



Statement by Foreign Minister HAYASHI Yoshimasa
at the Security Council Debate on Ukraine
24 February 2023

Mr. President,

I thank you for organizing this important meeting. My appreciation also goes to the Secretary-General.

One year ago today, right here in this very chamber, right in the middle of the discussion on how to prevent aggression against Ukraine, Russia, a permanent member of the Security Council, launched an aggression against Ukraine, in front of the wide-open eyes of the Council members.

It was an insult to the Security Council and to the entire United Nations. It demonstrated how little Russia cares about the UN.

At that very moment, I remember vividly, Secretary-General Guterres called on the Russian leader, I quote, "President Putin, stop the military operation. Bring the troops back to Russia," unquote. His call still echoes in my ears.

The call of the Secretary-General represents the collective will of the Member States, maybe except for a few, and it is reflected in the resolutions of the General Assembly, including the one adopted yesterday, and in the ICJ order on provisional measures.

It is unfortunate that, one year later, we still have to repeat the same call.

Mr. President,

Japan condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. It is a clear violation of international law, including the UN Charter, by a permanent member of the Security Council, which is supposed to bear the heaviest responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Russia must immediately stop its war of aggression, withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from Ukraine, and respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. No country is allowed to rewrite borders by force or coercion.

Japan also condemns Russia's attacks against critical infrastructure. Indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians are a violation of international humanitarian law and constitute a war crime.

Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and its seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant must be denounced as well. We commend and fully support the work of the IAEA to ensure nuclear safety and security at the plant.

We must hold Russia accountable in accordance with international law.

Mr. President,

We will stand firmly with Ukraine. Japan welcomes President Zelenskyy's sincere efforts to demonstrate fundamental principles in his Peace Formula and to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter.

Before closing, allow me to reiterate that any attempts to change the status of territory by force or coercion must be rejected anywhere in the world. At the same time, the Security Council should not leave behind many other challenges that it has to deal with.

Let us return to the unshakable principles that the Member States have built upon since 1945. Let us unite for the rule of law. Let us uphold the rule of law for peace.

I thank you.

(463 words)