



# CZECH REPUBLIC

**Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the United Nations**

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**General Debate**

**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. Petr Pavel**

President of the Czech Republic

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*Check against Delivery*

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Madame President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a true honour for me to speak here in front of you.

Much to my regret, since the last time we met here one year ago - the world has not become any safer. On the contrary!

To start with, let me recall that the United Nations was created to save humanity from the scourge of war and destruction, and to promote peace, justice, and a better quality of life for all humankind.

Together, we have managed to build a global system of rules and cooperation, with the ambition to advance security and human rights instead of conflicts and suffering. Fostering economic development instead of overlooking mass destruction.

Aligned around the UN Charter, we have subscribed not to repeat the mistakes and disasters of the past.

Unfortunately, we still do.

The world and its citizens need and deserve an effective UN that can respond quickly when needed – and deliver better on our shared global commitments.

Without a functioning multilateral system, alternative and exclusive structures would lead to more fragmentation and less predictability.

It is our duty as national and global leaders to find common solutions to the most pressing problems before they get out of hand.

Finding a compromise is never easy. It requires time and patience.

Only if we realize that together we can achieve much more than when antagonised, can we make our nations – and the United Nations – truly united behind our goal.

A comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council is long overdue. Making the Council more effective, inclusive, accountable, and better reflecting today's realities by strengthening the voice of underrepresented regions is crucially needed.

In the face of the unjust and unprovoked Russian war against Ukraine, we must realise that Security Council membership is not a carte blanche.

No one has the right to abuse power and bully other members of the international community without sanctions.

Together, we must exercise more pressure on Russia to end its unjust and brutal war.

The Peace summit in Switzerland clearly confirmed that peace in Ukraine must be based on international law and principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The cynical nature of Russia's policy and its disinterest in genuine peace talks has global consequences.

These include impairing nuclear safety, diminishing food and energy security, and damaging rule-based international order.

Czechia calls on those of you, who yet have not supported our common effort, to evaluate the possibility of signing the joint declaration agreed at the Peace Summit in Switzerland.

So far, too many with the aspiration to become respected regional or global actors have remained silent. But respect cannot be forced, it can only be earned.

Let us not forget that hesitation strengthens the aggressor.

If you remain silent to injustice and aggression, soon there will be others waiting in line to see how far they can go in bending international rules as they please.

Some of you might think that Russia's actions against Ukraine are just another regional conflict and both sides need to meet halfway.

But there is no such thing as "just a regional conflict". Conflicts in one part of the world cause food insecurity and create refugee waves in other.

With globalisation, our security and prosperity start way beyond our own borders. Being fully aware of that, Czechia is committed not only to security of Europe but also in Middle East, Africa and elsewhere.

I applaud the fact that many nations, including African, spare no efforts to achieve and safeguard peace and security in their own regions and far beyond.

Czechia will continue to engage with African countries and closely listen to their views and needs.

I believe that despite political differences, together, we can create mutually beneficial partnerships - based on the principle of equality, mutual respect and without any historical burden or future material demands.

Africa is a continent with a huge economic potential which is waiting to be unlocked. We want to see Africa flourish, enhance its capabilities and create opportunities and jobs for young people.

The last topic I want to touch upon is cybersecurity and technology.

With progressing digital transformation and our increasing reliance on advanced technology, the gravity and scale of cyber threats are increasing; and respect no borders.

Cyber espionage and attacks against our hospitals, media, infrastructure, national institutions and businesses aim to destabilise our democratic systems and undermine its principles.

Just as offline, we cannot allow the cyberspace to become a lawless criminal world.

The agreed framework of responsible behaviour of states in cyberspace should guide us in our effort to strive for a safer online world.

The security of cyberspace will depend on the capacities and effort of all responsible states to enhance their own cyber-capabilities.

Czechia is taking its commitment to the protection of global cyberspace security very seriously.

We will continue providing assistance to our partners in Africa, Asia and South America so that together we can improve our resilience and to protect our citizens even better.

Foreign interference and disinformation continue to present a challenge with a serious impact on democracy, security and the rules-based international order.

With rapid development of new technologies, protection and promotion of human rights continue to be vital for our societies. Emerging technologies will have an undisputable influence on the nature of our future conflicts, but also in peace.

It is our duty to ensure that innovations – including artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, biotech and quantum computing – fully conform to our ethical and human rights standards.

Last year, Czechia together with Mexico, the Maldives, the Netherlands and South Africa submitted a resolution on human rights in the context of digital technologies.

Furthermore, last month, during the Globsec Security Forum I sat down with top managers of global tech companies at the Prague GeoTech Summit. I was glad to hear they are fully aware of their responsibility and fully committed to contribute to the resilience of democracy.

Madame President, ladies and gentlemen,

The challenges we are facing are global, and we can only succeed if we fully commit ourselves to collective action and more cooperation.

The quality of our governance will be judged by our actions and whether we leave this world in a better condition for future generations.

I would like to thank everyone who is tirelessly working to make our planet a safer and more secure place for all.

That is what really matters!

Thank you for your attention.