

Statement by Mr. AKAHORI Takeshi
Senior Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the United Nations Security Council Briefing
Maintenance of International Peace and Security of Ukraine
24 September 2024

Mr. President,

I thank you and the delegation of Slovenia for organizing this important meeting.

More than two and a half years have passed since Russia launched its brutal aggression against Ukraine. Japan again condemns Russia's aggression in the strongest possible terms and repeatedly demands its withdrawal from Ukraine.

First and foremost, please allow me, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to pay tribute to and express solidarity with President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people, who have been fighting to uphold the inalienable principles of the UN Charter for the political independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of their country since the start of the aggression.

Today, Japan reaffirms its unwavering support for Ukraine.

As the aggression continues and civilian casualties mount day by day, Russia's attacks targeting critical infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and power plants are threatening the future of the Ukrainian people. Russia must uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law. Deliberate and indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets are in flagrant violation of international law and constitute war crimes.

Japan condemns Russia's illegal abduction of children who should bear the future of Ukraine. We strongly urge Russia to release all persons unjustly detained and to safely return all civilians illegally transferred or deported.

The damaging impacts of Russia's war of aggression go well beyond Ukraine. In addition to the mass displacement of people from Ukraine, we are witnessing the dire consequences of food and energy insecurity, particularly in vulnerable and developing countries.

Japan commits to protecting the human dignity of those made vulnerable due to the conflict, including women and children, and to continue its support for them.

It is unacceptable that a permanent member of the Security Council, on which the UN Charter confers the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is continuing to disregard international law by attempting to unilaterally change the

status quo by force.

In fact, Russia has violated Security Council resolutions it voted in favor of, by procuring ballistic missiles from North Korea and using them against Ukraine. In addition, we are deeply concerned about Iran's transfer of ballistic missiles to Russia. All UN Member States must refrain from aiding Russia's aggression directly or indirectly.

Furthermore, Japan condemns Russia's seizure and continued control and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during the war, Japan does not accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone its use of nuclear weapons.

In order to protect the international order based on the rule of law, it is essential to achieve a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine based on the principles of the UN Charter. The overwhelming majority of the international community shares this view.

The only country worthy of blame for the present situation of Ukraine is Russia. UN Member States including the members of the Security Council should make it clear that it was Russia that started this unjustified war of aggression.

The rule of law is indispensable for multilateralism, and the United Nations should embody multilateralism. For this cause, all nations must fulfill their responsibilities to strengthen the governance of the United Nations.

In order to reflect the realities of the 21st century and effectively maintain international peace and security, strengthening the functions of the United Nations, including through Security Council reform, is necessary. Japan is determined to continue exercising leadership to this end.

In conclusion, Mr. President, as a country determined to seriously contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security, Japan once again strongly calls on Russia to immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw from Ukraine.

Japan will stand with Ukraine so that peace and justice prevail.

I thank you.

(614 words)