



THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

STATEMENT

BY

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**GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 72ND SESSION
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**Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate H.E. Miroslav Lajcak, on his election as President of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, wishing him success in fulfilling his important mandate.

My thanks go also to his predecessor, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, for his dedication and professionalism in conducting the works of the previous session.

I take this opportunity to express words of encouragement and support to the Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres. I am confident that with his competent leadership and the joint efforts of the Member States, we will succeed in redefining the role of the United Nations and adjusting it to the requirements of the modern world.

Mr. President,

Clearly, all of us gathered in this great hall are deeply concerned by the challenges that the international community is confronted with. The armed conflicts in the Middle East, the protracted conflicts, terrorism and violent extremism, the affliction caused by poverty are only some of the phenomena that undermine peace and sustainable development.

We are equally concerned by the excessive accumulation of conventional weapons and the development of nuclear programs. An international environment marked by the threats to use force, including nuclear arms, greatly exacerbates the sense of insecurity and lack of trust.

The devastating natural disasters occurring with increasing frequency in a warming world affect hundreds of millions of people, especially those living in extreme poverty. In this context, I wish to express words of compassion and deep condolences to the countries and families affected by the recent devastating hurricanes, as well by the earthquake in Mexico.

The statements delivered by the previous speakers illustrate that we all have similar perceptions about global problems. Today, more than ever, we need a joint commitment of all UN Member States to face those challenges.

In this context, I would like to reiterate my country's full support to the Secretary General Guterres's agenda of reforms that puts a renewed emphasis on the conflict prevention, on the repositioning of the development and reforming the UN's internal management in order to effectively address the major challenges the world is confronted with.

Mr. President,

After the signing by the Republic of Moldova in June 2014 of the Association Agreement with the European Union, my country has engaged in a complex process of structural reforms aiming at building a modern society based on the European development model.

Our steady efforts are concentrated on the consolidation of the rule of law, the development of a functional market economy with a prominent social dimension and the respect for human rights. The strategic priorities for sectorial development entail, first of all, the modernization of infrastructure, efficient resource management, the promotion of green economy and renewable energy, as well as the application of modern technologies in agriculture. We have also undertaken to reform the public administration and the public services, while ensuring gender equality and the promotion of youth.

We have the necessary political will to fully implement those reforms and, in this endeavor, we will continue to rely on the support of our development partners, particularly the European Union and the United Nations.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Moldova fully shares the view that prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts, particularly the protracted ones, are indispensable premises for implementing the Agenda for Development 2030.

The lack of progress in protracted conflict's settlement should prompt a more direct involvement from the appropriate UN bodies. We believe that no conflict in the world should be left out of the UN's attention, irrespective of whether they are on the Security Council's agenda or not.

We appreciate the fact that the General Assembly agreed to include and maintains on its agenda an item addressing the "*Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development*". The General Assembly's debates under this item do not undermine, as some fear, the existing mechanisms to negotiate settlements of these conflicts.

On the contrary, the continuing monitoring of the situation in the concerned area, together with a proactive approach by the UN when its involvement is needed, can prevent or counter attempts aimed at changing the political borders of some GUAM states through methods that have nothing in common with democracy and the international law.

I take this opportunity to express the Republic of Moldova's deep concern regarding the ongoing armed conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine, a conflict that endangers the peace and security in our region. Let me reiterate again our full support to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Mr. President,

Since 1992, from this high UN rostrum, we repeatedly referred to the unresolved conflict in the Eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, a conflict that is also complicated by the illegal stationing of foreign military forces on our national territory.

We have underlined that, unlike other similar conflicts in the post-soviet space, the transnistrian conflict, while less intricate, could be resolved more easily should all the parties concerned display the necessary political will. In our case, there are no ethnic or religious enmities, and the population on the both banks of the Nistru River could live in peace and mutual understanding within a reintegrated Moldovan state.

Despite our efforts throughout the last twenty-five years with the involvement of international actors, we have not succeeded to settle this political conflict. We will continue our efforts to identify a solution in the existing 5+2 settlement format. For us, it is extremely important that this solution is based on the respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, providing a special status for the transnistrian region, as stipulated in relevant OSCE documents.

We firmly believe that the settlement process could be underpinned by the transformation of the current “trilateral peacekeeping force” that includes also a Russian contingent, into a multinational civilian mission with international mandate.

In this regard, I would like to underline that this trilateral disengagement force, which was established in accordance with the *Moldovan-Russian ceasefire agreement of 21 July 1992*, has long ago fulfilled its scope. This obsolete mechanism has turned into a factor of conflict preservation and has failed to ensure the full demilitarization of the security zone and to eliminate the obstacles to the free movement of people, goods and services.

Mr. President,

Against our expectations, the Russian Federation has not yet withdrawn its military forces from territory of the Republic of Moldova, in accordance with its international commitments, as stipulated in the Moldovan-Russian ceasefire agreement of July 1992, in the Moldovan-Russian agreement of October 1994, as well as in the relevant OSCE documents, in particular the Political Declaration adopted at the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999.

I would like to make clear here that these military forces are distinct and shall not be mistaken for the Russian contingent that participates in the “trilateral peacekeeping force” operating on the basis of an *ad-hoc* arrangement.

The military exercises conducted regularly in the transnistrian region by the Russian troops, with the increased participation of paramilitary forces belonging to separatist regime in Tiraspol, pose a continuous security threat to the Republic of Moldova. These joint military drills are in flagrant violation of express obligations stipulated in the *Moldovan-Russian ceasefire agreement of 1992* to strictly respect the principle of neutrality with regards to the two parties of the conflict.

Distinguished delegates,

According to OSCE reports, the stores of the Operative Group of the Russian Troops contain more than twenty-one thousand metric tons of weapons and ammunition.

The Government of the Republic of Moldova neither control nor supervise those weapons and munitions. Due to complete lack of access to the weapons and munitions' stockpiles controlled by the foreign forces, it is effectively prevented to assess the technical condition of those munitions, some of which may pose substantial environmental danger, or to monitor weapons and munitions transfers within its territory or abroad.

For the same reasons, the Republic of Moldova is unable to fulfill its international obligations, as a State Party, under various international disarmament conventions. While located on the territory of the Republic of Moldova, those weapons and munitions are not under its "jurisdiction or control".

Taking into account the commitments assumed by the Russian Federation, the fundamental principles of international law and the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova regarding its status of permanent neutrality and non-admission of deployment of military troops of other states on our national territory, we firmly reiterate the request for the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the so-called Operative Group of the Russian Troops (a successor of the former 14th Soviet army) which is illegally stationed on the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Let me also invoke in this context the *Declaration by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova of 21 of July 2017* (distributed earlier to all UN Member States as an official document of the General Assembly and the Security Council), calling on the Russian Federation to resume and finalize the process of withdrawal of its troops and munitions from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.

Distinguished delegates,

Mindful that the United Nations has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security and in accordance with article 11 of the UN Charter, the Republic of Moldova requests the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-second session of the UN General Assembly of a new item entitled "*The withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova.*"

From this perspective, I would respectfully call upon all UN member states to support this legitimate request that is fully compliant with the principles of the UN Charter and represents a fundamental interest of the Republic of Moldova.

We hope that the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly and its further consideration by the UN Member States, in a constructive and non-politicized manner, would constitute an important and necessary exercise of preventive diplomacy vis-à-vis a country and region where the maintenance of peace and security is continuously undermined by the lack of dialogue that is based on mutual respect and the respect for the fundamental principles of international law.

I thank you for your attention.