

**Address by Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, at the General Debate of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

Dear President of the General Assembly,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last two days, in this very room, global leaders welcomed the Pact for the Future. Together, we reaffirmed our commitment to multilateralism, anchored in the three pillars of the United Nations – sustainable development, peace and security, and human rights.

These are all great and noble principles that have defined the essence of the United Nations system ever since the end of the Second World War. Most significant global political developments, from decolonization to the end of the Cold War and the “singing revolutions” in Europe, have seemed to bring us closer to a bright future of peace, freedom and human dignity.

While this international rules-based world order was never perfect, it helped us to search for joint solutions. For many decades, we have been trying to resolve multiple conflicts and crises and address emerging global challenges such as climate change, unequal development, food insecurity, terrorism, and illegal migration.

And then, more than 10 years ago, something entirely different happened. A permanent member of the Security Council began military aggression against a peaceful member state. At first covertly. Then more and more openly, breaking ever more international norms. And finally, Russia started the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Today, even though we face yet another distressing crisis in the Middle East as well as rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region, the Russian war of aggression

is the most dangerous threat. The entire international order, defined by sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, is under assault in Ukraine. Each and every member of the United Nations – every sovereign nation – has also much to lose.

To fully understand what is presently at stake, we must all start paying attention to the words of Russian leaders and their representatives at the United Nations Security Council. How many times have they openly admitted that the Kremlin intends to wipe Ukraine from the face of Earth!

If any sovereign nation is under the threat of complete destruction, no country is truly safe anymore.

If the international community looks away and ignores the unpleasant truth, no country is truly safe anymore.

And if mass killings, deportations and deliberate attacks on civilian population become the new norm, no country is truly safe anymore.

That should be perfectly clear to anyone. That should disturb us all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What Russia presents to the world is a return to the era of imperial conquest, colonial domination and genocide. And I do not believe we are ready to follow this path. I do not believe any of us want to see powerful neighbors convincing themselves that from now on every dispute should be settled by force.

Therefore, right now, Ukraine is fighting not only a war of self-defense. Ukraine is also fighting for the future of all those countries who believe in the United Nations Charter and its principles. Ukraine is fighting for us all!

And yet our joint collective response to this day has been insufficient.

We have not been able to stop this madness.

We have not been able to force Russia to reconsider its dangerous course.

We have not been able to hold it accountable for so many violations of the United Nations Charter!

Why was that the case? Because to this day, the aggressor is hiding under the cover of the Security Council's permanent membership. Hiding in plain sight. Mocking every one of us with its unrestricted veto power.

It is a terrible blow to the very credibility of the United Nations system. And still, we keep hearing some calls for Ukraine to surrender, to compromise on its sovereignty and territorial integrity, or to accept Russia's ultimatums.

Why should the aggressor be rewarded?

Why should appeasement work this time, when it failed so spectacularly almost 90 years ago?

Why should the victim agree to the demands of the terrorist-in-chief, sitting safe in the Kremlin after so much bloodshed and loss of innocent lives?

Ukraine is still fighting. Ukraine is still going strong, regardless of all the appeasers and doomsayers. And only Ukraine has the right to determine the actual conditions for peace.

Meanwhile, we have the duty to support Ukraine. To restrict Russia's ability to wage war and ensure the accountability of those responsible for the crime of aggression and crimes against humanity. To reform the Security Council and to rebuild the credibility of the United Nations Charter.

To withstand enormous pressure and win this war, Ukraine will need more military equipment, ammunition, medical supplies. Ukraine also urgently needs humanitarian and financial aid.

This upcoming winter will be extremely difficult for the Ukrainian people. Constant deliberate Russian attacks on critical energy infrastructure have destroyed more than 80 percent of Ukraine's thermal energy generation and a third of its hydro generation. To prevent a humanitarian catastrophe, our assistance should be swift and focused on the energy sector.

Lithuania calls on other parties, including Belarus, Iran, North Korea, and China, to stop providing Russia with military support, including the transfer of dual-use materials. More arms for Russia means more civilian deaths. More civilian infrastructure destroyed. More chaos.

There is only one path towards comprehensive, just and lasting peace – Ukraine’s Peace Formula. It deserves universal support because it is based on the universal principles of the United Nations Charter – sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law. Lithuania urges all peace-loving countries to actively engage in these efforts, including preparation for and participation in the next Summit of the Peace Formula.

The war could enter the end phase tomorrow if only Russia agrees to disengage and withdraw its forces from all the occupied territories. Ukraine does not want Russia’s territories. It wants to liberate its own people – not Russia’s. It wants to see prisoners of war and abducted children – thousands of them – returned. It wants the constant deliberate bombing of civilian infrastructure, of so many schools, hospitals, and power stations, to finally stop.

To achieve lasting peace, more actions will have to follow. Justice will have to be served. Russia will have to atone for its many crimes and pay damages. The main culprits of the war of aggression and numerous war crimes will have to stand before the court.

Vladimir Putin is already under an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court for his crimes, specifically unlawful deportation and unlawful transfer of children. I call on the United Nations member countries to enforce this warrant. Immobilized Russian foreign assets should also be used to pay for the damage done to Ukraine.

Finally, we must all join forces in pushing for a comprehensive Security Council reform. There is simply no place for Russia in the Security Council, which was created to maintain international peace and security.

Excellencies,

Lithuania hopes to witness Ukraine's victory soon. Until this becomes reality, Lithuania's position remains steadfast.

We will not recognize Russia's illegal annexation of any Ukrainian region, be it Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, or Zaporizhzhia.

We will not stop demanding that Russia ends grave violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the occupied territories of Ukraine.

Lithuania will continue providing shelter to Ukrainian war refugees.

Lithuania will continue supporting Ukraine with all possible means.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as political divisions deepen and democracy seems to falter all around the globe, multilateralism remains our greatest hope. The United Nations has a crucial role to play not only Ukraine but also in the Middle East, Sahel, Horn of Africa, and the Indo-Pacific region.

We, as representatives of the international community, cannot remain indifferent in the face of global crises. We cannot stay silent on breaches of international law and universal human rights, thus normalizing them.

The pursuit of peace and justice requires our collective determination. It requires our unwavering adherence to the guiding principles of the United Nations.

Now, as always, Lithuania is committed to promoting democracy, human rights and accountability on the global stage. We call on all the members of the United Nations to unite in securing a better future for all. A future where every sovereign country is protected from imperialism and every human being from arbitrary violence and war.

Let us build a safer future together!

Thank you.