



General Assembly

Eleventh Emergency Special session

14th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 12 October 2022, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Kőrösi (Hungary)

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

Agenda item 5 (continued)

Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)

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

Mr. Rae (Canada): We meet again in this resumed emergency special session for one reason and one reason only, and that is because the Russian Federation continues to violate international law, specifically Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. Through its illegal actions in Ukraine, Russia is showing us that it is not a partner interested in peace or justice, in Ukraine or elsewhere. Once again, as it has in recent months, it falls upon us, the members of the General Assembly, to defend the Charter and everything the United Nations stands for.

Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 before us is submitted in response to Russia's attempts to illegally and forcibly annex more of Ukraine's territory. The draft resolution reaffirms the principle that borders and boundaries cannot be changed without consent that is freely given. It reaffirms the principle that might does not make right. We call upon every member of the Assembly to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Canada unequivocally condemns the so-called referendums held by the Russian Federation in the illegally occupied regions of Donetsk, Luhansk,

Kherson and Zaporizhzhya, in Ukraine. Those are yet another blatant violation of international law by the Russian Federation. Millions have been either killed or wounded or forcibly displaced by this war of Russian aggression. The latest barrage of missile attacks against civilian infrastructure in Kyiv and cities that Russia now claims as its own through its sham referendums allow all of us to see. It is apparent. The true nature of this war is there. This is not a "special military operation". It is a war to punish and ultimately to destroy Ukraine.

We all know in our heart of hearts that an election that is held at the barrel of a gun can be neither free nor fair. We know that. We know that when someone points a gun at another's head and tells them they must vote, it is not free or fair. Yet President Putin has claimed that these so-called referendums reflect the "will of the people" in those illegally occupied territories. He has claimed that the referendums somehow miraculously, two days after being called, were being carried out in line with democratic standards. He has alleged that they are somehow consistent with the United Nations Charter, as if the Charter means nothing. The reality is that nothing could be further from the truth. This is an illegal invasion, an illegal occupation and an illegal annexation, all at gunpoint. It is not democracy.

(spoke in French)

The actions of the Russian Federation clearly violate the Charter of the United Nations and the customary principle of international law that no acquisition of territory by the threat or use of force shall be recognized as lawful. Those fundamental principles, to

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which we all adhere — namely, the sovereign equality of all Member States, the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and abstention from the threat or use of force — have never been as threatened as they are today. Here, in the halls of the United Nations, we often talk about precedent. We must not allow another tyrannical precedent of invasion, occupation and annexation to override our commitment to the rule of law. We cannot allow the Security Council, to which we have entrusted the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to be entirely paralysed by a permanent member who clearly and publicly aspires to subjugate another State.

We are convinced that the majority of the countries represented in the Assembly are of the same opinion. It is not just the eastern countries; it is countries around the world. This afternoon, we are going to see the extent to which the countries of the world reject President Putin's declared policy. The latest attempt by President Putin to grab land in Ukraine is on a scale not seen since the Second World War. The territory illegally annexed by the Russian Federation covers an area of 109,000 square kilometres. That area is larger than the territory of three Canadian provinces — and Canada is quite large. That territory is larger than that which nearly half of the Members of the Organization possess within their internationally recognized borders. It is about the same size as the three Baltic countries illegally annexed by Stalin in 1940. We must remember that point because after the occupation of the three Baltic countries by the Soviet army, the rate of participation in the "elections" of the new constituent assemblies reached a staggering 99.6 per cent in 1940 following the invasion and annexation by Stalin's Government. Ironically and oddly, that figure of over 99 per cent resembles the results of the so-called referendums held in the four illegally occupied regions of Ukraine that Russia has just attempted to annex.

Imperial habits die hard. President Putin seeks to revive Russia's imperial past through invasion, occupation, annexation and subjugation. If his actions are not enough to convince us, his words are crystal clear. Those words should be read because President Putin speaks publicly about his desire to rebuild the former Russian Empire by any means necessary and to forever absorb into it the citizens of the free, independent and sovereign States of the former Soviet Union — whether they like it or not.

Yet President Putin and the representatives of the Russian Federation in this Hall have the audacity to tell us that they are acting in accordance with the Charter and international law. They say that this is a "decolonizing" project. No, it absolutely is not. On the contrary, the reality and the truth are clear. Russia's war of aggression runs counter to the principles that are at the heart of the United Nations Charter. Let us read the words of the Charter. I have it here in my hand. Article 2 states:

(spoke in English)

"The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

"All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.

"All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered."

President Putin would also have us believe that there is a conspiracy against the Russian Federation. That concept was recycled late this morning by the representative of another country. He would have us believe that somehow, something called the "West" is seeking to violate Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The West did not create the Charter. The Soviet Union signed the Charter. China signed the Charter. It was not created by the West. It was created by the Member States at that time. We need to understand that there is no grand conspiracy against Russia. The international community is not anti-Russian. Russia is facing the consequences of its own actions, that is, launching an illegal and disastrous further invasion of Ukraine on the basis of President Putin's desire for an empire that is long since gone. As I said in French, apparently, imperial habits die a very hard death. Russia makes claims of Russophobia, sort of like the kid who kills his parents and then goes to the Court and says, "Help me out, I am an orphan". There is no Russophobia. Its own soldiers, artillery, tanks, warplanes and missiles are flattening Russian-speaking cities and towns and abusing Russian-speaking populations in eastern Ukraine.

No country is seeking to violate Russia's sovereignty or its territorial integrity. The International Court of Justice has said there was no evidence to

support that allegation by the Russian Federation. Instead, it is Russia that has twice violated Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity since 2014. Russia has similarly violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of both Georgia and Moldova. Russia says that it is speaking the language of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, and it claims to be a friend of the Charter. The reality is that there is no greater threat today to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter than Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the annexation that has taken place over the past few days.

No one is bent on Russia's destruction. The Ukrainian people are valiantly defending themselves to secure their freedom and survival from Russia's war of aggression. Together with many of our allies and partners, we in Canada are taking what we believe to be proportional and necessary steps in response, including supporting Ukraine with the means to defend itself from Russia's aggression and to reclaim its territory. It can be argued and shown that Article 51 of the Charter in fact anticipates a situation just like this, because it says very explicitly that

“[n]othing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security”.

We do not seek Russia's destruction. What we seek is for the Russian Federation to live up to its commitments under the United Nations Charter and international law; to behave as a responsible member of the international community, like Ukraine and like so many other members of the Assembly; and to act as a steward of the Charter and as a steward of peace in the world. That was clearly anticipated in the creation of the status of permanent members whose mission in life it would be to preserve territorial integrity and global security. That is exactly the opposite of what Russia is now doing.

The Russian Federation has the power to end this war. It has the power to end the untold misery that it has caused. The impacts have been felt most severely in Ukraine and by the many Ukrainians who have died due to the mindless and systematic destruction of infrastructure and the necessary means of life. But we also have to remember — and every representative here knows this — that the inequality of the world

has historically been our greatest challenge, as has the security of the world. Then came the coronavirus disease. Climate change remains with us. And now comes this aggression, which has had a devastating impact, not merely on the people, economy and society of Ukraine, but also on the economies of each and every country that is represented here at the United Nations.

The Secretary-General has said that we are facing a winter of discontent. The International Monetary Fund reported yesterday that we are heading for an unprecedented global recession. Let us imagine how much better it would be if, instead of debating this motion — which we simply have to debate because the Security Council is not capable of doing its job because Russia has a veto — we were debating in this Hall how we could rebuild and how we could remake the economies and societies that have been so devastated by the impact of the cascading crises that we have been facing over the past decade. Instead of that, we are being forced to go back to square one and say “let us call it what it is” — an illegal aggression and an illegal annexation. If Russia would refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force, and if it would completely and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from the territory of Ukraine that it has illegally occupied, we would see an end to this terrible tragedy and we could start to rebuild — not rebuild just Ukraine but rebuild the economies of the world, including Russia's.

We have twice now demanded that as an Assembly. We are doing it now for the third time in response to the sham referendums and the desperate attempts to prolong what can only be described as a truly senseless, cruel and brutal war of aggression. The Charter calls on us all to “unite our strength” to maintain international peace and security. I want to suggest that we must, all of us, rise to that call today to defend the Charter and with it, yes, Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence. But in fact, it is not just the sovereignty of Ukraine, but the sovereignty of each and every Member State here; it is not just the territorial integrity of Ukraine, but the territorial integrity of each and every country that is represented here; and it is not just the political independence of Ukraine, but the independence of all of us self-governing nations represented here.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): Today's debate is simple. It can be summed up in one question: Do we want to defend the principles of the

Charter of the United Nations? That question concerns us all because the Charter is the cement of the United Nations. It is the guarantee of peaceful coexistence among sovereign States.

By attacking Ukraine, Russia not only unleashed an atrocious war with global repercussions, in terms of food, energy, economics and nuclear power; it also deliberately violated the most basic principles of international law. The International Court of Justice said as much unambiguously on 16 March, when it ordered the suspension of Russian military operations in Ukraine. It is clear that Russia has in no way complied with that decision.

The acquisition of territory by force should be a matter of concern to every State member of the General Assembly. By invading its neighbour, Russia has decided to pave the way for other wars of annexation. What is happening today in Europe may happen tomorrow elsewhere, in Asia, Africa or Latin America. We must be aware of that.

As long as Russia continues to intentionally and indiscriminately bombard cities and civilian infrastructure and to commit an ever-greater number of abuses that clearly constitute war crimes, France will never come resign itself to accepting a world in which force trumps right. France will never recognize either the sham referendums or the illegal annexation of entire swaths of Ukrainian territory. It will continue to support Ukraine, its sovereignty and its territorial integrity for as long as necessary. That is why France worked, with its partners, in a transparent and inclusive process, to draft a text that everyone should be able to support. The text is concise. It condemns the annexation of territories conquered by force.

Essentially, we are faced with a simple choice — condone war or defend peace. It is a question not of choosing a side, but of preserving the international order and its values. Abstaining is not an option. France therefore encourages all Members of the United Nations to defend the Charter and its universal principles.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): It has been nearly eight months since the crisis in Ukraine broke out. As we speak, the conflict rages on. The flames and the fighting are spreading, and the prospect of a peaceful settlement is not yet in sight. The crisis is becoming increasingly protracted, widespread and complicated, and its spillover effects are further

penetrating and affecting economies and people's livelihoods, bringing more instability and uncertainty to an already turbulent world and causing deep concern.

During the recently concluded general debate of the General Assembly, State leaders from around the world expressed their views and propositions on the crisis in Ukraine. Despite differences in view, a common thread is that most countries called on the parties to the conflict to cease fighting as soon as possible and to resolve the crisis peacefully through dialogue. They called for greater humanitarian relief for the people of Ukraine, who have been deeply affected by the crisis. They called for joint international efforts to mitigate the spillover impact, especially on developing countries. And they all called for unity to avoid bloc confrontations triggered by the crisis and the start of a new Cold War. Those appeals and demands should be the focus of our attention and the goal of this emergency special session. In that regard, China wishes to emphasize the following.

First, we stress the need for dialogue and engagement for a political settlement to the crisis in Ukraine. China is deeply worried about the recent intensification of the ground conflict and deplors the civilian casualties and damage to civilian facilities caused thereby. What is urgent now is to guide the parties concerned to exercise restraint, avoid the escalation of conflict, prevent the confrontation from spinning out of control and de-escalate the situation. In the final analysis, the Ukraine crisis must be resolved peacefully. However daunting the difficulties and challenges may be, the door to political settlement shall not be closed, diplomatic negotiations shall not be stalled and efforts to stop hostilities and promote peace talks shall not be slackened. The international community must encourage the parties concerned to relaunch peace talks as soon as possible, incorporate reasonable concerns into negotiations, put feasible options on the table and create conditions and space for the cessation of hostilities and settlement of the crisis.

Secondly, there must be increased efforts to provide humanitarian relief and alleviate the plight of the civilians affected. The humanitarian situation in Ukraine has deteriorated since the outbreak of the crisis and the coming long winter will further aggravate their difficulties. China commends Ukraine's neighbouring countries for hosting millions of refugees and supports the United Nations and international humanitarian agencies in assisting Ukraine and helping to share the

burden of its neighbours, based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. The parties to the conflict should strictly observe international humanitarian law, refrain from harming innocent civilians, give priority to the protection of women, children and other vulnerable groups, and facilitate evacuation and cooperation on the ground with regard to humanitarian aid. China calls on the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries and to ensure a proper resettlement of the people affected by the conflict. The safety and security of nuclear facilities cannot be compromised, not even by the smallest margin. We call on all parties concerned to exercise restraint and prevent an irreparable humanitarian disaster.

Thirdly, we must strengthen solidarity and cooperation to minimize the spillover effects of the conflict. The interwoven impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine has exposed all countries in the world, developing countries in particular, to a myriad of challenges, including food security, energy security and financial security, making it all the more difficult to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All-out and indiscriminate sanctions will not help solve the problem. Instead, they will only disrupt the stability of global supply and industrial chains, amplify the spillover effect of the crisis and affect the normal life of peoples worldwide.

The conclusion and implementation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative has played a positive role in stabilizing global food prices and improving food supply in developing countries. We encourage more such efforts and look forward to other, similar arrangements. We call on the international community, the United Nations in particular, to keep development high on the international agenda, diffuse the spillover effects of the crisis in Ukraine, help developing countries overcome difficulties and prevent hard-won development gains from going down the drain.

Fourthly, we must abandon the Cold War mentality and prevent the world from falling into division. The crisis in Ukraine shows once again that clinging to the Cold War mentality and bloc politics, creating bloc confrontation and pursuing absolute security will not bring peace but lead only to conflicts that serve the interests of no one. At a time when the world needs unity and cooperation to overcome difficulties, it is irresponsible and dangerous to focus on ideological

differences, intimidate and force other countries to take sides, create isolation, exert pressure and engage in decoupling and chain-cutting. We must draw lessons from history, reject division and confrontation, uphold solidarity and cooperation, practice multilateralism and jointly safeguard the international system, with the United Nations at its core, and the international order based on international law, with a view to promoting world peace and development.

As the most representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly should play an active and constructive role in the issue of Ukraine by bridging differences and forming consensus, garnering the greatest synergy for peace talks and finding the greatest common factor among Member States. We have always believed that any action taken by the General Assembly should be conducive to the de-escalation of the situation, the early resumption of dialogue and the promotion of a political solution to this crisis.

The draft resolution (A/ES-11/L.5) submitted for adoption at this emergency special session will not help achieve the objectives mentioned. Therefore, the Chinese delegation will abstain in the voting. Moreover, the Chinese delegation wishes to point out that the work of the General Assembly should be conducted in full accordance with the rules of procedure and reflect fairness and impartiality. With regard to procedural issues, the views of all Member States should be fully expressed and their motions must be given equal weight.

On the question of Ukraine, China has always maintained that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, that the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed, that the reasonable security concerns of all countries should be taken seriously, and that support should be given to all the efforts aimed at peaceful solutions. As a responsible country, China will always stand on the side of peace. We will work with the international community and play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation and seeking a political solution to the crisis.

Mrs. Thomas-Greenfield (United States of America): I speak to all those who dedicate themselves to the noble mission of this institution. Soon, we will vote on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, which is important not just for the future of Ukraine and the future of Europe, but for the very foundations of this institution. After all, the United Nations was built on

an idea that never again would one country be allowed to take another country's territory by force. In the wake of the Second World War, that important idea, despite all of our differences, brought us together. Now, we are called upon to defend that idea and the Charter of the United Nations that embodies it.

The facts are clear. A United Nations Member State — one with a permanent seat on the Security Council — has attempted to annex territory from its neighbour by force. That United Nations Member State has not only put its neighbour in its crosshairs but has also put a bullseye on this institution's core principle that one country cannot take the territory of another by force. Eight years ago, the General Assembly was asked to respond to this same United Nations Member State's attempted annexation of Crimea. Back then, the General Assembly defended the United Nations Charter. We overwhelmingly adopted resolution 68/262, affirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We must do the same today.

As in 2014, Russia is testing the resolve of the world to stand up for the core principles of international law. How else do we explain the flagrant disregard of the values of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peace and security? How else do we explain the horrific attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure that we have seen this week? How else do we explain the sabre-rattling from Putin and his veiled threats to deploy nuclear force? Those are threats against this institution. They are threats against all of us. We have heard countries underscore the need to pursue solutions that lead to dialogue and peace. Believe me, there is nothing we would like to see more than peace. We would like to stop seeing craters in Ukrainian playgrounds where swings used to be. We would like to stop seeing dangerous attacks on the city of Zaporizhzhya that threaten civilians. We would like to stop seeing Russia commit war crimes.

The path to peace does not run through placations. The path to peace does not involve turning the other way in the face of those flagrant violations. Peace does not and has never come from silence. The only way to bring peace is to stop this aggression, to demand accountability, to stand together with conviction and to show what we will not tolerate. So let us send a clear message today. The United Nations will not tolerate attempts at illegal annexation. We will never recognize it. The United Nations will not tolerate seizing a

neighbour's land by force. We will stand up to it. The United Nations will not tolerate the destruction of the United Nations Charter. We will defend it.

As the Secretary-General has said, Russia's actions have no place in our modern world. That is why the draft resolution before us calls for peace and de-escalation. But it also makes clear that we reject Russia's attempted annexations and that we reject this affront to territorial integrity, to national sovereignty, to peace and security. We reject it because we believe in the United Nations. We believe that the fundamental guardrails of the international system protect us all. Today it is Russia invading Ukraine, but tomorrow it could be another nation whose territory is violated. It could be anyone. Any country could be next. What should that country expect from this Hall? Our message is loud and clear. It does not matter if a nation is big or small, rich or poor, old or new; if a nation is a United Nations Member State, its borders are its own and protected by international law. They cannot be redrawn by anyone else by force. That is why all of us, together, built this institution. And that is why we must defend it, here and now.

Today the United States will proudly vote in favour of the draft resolution, and we urge every country to do the same. They should do so not because we are asking them to do it, but because they know that it is the right thing to do. Let us condemn Russia for its illegal attempted annexations. Let us affirm the borders of every United Nations Member State as they stand. And with the eyes of a worried world upon us, let us renew our promise, as the United Nations Charter says, to be good neighbours in the pursuit of a peaceful world.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Caccia (Holy See): We have heard many words over these past hours. The Holy See is taking the floor with a succinct and heartfelt plea to end the madness of this conflict, which with every ongoing hour takes innocent lives and deepens the wounds among peoples, destroying the mutual trust upon which the international order depends.

Just a few days ago, Pope Francis made this heartfelt appeal:

“In the name of God and in the name of the sense of humanity that dwells in every heart, I renew my call for an immediate ceasefire. May the weapons be silenced and may conditions be

sought for the start of negotiations that will lead to solutions that are not imposed by force, but are consensual, just and stable.”

His Holiness clearly indicated that solutions must be based on respect for the sacrosanct value of human life, as well as on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each country.

Having addressed a direct appeal to the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as to all the protagonists of international life and the political leaders of nations, Pope Francis stressed that we gathered here in this Hall have a role to play and must do everything possible to bring an end to the war, without allowing ourselves to be drawn into dangerous escalations, and to promote and support initiatives for dialogue. Those words take on greater weight with the added threat of nuclear escalation and make even more urgent the transformation of the hearts of those who hold the outcome of the war in their hands, so that the hurricane of violence may cease and peaceful coexistence, in justice, may be rebuilt.

The affirmation of the clear principles of international law that are underlined by draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 before us and that are clearly enshrined in the United Nations Charter should be understood as opening a path to a just and peaceful solution, and not as a way to aggravate the conflict, which has already claimed too many victims. From this Hall, may the clarion call of Pope Paul VI sound out again.

(spoke in French)

No more war!

(spoke in English)

No more war!

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. Beresford-Hill (Sovereign Order of Malta): We are now at the conclusion of a strong and dramatic debate driven by conflict and suffering, aggrandizement and force. But, unlike with other historical precedents, particularly those involving Europe, which were oftentimes conducted in the aftermath of battle, all of this week and over the past three quarters of a year we have been deliberating in the heat of it. And yet the words of this salvific Assembly, uttered amid the burning rage that consumes two sovereign nations, seem to have little effect. And in the midst of that

burning rage, it is the poor, the sick and those who have nowhere to go who suffer the most. All of our histories are intertwined. The commonality of human motivation and desire is all too evident. Technology and the integration of economies, whether we like it or not, have made all of us more than bystanders. No nation can allow this conflict to spiral out of control because the consequences, as we all know, are too terrible to contemplate and, no matter how far away and isolated we feel we might be, the detritus of burning rage will consume us.

The Sovereign Order of Malta is unique in its sui generis status, as both a sovereign entity and a Catholic religious order, as it seeks to embrace its citizens with charity and love. Those citizens are those who are left behind. They are the forgotten people of our world, often stateless, homeless, the trafficked, the migrant and refugees, the suffering humankind that is so often left without support and hope. Few States are too proud to refuse our help on behalf of those who are in need. Fewer still are unwilling to augment their own services with the apolitical and neutral aid that we offer, without consideration of religion or politics. Yet today in Ukraine, despite recent missile attacks on Lviv, our staff and volunteers continue their mission throughout the country in the same spirit as that of the heroic employees of Caritas who were so tragically killed in Mariupol in April.

We recognize that this debate will shortly close, but we wish to appeal for a cessation of hostilities on behalf of those millions of innocent civilians suffering through no fault of their own: a father crying over a wife killed during a missile attack, an elderly woman crippled and confined to bed while gunfire rages outside her flat, a mother laying to rest her only son, a soldier killed in battle, a child bereft of parents and alone. When these vignettes become the norm and when the innocent see no way out of their pain, then we fail the Charter of the United Nations. That is a beacon of light that brings us all together. Let us not allow the Charter to be consumed by burning rage. Collectively, we are better than that — much better than that.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5. Before giving the floor for explanations of vote before the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the meeting on 10 October (see A/ES-11/PV.12) we talked about the reasons and goals for holding referendums in the Donetsk and Luhansk Republics, as well as in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya regions. On 28 September, the final results of the referendums were tallied and the vast majority of those who voted — 99 per cent in the Donetsk People’s Republic, 98 per cent in the Luhansk People’s Republic, 93 per cent in Zaporizhzhya and 87 per cent in the Kherson region — supported the idea of those regions becoming a part of Russia. Despite the difficult security situation and the provocations of the Kyiv regime, the vast majority of voters decided to cast their vote, ranging from 76 per cent in the Kherson region to 97 per cent in the Donetsk People’s Republic.

The results of the vote speak for themselves. The populations of those regions do not want to return to Ukraine and have made an informed and free choice in favour of our country. The referendums were held in full accordance with the norms and principles of international law, no matter how hard our Western opponents or even the Secretary-General, who suddenly decided to speak for the entire United Nations without a mandate, may try to prove otherwise. More than 100 international observers from Italy, Germany, Venezuela, Latvia and other countries who observed the referendum also recognized its outcome as legitimate.

Today, however, the General Assembly has been presented with a politicized and openly provocative document that not only ignores all of those facts but also contains a confrontational charge that could destroy any and all efforts in favour of a diplomatic solution to the crisis in Ukraine. Despite its title, it has nothing to do with the protection of international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. By introducing draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, Western States are pursuing their own geopolitical goals and are once again trying to use the members of the General Assembly as bit players. The expressions of commitment to the protection of international law that the Assembly heard today from representatives of the United States and other NATO member States are a vivid example of hypocrisy and double standards. It is telling that they have temporarily even stopped using their pet phrase, “rules-based order”.

Let us recall the situation in Kosovo. Today’s loudest critics of the referendums were at the forefront of supporters of Kosovo’s independence. They insisted

that Kosovo had the right to secede from the State in the event of a real threat of serious violations of the population’s rights. That was the official Western legal position presented to the International Court of Justice when it prepared an advisory opinion at the request of the General Assembly in 2008. Yet by 2008 nothing had threatened the Kosovo Albanians for quite some time. Yugoslavia was no longer on the map and Serbia, which had been bombed and crushed by NATO countries, had a foreign contingent stationed as peacekeepers. No referendums were held in Kosovo. There was simply a declaration of independence adopted by interim self-governing authorities, which had clearly exceeded their remit. Yet that alone was enough for the West to recognize the independence of Kosovo. Back then, our opponents argued that international law does not prohibit a declaration of independence. And what do we hear from them today? That Kosovo was different. In other words, NATO members were prepared to protect the Kosovo Albanians from threats that did not even exist at the time, whereas the populations of Donbas, Kherson and Zaporizhzhya are, in their view, second-class citizens whose extermination by the Kyiv regime does not worry the civilized West one bit because they support Russia.

Another example is Washington, which today is the loudest to criticize us and cry out about the territorial integrity of Ukraine. Recently, Washington declared its readiness to use force to protect Taiwan, which is an integral part of the People’s Republic of China. It is clear that no sanctity of the principle of territorial integrity exists for the United States and NATO member States. They support it only when it suits their interests.

Today’s draft resolution is simply chock full of these ugly double standards imposed by the West, and now its authors are trying to force the General Assembly to endorse them. The Secretary-General has been cited even though no such practice exists in the preparation of General Assembly resolutions because the statements of the Secretary-General do not represent the views of Member States. But even leaving that aside, we have never seen our Western colleagues pay the same attention to other statements of the Secretary-General, such as when he calls for the resolution of conflicts in other parts of the world, including those unleashed at the behest of Western States, in which women and children are killed and the economy is damaged. In particular, they stubbornly ignore his call to end illegal unilateral economic sanctions. The West

is completely deaf to the problems of the global South and to calls to finally address them. All efforts are thrown at promoting the Ukrainian narrative, but not for the sake of the country's well-being — only in an attempt to harm Russia.

Today's draft resolution selectively cites the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (resolution 2625 (XXV)). Not a word is said about the rights of peoples to self-determination, which paved the way for decolonization and made it possible for many States represented in this Hall today to gain a seat in the General Assembly. Today they are trying to make members forget that the West opposed that process with all its might while the Soviet Union contributed to it.

In recent days, we have all witnessed how the West, driven by neocolonial instincts, has unleashed an unprecedented campaign of blackmail and arm-twisting among developing States, seeking by any means to force them to support the anti-Russian draft resolution. We know that this campaign has been led from Washington and that the capitals of members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries have literally been besieged by United States political emissaries and their allies, who have directly threatened punishment and consequences for disobedience. This was even written about in leading Western media. *Politico* magazine quotes United States State Department officials whose words clearly show how Washington and other Western capitals truly feel about the voices of developing countries. Those officials said that when it comes to voting on the anti-Russian draft in the General Assembly, "every Fiji counts. Every Palau counts". I wonder if the representatives of Fiji and Palau enjoy hearing such quotes.

These are all classic methods used by slave owners and colonizers who are used to seeing the world through a colonial prism. I will not conceal the fact that in recent days, a number of colleagues from countries of the global South have approached us to tell us about the economic blackmail and direct threats that they have had to endure from the United States and European States. It is clear that in this situation, the votes that we will see on our monitors should be viewed precisely through the prism of the Western blackmail campaign, which is unprecedented in the General Assembly. Such methods do not and cannot have a place in the United Nations.

Today we are all attending a truly historic meeting. Before our very eyes, the United States and its satellites are teaching us a lesson in "de-sovereignization" live on the air. We regret that the unscrupulous Western blackmailers who have been trying to wrestle the votes they need from developing States were aided by the President of the General Assembly, whose procedural manoeuvring on 10 October, on the first day of the resumed special session, not only deprived United Nations Members of the opportunity to vote without coercion through secret ballot but also gave the blackmailers additional time to carry out their blackmail. I hope that despite all this, there will be enough States present in this Hall today that are prepared to stand up to the Western dictate and to vote independently, without fear of surveillance from Big Brother. We call on United Nations Member States to take an unbiased look at the current situation and to vote against the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Pérez Ayestarán (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are participating in today's meeting as a result of the activation of the mechanism established in resolution 76/262, which requires us to meet. However, we are not obliged to consider, much less to adopt, a draft resolution on which consultations have never been held and no efforts have been made to take the views and proposals of all Member States into account, which demonstrates the clear lack of interest of its proponents in forging a consensus on the text. We are convinced that this method of work will hardly bring us closer to the goal that should bring us together equally — that of achieving peace.

Just over seven months ago, when we first met in this very Hall on this issue (see A/ES-11/PV.1), we alerted the international community to the existence of a three-tiered crisis in the Eastern European region which, if not addressed in a balanced and cautious manner, would lead to a dangerous phase of overheating between nuclear Powers, which, seeing their strategic and security balances altered, could unleash a conflict of global proportions. Today we regret that our warnings have been ignored and that, far from having been used in recent months to build a path that would put a stop to the escalation of tensions and bring us closer to a peaceful resolution of the conflict, we now find ourselves in a moment of greater confrontation, greater tensions and greater divisions.

However, as a country that believes that peace is the only way, we cannot but continue to insist that our role today must be to correct course and create

a firewall between the three levels of the crisis in Ukraine in order to prevent a chain reaction that will lead us, like sleepwalkers, into the abyss. In a way that is unprecedented in the past 60 years, we are approaching a point of no return that has the serious potential to compromise the survival of present and future generations. We must therefore recognize that today the prospects of an outbreak of a conflict with nuclear dimensions seem to be getting closer. We note with great concern an increase in actions and policies that seem to only seek to create a clash of civilizations in the false illusion of a definitive unipolar victory — a clash that would cause a global conflict between nuclear Powers that would destroy humankind as we know it today.

This is not the time to instrumentalize the General Assembly or to entrench a new Cold War mentality, with its bloc confrontation politics, which could result in serious miscalculations with unimaginable consequences for humankind as a whole. We must make a collective effort to turn down the heated rhetoric, bearing in mind that, as the facts show, discursive excesses are precursors to violent actions that, on the one hand, encourage a dangerous illusion of control over events and, on the other, deliberately lead us away from the path of peace. In that context, we cannot allow persistent attempts to normalize the language of war, much less to convince entire nations of the idea that a nuclear war would have winners and losers, when the reality is that it would generate only death, destruction, pain and suffering for everyone. It is mutually assured destruction. The path of incendiary speeches and reckless actions is not only the wrong path, but also an irresponsible one that only places humankind at greater risk.

It is for all the aforementioned reasons that we believe that the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-11/L.5 will in no way contribute to the objective of achieving a lasting peace through political dialogue and diplomatic negotiation. That is why we call on the responsible members of the international community to vote against the text. Quite the contrary, our Organization must play its central role in the preservation of humankind at this historic and decisive moment by facilitating a constructive and good-faith environment that would foster dialogue, negotiation and the achievement of a peaceful solution.

In conclusion, from this rostrum we call for the reduction of tensions and the cessation of war propaganda and the discourse of intolerance, guided by hateful ideologies. We also emphasize that it is only through diplomacy, dialogue and self-restraint, without pressure or sanctions, that we will be able to avoid being deliberately pushed towards a more acute phase of the conflict, towards a longer and more obdurate phase, and towards a phase that only prolongs the crisis over time and generates consequences that will take generations to overcome.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): My delegation is deeply distressed by the protracted violence and conflict in Ukraine. It has posed a serious threat to international peace and security. Nepal's position on Ukraine remains clear. The principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aggression, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, are inviolable and must be fully respected by all Member States at all times. There cannot be any ifs, ands or buts. The United Nations Charter clearly stipulates that all Members must settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered. Peaceful coexistence, non-aggression, non-interference, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence are fundamentals of Nepal's foreign policy. Those principles are the foundations of peace, security and stability in the world. Nepal reiterates its call for the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine to create conditions for dialogue and diplomacy, which are the only pathway to resolve conflicts and find a lasting political solution.

Based on Nepal's long-standing principled position on the inviolability of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States and its unwavering respect for international law, the rules-based international system, the United Nations Charter and the values of world peace, my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 before us today.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will vote in favour of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 before us and wishes to offer an explanation of its vote before the voting.

The recent referendums and subsequent signing of treaties to annex several regions are deeply disturbing developments in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. We do not consider that the manner in which the referendums

were conducted was in accordance with the tenets of international law. As such, they constitute violations of Ukraine's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

Our vote in favour of the draft resolution serves to firmly underscore that the bedrock principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity must be respected and strictly adhered to by all. Those principles are sacrosanct, and they should be applied consistently and upheld in the international community as universal truths.

The conflict in Ukraine has, tragically, resulted in great loss of life and the destruction of critical civilian infrastructure. Additionally, its global repercussions have had catastrophic impacts on countries located far beyond its borders. We therefore reiterate the resounding call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and for the exercise of restraint in all actions.

The only path towards peace is through diplomatic engagement that prioritizes constructive dialogue and good-faith negotiations that take into consideration the legitimate security concerns of all parties. Provocative rhetoric, unproductive diplomatic posturing and actions that exacerbate tensions and intensify the existing high-alert postures, which bring us increasingly closer to nuclear catastrophe, are unhelpful and wholly objectionable. A responsible international community should therefore seek to encourage the type of engagement that prevents further polarization and facilitates a prompt diplomatic resolution to this conflict. The incessant talk on all sides of total victory, whatever that means, opens the door to a nuclear Armageddon. Let us give mature diplomacy a chance to achieve peace. Peace is the legitimate aspiration of all peoples. The world cannot countenance, nor can it afford, another catastrophic conflict.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

Before proceeding to take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, I wish to address the question concerning the majority required for the adoption of the draft resolution. In the light of paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 18 of the Charter of the United Nations, is there any objection to taking action on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting?

It was so decided.

The President: A two-thirds majority of members present and voting is therefore required for the adoption of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, entitled "Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations". For members' information, the draft resolution has closed for e-sponsorship.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Nakano (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5, and in addition to the delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Guyana, Jamaica, Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Myanmar, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Suriname, Switzerland, Tonga, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Uruguay.

The President: At its twelfth plenary meeting of the emergency special session (see A/ES-11/PV.12), the General Assembly decided to take action on draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 by recorded vote. We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia,

Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Yemen, Zambia

Against:

Belarus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Algeria, Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Burundi, Central African Republic, China, Congo, Cuba, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mali, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

Draft resolution A/ES-11/L.5 was adopted by 143 votes to 5, with 35 abstentions (resolution ES-11/4).

The President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote after the voting, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by representatives from their seats.

Mr. Alwasil (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The GCC States have been following the situation in Ukraine with extreme concern since the start of the conflict. We would like to stress that the GCC States

have friendly relations with all parties and are convinced that the best way to avoid any negative repercussions is to settle the crisis through dialogue and diplomacy, in a way that caters to the interests of all parties concerned. Therefore, the GCC States urge all parties to exercise restraint, avoid further escalation and adopt peaceful means of resolving the dispute.

The voting of the GCC States in favour of resolution ES-11/4 is in line with our commitment to the firm principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. We stress the need to respect the sovereignty of States, uphold the principle of good-neighbourly relations, abstain from the threat or use of force and settle disputes peacefully.

In conclusion, the GCC States would like to express their hope that efforts will continue until a solution satisfactory to all parties is reached, in order to avoid any negative humanitarian, political and economic ramifications.

Ms. Ferreira (Angola): The Republic of Angola voted in favour of resolution ES-11/4, in accordance with its convictions concerning the well-founded, sacrosanct principle of territorial integrity enshrined in its own Constitution, which defines Angola as a unitary and indivisible State whose territory is inviolable and unalienable. Our position is also in line with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. Indeed, the predecessor organization of the African Union, the Organization of African Unity, laid down the basis for the same principle when the founding fathers wisely decided, in 1964, to maintain the principle of the intangibility of the borders inherited from colonialism.

Since the 1960s, the Russian people have always shown their friendship and solidarity with the Angolan people, having played a decisive role in our liberation struggle against colonialism and the invasion of Angolan territory by the army of the apartheid regime of South Africa. Today we have a close relationship of friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation in several areas of common interest. With Ukraine, the Republic of Angola also enjoys good diplomatic relations and cooperation. Those relations constitute one of the reasons for the deep concern constantly expressed by the Republic of Angola about the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which, in addition to causing countless human casualties, has generated thousands of displaced people and refugees at a level not seen since the Second World war, as well as

the destruction of important infrastructures of Ukraine. The same war has also had serious consequences on world peace and security, as well as on the economy of all countries in general.

The Republic of Angola therefore reiterates its appeal to the parties to cease hostilities and to strive for a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue, in full respect for international law. The call of the Republic of Angola for a peaceful resolution is in line with the African Union principle of non-indifference, as well as with the efforts of His Excellency Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola, to promote peace and security in Africa in his capacity as Champion of the African Union for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa.

Mr. Larbaoui (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Algeria would like to express its grave concern over the deterioration of the situation in Ukraine and the exacerbation of polarization, which has contributed significantly to the escalation of the crisis and its repercussions on international peace and security. Algeria also wishes to express its grave concern at the consequences the crisis has had on the food and energy sectors, as well as its destructive effects on all States. The crisis adds to the major challenges that countries of the world are already facing, particularly developing countries, which continue to work hard to overcome the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In that regard, based on our principled positions and our profound belief in the values of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Algeria once again confirms that we are firmly committed to the basic rules of international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly respect for the sovereignty of States and the total rejection of the annexation of territories, which is considered a breach of international law.

Algeria calls on the international community and the United Nations to discharge their basic responsibilities and to fully abandon the approach of double standards. We call on them to end all forms of occupation and annexation of territories by force that have been on their agenda for decades, particularly in Palestine, the occupied Syrian Golan and Western Sahara. Moreover, Algeria stresses that multilateral international efforts require the strengthening of dialogue and cooperation and the intensification of meaningful international diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis and prevent a collapse of diplomatic norms. That would

allow the identification of a consensual political solution that would ultimately guarantee the prevalence of international peace and security.

Ms. Joyini (South Africa): South Africa is deeply concerned by the ongoing war in Ukraine, the increased loss of life and the deteriorating humanitarian situation. The detrimental effects of the war are also being felt all over the world. We urge the parties to the conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Civilians, humanitarian personnel and vulnerable persons, including women and children, must be fully protected.

Speaking in the Assembly in March (see A/ES-11/PV.9), we said that wars have no winners and that the real heroes are those who work for peace. It is therefore regrettable that, in the case of Ukraine, peace remains elusive. Instead, we see steps being taken to encourage a continuation of the war. All parties are reminded that they must comply with the laws of war as contained in the Geneva Conventions, in particular those relating to the targeting of civilians. The principle of distinction is clear that all parties should take responsibility to ensure that civilians are not targeted.

South Africa considers the territorial integrity of States, and that of Ukraine, to be sacrosanct and we reject all actions that undermine the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. We have noted the statement of the Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres, that any annexation of a State's territory by another resulting from the threat or the use of force is a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

We abstained in the voting on resolution ES-11/4 because we believe that the objective of the General Assembly, in keeping with its mandate, must always be to contribute to a constructive outcome that is conducive to the creation of sustainable peace in Ukraine. Unfortunately, some elements of the resolution do not address that. In the context of the heightened tensions of recent days, all efforts should be geared towards a ceasefire and a political solution.

The General Assembly must stand together in seeking peace and unanimously call for an immediate end to the war. That should be our immediate focus. We therefore expected that any additional resolutions would focus on concrete proposals to end the war, which is exacting such a heavy toll on the people of Ukraine. South Africa remains steadfast in its belief

that dialogue, mediation and diplomacy are the only path that will lead to a peaceful resolution of the conflict. We reiterate our call for a cessation of hostilities as a matter of urgency. That would create the environment required for a political process leading to sustainable peace, taking into account the concerns of all affected States.

We were encouraged by the efforts of the Secretary-General to finalize an agreement for the export of grain and fertilizer to countries in need. We had hoped that this important example could be the basis for an agreement leading to a diplomatic resolution of the conflict. We therefore call on the Secretary-General to use his good offices to mediate in pursuit of finding a sustainable solution and on us, as Member States, to facilitate an enabling environment for dialogue and a negotiated solution to the conflict.

South Africa stands ready to work with all Member States to contribute to the creation of that conducive environment. We urge the Security Council to play a constructive role in the resolution of this conflict, in line with its mandate for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council cannot abandon its responsibility at this time. And to the women and children of Ukraine, we wish them strength.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan abstained in the voting on resolution ES-11/4. Pakistan fully supports the resolution's call for respect for the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States — a principle that applies as much to Ukraine as it does to other Member States. States cannot be torn apart by the use of force. Those principles must be consistently and universally respected.

In the case of the referendums mentioned in the resolution, we acknowledge Ukraine's complex history and the provisions of the Minsk agreements. However, under international law, the right of self-determination applies to peoples who are under foreign or colonial domination and to those who have not yet exercised the right to self-determination, as in the case of Jammu and Kashmir. We look forward to seeing similar concern about and condemnation of the attempts by India to formalize its illegal annexation of the internationally recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, illegally occupied by India in complete violation of international law and relevant resolutions of the Security Council on Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, the exercise of the right to self-determination should be conducted in an environment that is free of military occupation and under impartial auspices, preferably under the supervision of the United Nations. Pakistan therefore endorses the basic principle, reflected in the resolution, that referendums conducted for peoples in regions that are part of a sovereign State and in an environment that is not free and not under impartial auspices are *ultra vires* and legally unacceptable.

Unfortunately, the resolution contains several provisions that go beyond declaring the referendums null and void and includes provisions that my delegation has been unable to endorse. The first is in the third preambular paragraph. There, the resolution recalls resolution 68/262 and resolution ES-11/2, of 24 March, all of which Pakistan abstained on. Secondly, the sponsors of the draft resolution have not accepted proposals for an immediate, peaceful resolution of the conflict. My delegation believes that, irrespective of the origin of the conflict, the highest priority at this moment is the immediate cessation of hostilities and the resumption of a peaceful dialogue through direct negotiations, mediation or other peaceful means to resolve the causes of the conflict and restore peace and security in Ukraine. Unless we halt the conflict, there is every likelihood that it will escalate further, with consequences that could be devastating for the entire world.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of Egypt voted in favour of resolution ES-11/4 in accordance with its position of principle, namely, adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, rejection of the threat or use of force in international relations, adoption of peaceful methods of dispute settlement, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Egypt, a founding country of the United Nations, has adhered to those principles for seven decades without deviating from or denying them at any stage. Egypt reiterates its call on the parties to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and on all those with influence to reach a negotiated solution that addresses the concerns of all parties without exception and ends the fighting, the destruction and the negative impacts of the conflict on civilians in order to ensure the interests of both parties in an equal manner and to achieve international stability and security.

The current situation should prompt the international community to wonder whether it was possible to avoid a crisis and whether reason and dialogue could have prevailed. What if each party had listened to the concerns of others and a settlement satisfactory to all parties had been reached? Would we not be in a better position for the sake of our world, our countries and our peoples, who suffer and deserve better?

We stress the need to stop using double standards and cherry-picking among interests and principles in addressing international issues. If that persists, our contemporary international order will experience more exacerbated crises and will be unable to address them in an effective manner, ultimately leading to the creation of an order that is unable to positively interact with the parties' demands.

We also must note that the current crisis in Ukraine is impacting the entire world while negatively affecting its economy. Developing countries, including Egypt, are the most affected when it comes to energy and food security and the supply of goods and grain, which is an essential nutrient for our peoples. The crisis is also increasing budget deficits in those countries by generating fewer employment opportunities and higher unemployment rates. Nobody listens to their problems or cares to address them.

From this international rostrum, Egypt calls for reason and dialogue. We call on the parties to refrain from taking any action that could exacerbate the current crisis. We call for international efforts to address the crisis before it reaches the point of no return and imposes tremendous losses on all countries and costs them resources that should have been directed towards development and progress of all parties.

Mrs. Kamboj (India): India is deeply concerned at the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, including the targeting of civilian infrastructure and the deaths of civilians. We have consistently advocated that no solution can ever be found at the cost of human lives. The escalation of hostilities and violence is in no one's interest. We have urged that all efforts be made for an immediate cessation of hostilities and an urgent return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy. We believe that the global order that we all subscribe to is based on international law, the Charter of the United Nations and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States. Those principles must be upheld without exception. Dialogue is the only answer to settling

differences and disputes, however daunting that may appear at this moment. The path to peace requires us to keep all channels of diplomacy open. We therefore sincerely hope for an early resumption of peace talks to bring about an immediate ceasefire and resolution of the conflict. India stands ready to support all such efforts aimed at de-escalation.

It is also unfortunate that as the trajectory of the Ukrainian conflict unfolds, the entire global South has suffered substantial collateral damage. As developing countries face the brunt of the conflict's consequences on food, fuel and fertilizer supplies, it is critical that the voice of the global South be heard and their legitimate concerns duly addressed. We must therefore not initiate measures that further complicate a struggling global economy.

There are other pressing issues at play, some of which have not been adequately addressed in resolution ES-11/4, adopted today. Our decision to abstain is consistent with our well-thought-out national position. I would also quote from the address of my Minister for External Affairs to the Assembly last month:

“India is on the side of peace and will remain firmly there. We are on the side that respects the United Nations Charter and its founding principles. We are on the side that calls for dialogue and diplomacy as the only way out of conflict. We are on the side of those struggling to make ends meet, even as they stare at escalating costs of food, fuel and fertilizers. It is therefore in our collective interest to work constructively, both within the United Nations and outside it, to find an early resolution to this conflict.”
(A/77/PV.12, p. 52)

My Prime Minister has said unequivocally that this cannot be an era of war. With that firm resolve to strive for a peaceful solution through dialogue and diplomacy, India decided to abstain.

I wish to make one final point before I conclude. We have witnessed, unsurprisingly, yet again an attempt by one delegation to misuse this forum and make frivolous and pointless remarks against my country. Such statements deserve our collective contempt and sympathy for a mindset that repeatedly utters falsehoods. It is important, however, to set the record straight. The entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir is and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India, irrespective of what the representative of Pakistan believes or covets. We call on Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism so that our citizens can enjoy their right to life and liberty.

Mr. Muhith (Bangladesh): Bangladesh voted in favour of resolution ES-11/4, entitled “Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations”. We did so because we strongly believe that the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter regarding respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of all disputes must be complied with universally by everyone, everywhere, under all circumstances and without any exception. We also believe that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any country, within its internationally recognized borders, should be respected. In that connection, we especially underscore the need for the international community to take a similar, uniform stand against the annexations of Palestinian and other Arab lands by Israel.

Bangladesh remains deeply concerned by the continuation of the conflict in Ukraine and its global socioeconomic implications. We believe that antagonism, like war, economic sanctions or countersanctions cannot bring good to any nation. Dialogue, discussion and mediation are the best ways to resolve crises and disputes. As a firm believer in multilateralism, we will continue to stand with the United Nations and the Office of the Secretary-General and to support them in every way we can. We urge that in order to gain the trust and confidence of the people at all levels, the United Nations and the Office of the Secretary-General must lead from the front and work to fulfil the expectations of all. Bangladesh therefore urges all parties to the conflict to play a constructive role for de-escalation, to resume immediate diplomatic dialogue in order to settle all disputes by peaceful means, and to refrain from taking any action that may endanger international peace and security. We should work towards ending war and stopping the arms race for the good of humankind. As States Members of the United Nations, we must continue to work together to promote peace and development.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): As a small, sovereign nation, Thailand holds sacred the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as they are our first and last line of defence. We are unequivocally committed to the principle of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It has long been Thailand’s long-standing and consistent policy to be opposed to the threat or use of force against the

territorial integrity of any State and to the unprovoked acquisition of the territory of another State by force. However, Thailand chose to abstain in the voting on resolution ES-11/4 because it takes place in an extremely volatile and emotionally charged atmosphere and situation and thus marginalizes the chance for crisis diplomacy to bring about a peaceful and practical negotiated resolution to the conflict, which may push the world towards the brink of nuclear war and global economic collapse. We are genuinely concerned about the increased politicization of international principles, which has become counterproductive, as the means and guidance to end the war. Condemnation provokes intransigence and thereby greatly reduces the chance for constructive engagement.

Thailand bemoans the physical, social and humanitarian destruction of Ukraine and the extreme hardship endured by Ukrainians. We therefore emphasize the need for all stakeholders in this absolute tragedy in Ukraine to de-escalate the conflict and violence and to try to find a peaceful means to settle differences by addressing the pragmatic reality and concerns of all involved. Human security and the right to life are important pillars of article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to date Ukrainians and many millions of people around the world have been deprived of that right. It is the ultimate duty and responsibility of this Organization to restore peace and normalcy of life to the Ukrainians, not through violent means but by diplomatic mechanisms that can only bring practical and lasting peace.

Mr. Nayeck (Mauritius): Mauritius voted in favour of resolution ES-11/4 because Mauritius firmly believes in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, big or small. We are also firm supporters of the principle of non-interference in the internal matters of any State unless mandated under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mauritius is concerned about the worsening situation in Europe and its consequences on developing States, especially those that depend on food, fuel and fertilizer imports. We welcome the initiative of the international community to ensure that international law prevails and that the principles and values of the United Nations Charter are respected by all countries. However, we must emphasize that such action must be taken in an indiscriminate manner, just as much as international law must apply indiscriminately. The credibility of our Organization suffers when double

standards are applied in other cases where there is illegal occupation and where international law continues to be flouted.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Brazil voted in favour of resolution ES-11/4. As we recently stated in the Security Council (see S/PV.9143), Brazil does not believe that populations in areas of conflict are able to freely express their opinion by means of referendums. The results thereof do not constitute a valid expression of their will and cannot be considered legitimate. We voted in favour also because we stand by the principle of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, as well as that of all Member States. International law and the United Nations Charter must be respected and preserved.

Inasmuch as the facilitators have shown flexibility, we are disappointed that our proposal to include a clear message urging the parties to cease hostilities and engage in peace negotiations was not included in the draft. Our role is to make room for a peaceful resolution of the conflict to emerge through diplomacy and political dialogue. To that end, we must unite in de-escalating tensions instead of fostering antagonizing views. We must avoid the crystallization of positions and fuelling disputes, to the detriment of civilian populations on the ground.

Last but very importantly, Brazil is deeply concerned about all implicit or explicit threats involving the use of nuclear weapons in connection with the conflict. Any use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable and would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Opening avenues for dialogue is our only option out of the conflict.

Mr. Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): International relations are taking a very dangerous path. Threats, extortion and economic and political-diplomatic coercion are being used openly against the countries of the South in order to subject them to an order based on the capricious policies of a group of powerful States. That, together with the expansion of NATO and its increasingly aggressive doctrine, and the development of fifth-generation unconventional warfare, inevitably leads to a climate of tension and conflict, the consequences of which are today unpredictable. Double standards, selectivity, incoherence and political manipulation harm the cause of international peace and security. There is a long list of States members of the Assembly that have suffered the terrible consequences of invasions, military

aggression and unilateral sanctions that flagrantly violate the Charter of the United Nations. In an act of supreme hypocrisy, some of those primarily responsible for those violations now proclaim themselves defenders of the principles of the Charter.

Cuba defends the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the self-determination of peoples. The Charter of the United Nations and international law must be respected by all Member States, without exception and in all circumstances. Cuba opposes the threat or use of force and supports the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In that context, it advocates a serious, constructive and realistic diplomatic solution to the current crisis in Ukraine, by peaceful means and in unrestricted adherence to the norms of international law, which guarantees the security and sovereignty of all, as well as peace and regional and international security.

Several months have passed since the conflict in Ukraine began. The General Assembly and the Security Council have considered this issue in multiple meetings. However, the loss of innocent lives continues, material damage persists and the causes that gave rise to the conflict remain unchanged. In Cuba's opinion, the text presented to us, prepared by some members of the Security Council, does nothing to alter that scenario. On the contrary, it follows the same pattern of previous resolutions, characterized by the absence of a true will to de-escalate the crisis and protect human lives, which should be the main and priority objective of all. It is our responsibility to reduce tensions, not to stir them up. It is also our responsibility to achieve a ceasefire and help resolve the conflict, not to exacerbate it. We will not achieve peace by compounding the differences between the parties or by promoting confrontation. Achieving peace is totally inimical to the promotion of initiatives that sharpen inconsistencies and confrontation.

Regarding the multiple votes of a procedural nature that took place on Monday, 10 October (see A/ES-11/PV.12), we call on Member States to preserve and to respect the integrity of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. All initiatives put forward with the sincere intent to promote dialogue and negotiation, with the participation of all the parties involved, and to reach a genuine peace settlement can count on Cuba's support. Resolution ES-11/4, which was adopted today, does not meet those requirements. For the reasons stated, the Cuban delegation abstained in the voting on the resolution.

Mr. Pary Rodríguez (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I take the floor to express the principled positions of Bolivia with regard to this or any other conflict on the agenda of the United Nations.

In strict adherence with our Constitution and the principles of diplomacy of peoples that guide our international relations, we categorically reject any act of aggression used to resolve conflicts and disputes between States. Likewise, we reject any weakening of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including annexations and occupations, which also contravene the agreed rules upon which we have built multilateralism over more than 70 years. We reiterate the proposal we made in the general debate of the seventy-seventh session to work as a community of nations to declare the world a zone of peace (see A/77/PV.5). Our commitment is to peace, dialogue, mediation, negotiation, conciliation, arbitration and preventive diplomacy, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which have been circumvented on many occasions in recent decades.

In that regard, we express our deep concern over the escalation of violence in the military conflict between two countries in Eastern Europe. The effects of the crisis have affected the lives of millions of people in regions throughout the world. It has generated economic, energy, food and humanitarian insecurity that affects us all. The double standards deployed in the conflict only exacerbate the situation. Many speak about defending peace while they continue to supply weapons and promote measures that accelerate the violence. And, curiously, many of the serious humanitarian crises that affect the Middle East and Africa have not been at the core of the Organization's debates.

We must now find solutions and proactive measures that will, above all, curb the conflict and promote conditions that make peace and international security for all possible. The United Nations has a fundamental role to play in that task, in particular in reducing tension and making progress towards committed dialogue that will ensure a political and diplomatic solution to the conflict. To that effect, we call for the establishment of a high-level commission, led by the Secretary-General, together with recognized guarantor States that are accepted by the parties to the conflict, with a view to intensifying dialogue, negotiations and peacemaking.

Bolivia abstained in the voting because it is our view that the decisions of the General Assembly must address substantive solutions and promote genuine spaces for dialogue and peace.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

Several delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to ten minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda): We apologize for taking the floor. It was not our intention. However, we are compelled to take the floor to reply to the comments made by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (see A/ES-11/PV.13).

We are not surprised that the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo chose to misuse this platform. The continued misuse by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of various platforms to engage in baseless and malicious propaganda against neighbouring countries, including my own, Rwanda, is not new. It has been the tactic used to run away from its internal responsibilities to address the root causes of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda stresses that the blame game will not address the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That country has the key and padlock to solve and to unlock the problems that exist there. Externalizing the domestic problems of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will not solve them. That will only serve a short-term goal.

Rwanda is fully committed to working with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other neighbouring countries, through existing frameworks, to address the root causes of the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the dignified return of Congolese refugees who have stayed in neighbouring countries, including in Rwanda, for too long. Political leaders have falsely accused the neighbouring countries with unfounded allegations. The grievances with respect to the internal concerns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be addressed internally.

We recall that in March, the United Nations human rights body issued a report on hate speech in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The incitement

of violence, including among leaders, was implicated. In May and December 2020, the same body released a report showing that hateful messages were being entrenched within the communities and that the tribes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were being pitted against one another. In 2022, the international community was alarmed by the escalation of hate speech and incitement to discrimination, hostile violence nationwide and specifically against Kinyarwanda speakers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a statement issued by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, both were disturbed by the increase in violence and hate speech, noting that “hate speech fuels the conflict by exacerbating mistrust between the communities”. Those are very serious concerns that must be addressed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The blame game will not solve the problem.

What the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not telling this house is that it is home to over 130 armed groups, combining both foreign and local armed groups, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda, which is a genocide force that left Rwanda after committing the genocide in 1994. To this day, it has been a thorn in the side of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Security Council because they cannot address the problem. The existing frameworks — the Nairobi framework, the Rwandan framework, as well as other existing agreements — need to be implemented by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Rwanda, like any other regional country, rejects the propaganda narrative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to which the countries of the region want to invade or have invaded. Those are absurd statements without basis that are intended to divert attention from complex internal issues.

Finally, Rwanda believes that the regional approach recommended by the second Heads of State Conclave in Nairobi and the Luanda road map in Angola are essential and must be implemented in good faith. The existing frameworks also need to be implemented by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and several other armed groups. In that regard, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should acknowledge its own obligations rather than come into these forums and say that neighbouring countries intend to invade them.

Mr. Sarwani (Pakistan): My delegation is exercising its right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of India.

Disinformation and falsehood define India’s diplomacy today. The biggest falsehood that we have just heard is that Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India. Jammu and Kashmir is not a so-called part of India, nor is it India’s internal matter. India remains in occupation of an internationally recognized disputed territory whose final disposition needs to be decided in accordance with the democratic principle of a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations, as provided for under numerous Security Council resolutions. India has accepted that decision and is bound to comply with it in accordance with Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The maps of the United Nations also show Kashmir as a disputed territory. In Kashmir, the oldest United Nations peacekeeping force is deployed at present along the line of control. Above all, the report that is under consideration by the Security Council itself considers Kashmir to be a disputed territory. If India has any respect for international law and moral courage, it will end its reign of terror, withdraw its troops and let the Kashmiris freely decide their future in accordance with Security Council resolutions.

In order to divert attention from the ever-increasing international condemnation of India’s widespread and escalating immoral abuses in Jammu and Kashmir, illegally occupied by India, India continues to level baseless allegations against others. History bears testimony to the undeniable reality that aggressors, colonizers and occupiers often attempt to justify the suppression of legitimate struggles for self-determination and freedom by reporting them as terrorism. As for comments regarding terrorism, the Indian delegation would do well to reflect on the deeply troubling trajectory their State is embarked upon, rather than indulging in blatant falsehoods about Pakistan. India is resorting to State terrorism to suppress the people of Jammu and Kashmir, illegally occupied by India, where since 1990 India’s terrorist occupation forces have martyred over 100,000 innocent Kashmiris. More than 220,000 women have been widowed, and more than 180,000 children have been orphaned.

In contravention of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, India has resorted to illegally and unilaterally changing the internationally

recognized status of Jammu and Kashmir. Today India is being guided by the Hindutva ideology, which has mainstreamed Islamophobia and bigotry against minorities, particularly Muslims, in its political discourse. In today's incredibly intolerant India, 200 Muslim minorities face frequent lynching by vigilantes, pogroms by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with official complicity, discriminatory citizenship laws to disenfranchise Muslims and a concerted campaign to destroy mosques and the rich Muslim heritage of India. Pakistan has been highlighting and will continue to highlight those issues and India's State terrorism against the people of Jammu and Kashmir, illegally occupied by India.

Mr. Nzongola-Ntalaja (Democratic Republic of the Congo): I thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the chance to reply to the representative of Rwanda. What he is saying is simply total nonsense. Everybody knows that Rwanda occupied the Congo from 1998 to 2003, committed many atrocities and plundered our economy. Today Rwanda is a major exporter of gold and coltan from the Congo and many other resources. They even take chimpanzees and gorillas from Congolese forests to Rwanda.

All of that is well known. The Human Rights Council published a very important report some 10 years ago. I cannot recall the name of the report, but I will remember it shortly. The report points to many crimes committed in the Congo by some of our neighbours, particularly Rwanda. There is no denying the fact that Rwanda has been in the Congo since 1996, when President Laurent Kabila brought it into my country and even named a Rwandan military officer as Chief of Staff of the Congolese Armed Forces. That, again, was imposed on him by Rwanda, which had helped him to take power by kicking Mr. Mobutu out and taking over the country. However, after one year Kabila saw that he was really a stooge of Rwanda and Uganda and then asked them to leave the country. What did they do? They came back to invade the country one week later. That is well known and well documented. I do not think I have to say too much about that.

We deplore the fact that the international community places so much emphasis on the crisis taking place in Europe while basically ignoring the crisis taking place in Africa. While they are sending billions and billions of dollars in arms to Ukraine to defend itself, which

I think is good, they do not do the same for us. They even place restrictions on what we can buy in terms of armaments. That is the policy of double standards that I was asking about. It is a policy that should be ended. The international community ought to condemn and take action against any invasion of a country, any occupation of a country by another country.

Mr. Kayinamura (Rwanda): I will make sure to respect the rules. In my culture, it is very hard to argue with one's elder and so I will respond respectfully.

I think the point that I was trying to make is that since colonial times the Democratic Republic of the Congo has had a difficult past. There are constant allegations. Every time there is no flowing water, it is Rwanda. If there is no electricity, it is Rwanda. If there is no road, it is Rwanda. If there is no this or that, it is Rwanda or its colonial masters. I think we need to move beyond that. We need to move beyond that kind of mentality, look for homegrown solutions and address the problems in our countries. We cannot outsource a solution. We cannot. We cannot outsource a solution here. We have to deal with the issues we face locally and find sustainable solutions.

I say the following respectfully. We have heard these excuses. Every time there are elections, Rwanda is supposedly going to come to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Perhaps we may not hear about Rwanda again after the 2023 elections. We look forward to the conclusion of the elections. The reason the representative could not recall the report he referred to is because the allegations and attempted reports were dismissed and thrown out of the Human Rights Council. Perhaps he can give us a United Nations symbol for that report. I can even bet money that there is no such report.

With all due respect, what I was getting at is that as a region, as neighbours, Rwanda is not going to move, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not going to move. We need to find solutions to address the real causes of the problems in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President: In accordance with the terms of paragraph 8 of resolution ES-11/4 just adopted, the eleventh emergency special session of the General Assembly is temporarily adjourned.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.