

Statement by Ukraine at the Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council

Conflict Prevention
21 August 2014
(Unofficial Transcript)

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing such an important and timely open debate. We welcome resolution 2171 (2014), adopted today. We also want to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for their briefings today.

The delegation of Ukraine aligns itself with the statement delivered by the delegation of the European Union. We fully share the ideas expressed by the European Union on ways to improve the United Nations performance in the prevention of conflicts. At the same time, we would like to reflect on the key issues that are very important from the perspective of our country.

The idea to establish a mechanism for the prevention of conflicts is at the very heart and essence of the United Nations. Severe consequences of the First and Second World Wars and the strong will of States to prevent such conflicts in future led to the creation of the United Nations and the adoption of its Charter. The Charter of the United Nations gives the main bodies of the United Nations, especially the Security Council, the necessary leverage to effectively prevent conflicts. Of course, that mechanism is not perfect. But it can function quite well if there is goodwill on the part of all players.

For many years, the United Nations and its main bodies have been helping to improve the technologies and techniques of conflict prevention within the authority and power invested in them by the Charter. And many of the ideas that have been expressed today merit serious attention. However, we believe it is impossible to succeed if the Organization cannot adequately respond to the main challenges and gaps that prevent it from being an effective global actor in the field of security.

Respect for the rule of law at the international level is the basis for international peace and stability, a key precondition for the prevention and settlement of conflicts and a guarantee of predictability in and the legitimacy of international relations. It begins with strict adherence to the Charter of the United Nations and other international treaties in force by States parties.

A lack of responsibility and impunity for the violation of the Charter and international treaties, which Ukraine considers as a guarantee of peace and stability in relations with its neighbours, have been among the main causes of aggression against my country and the occupation of Crimea. The Security Council had all the necessary levers available and should have taken actions to prevent that conflict in order to secure peace and stability in the region. Unfortunately, despite support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine by almost all Member States of the Security Council, the abuse of the veto power by one of the permanent members actually blocked any practical measures by the Security Council. The problem is that by taking advantage of its veto power, the Member State has committed aggression against Ukraine, even though, before that, that State had always recognized the territorial integrity and State borders of my country in accordance with the relevant bilateral treaties.

In that context, I should like to emphasize that permanent membership in the Security Council and the veto power are not just a privilege or matter of good luck. They entail the obligation and duty to responsibly take care of the peace and security of our world. Abuse of that status seriously undermines the authority and credibility of the Organization and erodes the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Within the framework of the Organization, we have already started discussions on non-use of the veto in the case of mass atrocities. My delegation welcomes that initiative. We hope that, very

soon, we will be able to engage in a substantive discussion on the prevention of the use of veto power in cases of aggression.

In conclusion, I would like to note that we can and should propose and discuss ideas aimed at improving United Nations mechanisms of conflict prevention. There is no doubt that this is very important work. That is why the topic was a main feature of Ukraine's Security Council membership in 2000 and 2001, as well as its membership in the Peacebuilding Commission in 2011 and 2012.

However, without solving the problem of abuse of the veto power and without a proper mechanism ensuring compliance with international treaties, all our efforts to prevent conflicts may fail any time, and any State Member of the Organization could become a victim of that failure.