexations cannot be reconciled with the international legal framework. They flout the purposes and principles of the Charter. They must not be accepted.

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General for the very clear statements made in defence of the Charter of the United Nations and the sovereignty of Ukraine.

No State can stand on the sidelines while the basic principles of our legal order are undermined. Do we want to live in a world where might prevails over the rule of law? I do not think so. It is therefore our duty to come together today and call for an end to those illegal acts. That is critical for all of us, but even more so to neutral countries such as my own.

The so-called referendums that Russia organized in Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhya to prepare this attempted annexation were equally void of any legal basis. Let me be clear: those sham referendums cannot be called a genuine expression of the popular

will. They lack legitimacy under international law and will not be recognized by us.

There is also another reason why we are meeting today: the fact that the Security Council was yet again unable to act on this matter because Russia used its veto power.

For the past few months, the Council has been unable to act on what is undoubtedly the biggest threat to international security in decades. It is thereby failing to implement its mandate. Resolution 76/262 — the so-called veto initiative — was explicitly adopted this year to address such situations, and we welcome the report that the Security Council submitted to this debate today (A/77/551).

I would like to reiterate our belief that the failure of the Security Council to act in such grave situations reflects a predicament that needs to be discussed. The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace will be an opportunity to do so. But until then, the General Assembly needs to continue to step up. It is clear what needs to be done. The General Assembly must send a strong signal that the world does not accept this blatant breach of the Charter. It must make clear that the so-called referendums were illegal and that the annexation has no legal basis and must not be accepted — not even implicitly.

That is exactly what the draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.5) submitted to the Assembly proposes. Consultations were held thereon with all regional groups in a transparent and inclusive manner. We will therefore vote in favour and encourage all members to do the same.

I cannot close without referring to the suffering that this war has caused in the more than seven months of its duration. Thousands of civilians have been killed. Millions of people have had their lives and livelihoods uprooted. The Russian attacks against civilian infrastructure in Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine in past days are utterly unacceptable and must stop. The protection of civilians is not a choice but a duty under international law.

We have seen reports of unimaginable horrors — in Bucha, Mariupol and Izyum, previously peaceful cities that have now become associated with war crimes, torture, rape and mass killings. Those crimes must be investigated, and the perpetrators must be held to account. We fully support all efforts to do so, including those of the International Criminal Court and the

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, based in Vienna. That senseless Russian aggression has plunged the whole world into peril. Food shortages, soaring energy prices and nuclear blackmail serve Russia's sole purpose of trying to subdue its neighbour, with devastating consequences for the most vulnerable nations.

Let me say a word on the threat of nuclear weapons: a nuclear threat is a clear violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. That is completely unacceptable. Austria categorically rejects any and all nuclear threats, irrespective of the circumstances. That underscores the urgency of progress on nuclear disarmament and of moving away from the nuclear deterrence paradigm.

We call on Russia once again to stop this war, withdraw its troops from the whole territory of Ukraine and end the bloodshed. There must be a return to meaningful negotiations and a sustainable, negotiated solution. That is the only path to peace.

Austria stands in full solidarity with Ukraine, the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people. We once again call on all colleagues to vote in favour of the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this debate, to defend the Charter and to defend international law.

Mr. Wenaweser (Liechtenstein): Once again we are meeting in an emergency special session owing to a further escalation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Since its very beginning, in 2014, that aggression has gone hand in hand with an attempt to distort the fundamental concepts of international law and the basic tenets of the Charter of the United Nations beyond all recognition. But the law is clear. We in this Hall must uphold it, not only for the sake of Ukraine but also to safeguard the international order and to maintain peace and security.

The Assembly unanimously agreed on a definition of aggression in 1974, at the height of the cold war. The very first of the acts listed in that definition is:

“The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State... or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof” (*resolution 3314 (XXIX), annex, article 3(a)*).

Russia's attempt to forcibly annex Ukrainian territory is thus the latest act constitutive of aggression, for which international law provides for individual

criminal responsibility — responsibility that falls on the Russian leadership. It is incumbent on us in this Hall to ensure such accountability for the sake of justice, but also, critically, for future deterrence. That is why we, like many others, advocate for a special tribunal for the crime of aggression. We appeal to all States to join that effort on the basis of our common interest in maintaining internationally agreed borders and averting future aggression.

In its attempt to deny the reality of its aggression, Russia is violating the foundational precepts of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations. It is violating the prohibition of the illegal use of force in the most brazen manner. It is undermining the principle of territorial integrity, which is of vital importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. And it is making a mockery of the right of self-determination, which allows peoples to freely determine their political status. Russia's attempt to fabricate election results through blackmail and intimidation, as well as the use of the illegal so-called referendums to justify the redrawing of Ukraine's internationally recognized borders by force, evokes the worst memories of colonial oppression and imperialism.

Those violations are not simply improvisational tactics; they are the latest example of a well-known playbook. In 2014, when Russia attempted to annex Crimea, it also sought to justify its aggression through the use of a sham referendum. In Syria, as earlier in Chechnya, its relentless targeting of civilians goes hand in hand with support for so-called strongmen through rigged elections and the elimination of any political opposition. Russia seeks to construct an alternative reality based on disinformation, distorting our shared norms and values while claiming to invoke them. We must collectively resist that attempt and speak truth to brute force.

The Assembly will soon vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, which condemns the illegal attempt to annex parts of Ukrainian territory — a continuation of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Our consideration of this text is also an opportunity for Member States to once again speak up in defence of the Charter of the United Nations and of territorial integrity, the sovereignty of States, genuine self-determination and the rule of law. We therefore hope that all members will join us in voting in favour of the draft resolution before us today.

Mrs. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to condemn with sadness, but also in the strongest possible terms, the current attacks against civilians in several Ukrainian cities and to express our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. Switzerland calls on Russia to immediately stop the strikes.

Today we are meeting once again for a special emergency session to consider draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, entitled “Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations”.

In normal times, we would have never found ourselves here discussing or even voting on such a draft resolution, because it involves not only something that is a given — respect for the territorial integrity of a country — but also a fundamental principle of the Charter of the United Nations and of relations between Member States.

We are therefore here to reaffirm the values and principles of our Charter and to call for respect for public international law. A rules-based international order is of great importance to small and medium-sized countries such as Switzerland and the great majority of States members of the Assembly. We cannot tolerate the power of the strongest prevailing over the rights of the weakest. Respect for the Charter is the basis of the security and prosperity of the international community as a whole, and protecting it is therefore an existential need for all of us, everywhere and at all times.

More than seven months after the beginning of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine, we are confronted with a fresh serious violation of international law. The annexation of Ukrainian territory by Russia violates the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Switzerland does not recognize the integration of Ukrainian territories into the Russian Federation and calls on Russia to de-escalate and to withdraw its forces completely and immediately from Ukrainian territory.

In addition to the direct effects of Russia’s military aggression, the consequences of that conflict are being felt across the world, in a situation in which the world needs unity to face the tremendous challenges ahead. Its effects are also being felt here in this building and in this very Hall, not only in meetings such as the one we are attending today but also more generally speaking, manifesting in tensions, divisions and a growing polarization among Member States. Those tensions

threaten the compromises necessary to move forward and to find solutions; therefore, they threaten us all.

We note with concern some fears that calling for respect for international law and holding those who violate it accountable could be unfavourable to de-escalation and the quest for solutions. We strongly reject that idea. International law must prevail at all times, especially in times of political crisis and unrest. Respect for international law is an essential condition for lasting peace.

It is difficult to speak of peace when war is raging, when unspeakable pain is being caused and when the future is uncertain, not only for young people in Ukraine and Russia but also elsewhere in a world that is suffering the consequences of that war. And yet peace is what we must aspire to. Let us today reject the narratives of hate and fight the creation of untruths and the systematic disinformation that divides us. Let us send a clear signal in favour of facts, of international law and of the responsibility of those that violate it.

Switzerland strongly condemns the continual Russian attacks on residential areas in various Ukrainian cities. Switzerland calls on Russia to immediately stop those indiscriminate attacks. Civilians are protected by international humanitarian law.

Switzerland is strongly concerned about the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict in Ukraine and the thousands of victims it is creating. Respect for international humanitarian law by all parties is crucial to limiting those humanitarian consequences.

Switzerland reiterates its call for strict respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. The protection of the civilian population and of persons who are hors de combat is an obligation and must be ensured. We encourage initiatives in that regard and call for the rapid and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout the territory of Ukraine and in the areas occupied by Russia.

In line with its humanitarian tradition, Switzerland reiterates its offer of good offices. In that spirit, Switzerland also expresses, as stated in operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution under consideration, its strong support for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General to de-escalate the situation. The United Nations is a unique and universal platform for dialogue and cooperation if we, the Member States, remain united in defending its values and principles.

Switzerland is a neutral country. Neutrality leads us to refrain from providing military support, but it does not prevent us from mobilizing for international law, for international humanitarian law and for the Charter of the United Nations and its principles. All of us in this Hall have a collective responsibility to defend what unites us, what unites the United Nations. Therefore, Switzerland co-sponsored and supports the draft resolution proposed by Ukraine and calls on all Member States to do the same.

Dame Barbara Woodward (United Kingdom): In February, the General Assembly met in an emergency special session (see A/ES-11/PV.1-6) to condemn Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and today we meet again to condemn Russia's sham referendums and attempted illegal annexation of the Ukrainian regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhya, Luhansk and Donetsk, the largest forcible annexation attempt since the Second World War.

Putin is trying to take Ukraine's land, its resources, its identity. In doing so, he is overturning the most sacred principle in the international system: that borders cannot be drawn by force.

More than seven months into the war, the whole world understands the terrible cost of Russia's invasion. In Ukraine, families count that cost in the bodies exhumed from mass graves, in the rubble of flattened towns, in the lost education for millions of innocent children, and in the growing list of friends and relatives detained or forcibly deported through Russia's filtration process.

Even this morning, millions across Ukraine awoke to the sound of air-raid sirens as Russia carried out one of the largest bombardments of civilian areas and infrastructure in the war. Around the world, people and Governments are suffering from the unaffordable cost of higher food and energy prices. As a result of Russia's invasion, everyone's lives have been made more difficult and more insecure.

Here in New York, we also see the cost in terms of damage to the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter enshrines the principle that there will be no threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. We have no way to resolve disputes or achieve the fundamental goals of the United Nations if we concede that principle, if any rogue Head of State can, by force or fiat, change the borders of another Member of the United Nations.

The Assembly's call on Russia, since the start of its illegal invasion, has been simple: end this war and withdraw from Ukraine. For the sake of Ukraine, Russia and the entire United Nations membership, we reiterate that call today. We call on Russia to end the war and honour the Charter of the United Nations.

At the end of this debate, we will have an opportunity to vote on a draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.5) condemning Russia's so-called referendums and illegal annexation. We urge everyone here to vote in support of international law, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and the Charter of the United Nations. We urge all members to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We convey our gratitude for the special report submitted by the Security Council (A/77/551) pursuant to resolution 76/262, a resolution that remains applicable to the case under consideration today.

Once again, a veto in the Security Council brings us together in the General Assembly. That was the veto, as has been noted, cast by the Russian Federation on 30 September (see S/PV.9143) during the voting on draft resolution S/2022/720, on the so-called referendums held recently in Ukrainian territory in the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya, with a view to their subsequent annexation.

Mexico voted in favour of that draft resolution as an elected member of the Security Council. We will do the same in the General Assembly, on the basis of our unwavering commitment to and support for international law, in particular the principle of the prohibition of territorial expansion through the use of force or through other actions inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations.

As we have been stating since the day last February when the Russian invasion of Ukraine was confirmed, Mexico, as an independent country, has been the victim of four military invasions, and, as a consequence of one of them, it lost around half of its national territory. As such, Mexico cannot under any circumstance allow another country in its turn to fall victim to those types of acts of aggression.

In recent weeks we have seen the emergence of the idea that there is an apparent tension between the right to the self-determination of peoples and States' rights to territorial integrity. It is as if we were talking about dichotomous notions and as if the international

community were forced to prioritize one over the other. For my country, there is no such dilemma. If we view international law as a system in which those principles are applied according to the criteria and conditions unique to specific situations, there is no place for false dichotomies, and even less for interpretations that allow one of those principles to be invoked in open violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

The aforementioned was clearly established in the annex to resolution 2625 (XXV), which states that the enjoyment and exercise of the right to self-determination cannot be construed

“as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States”.

In sum, that norm of international law, which is grounded in the Charter of the United Nations itself and which has been endorsed by the General Assembly and the Security Council and in the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice, means that the so-called referendums held in the occupied territories in Ukraine lack all legal validity. Furthermore, the fact that that exercise was conducted in a territory enduring a military invasion means that any expression of popular will there is null and void.

Mexico is a staunch defender of the sovereignty, national unity, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, as we have been since the very beginning of the war. Any attempt at territorial annexation would constitute an escalation of the armed conflict, including a nuclear threat or nuclear accident, insofar as there is no delineation of a secure perimeter around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant and no guarantees have been given as to the safety of any other.

The recent attacks on civilian infrastructure, which run counter to international humanitarian law, day by day intensify the seriousness of the conflict and increase the war-related costs borne by society. Against that backdrop, it is urgent that efforts be made by the Secretary-General and other potential international actors capable of convening a truce with a view to encouraging dialogue, resuming diplomacy and finding political pathways that could put an end to the war, as my country has proposed time and time again.

I conclude by expressing strong agreement with the majority of States here present regarding the importance of the General Assembly speaking out clearly on the purpose of this emergency special session. It is not possible, through a veto, to eliminate or discredit the edifice of legal rules and institutions that we have built collectively within our Organization, whose only goal is to ensure the peaceful coexistence of the nations of the world.

The ill-titled right of veto has been an issue in the Assembly's discussions since the very inception of the United Nations. It is time to find a collective and systematic solution to restrict the use of the veto in specific circumstances. We invite those delegations that have not yet done so to consider the Franco-Mexican initiative concerning voluntary restraint on the use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities and to sign onto it. The initiative already has 106 signatory States. The real dilemma that we are grappling with in the context of this emergency session is whether we wish to take more effective action to prevent that deeply regrettable circumstance from recurring time and time again.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. We shall hear the remaining speakers Wednesday, 12 October, in this Hall at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.