

## News

## Address by Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, at the United Nations General Assembly

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Address by Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania, at the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, 23 September 2025.

Mister President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eighty years ago, humanity, emerging from the Second World War, embarked on a long road towards peace.

Building on the solid foundation of a rules-based international order, our forefathers created the United Nations and its institutional system.

This system was never perfect. Many nations, Lithuania included, had to struggle for decades seeking freedom, independence and sovereignty. Many people suffered war, famine and premature death.

And yet, it was the best international order that we have ever had. The United Nations system embodied the great hope that nourishes the human soul and guides our actions for the universal good. Together, we succeeded in condemning war and conquest – at least in theory, if not always in practice.

To this day, even the worst aggressors feel ashamed to openly conquer, destroy and enslave. Instead, they talk about special military operations and the need to protect those who, frankly, do not want to be protected.

This shame is a significant achievement of our time. To the extent that current international norms limit the behavior of offenders, they help countless people to survive, escape torture, or even prosper.

Thus, it is an ever-growing concern to witness these same norms being subjected to increasingly open and brutal attacks. Our international order is being slowly eroded by the irresponsible actions of those who should know better. The world is turning into a much more dangerous place.

We have seen this before. We cannot ignore the striking parallels between the present day and the events of 1938, a time when the world chose appeasement over international law and diplomacy over deterrence, culminating in the infamous Munich Pact.

That was a short-sighted attempt to satisfy a dangerous, revisionist aggressor by giving away the territory of a sovereign nation. It proved to be a complete failure.

The Munich Pact not only emboldened the Nazi regime but also opened the door for Soviet expansion. Soon after, the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact carved Europe into spheres of influence and sealed the fate of many independent states. As Europe descended into another great war, Lithuania and the other Baltic States were illegally occupied, annexed and brutalized.

After regaining the independence 35 years ago, Lithuania feels a duty to guard the bitter memory of past mistakes. Never again will we place our hopes in appeasement. Never again will we stand aside. Never again shall Pandora's box be opened.

In 1938, it was Czechoslovakia that was abandoned. Today, we cannot abandon Ukraine.

The war in Ukraine is well into its fourth year. The international community has not done enough to stop the aggressor.

This is a quest that goes far beyond the usual lines that keep different nations apart. What matters is not the distinction between large or small, or between Global North and Global South nations, but the basic principles of the UN Charter which guarantee peace and security across the globe.

If one UN member is attacked with impunity year after year by a permanent member of the Security Council, what does that mean for the rest of us?

When power replaces law, and fear silences the truth, the foundations of global order begin to crack. And then nobody – nobody – can feel safe anymore!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The effects of Russia's war against Ukraine are being felt across the world. This war has sparked crises in energy, migration and food security, while also deepening global poverty, hunger, environmental damage and climate change.

It all began with the illegal occupation of Crimea in 2014, and escalated into a full-scale invasion, marked by systematic war crimes.

The targeted destruction of civilian infrastructure, indiscriminate missile attacks and the forced deportation of thousands of Ukrainian children are not isolated abuses. These are calculated efforts to erase Ukraine's identity and undermine its sovereignty and territorial integrity – all in open defiance of the United Nations' Charter.

Let me be clear: Lithuania will never recognize Russia's illegal occupation and annexation of Ukrainian lands. Ukraine's borders are not up for negotiation and attempts to redraw them by force are unacceptable. The United Nations' Charter is not a menu to pick from; it is the binding foundation of international order.

Ukraine is also not the only target. Russia continues to occupy two Georgian regions, destabilizes Moldova, and uses proxies and mercenaries to spread instability across the Sahel, the Middle East, and beyond. These are not isolated episodes. They are part of a calculated policy to undermine international norms and export chaos for strategic gain.

Russia is not acting alone. The countries enabling Russia's war against Ukraine also violate international law. They prolong the war and deepen unnecessary suffering. Their actions damage us all – every sovereign nation.

Lithuania therefore calls on the international community to maintain strong political, military, humanitarian, and economic support for Ukraine. Having already provided more than 1 billion euros in assistance, half of which for reconstruction and long-term recovery, we are setting an example to follow.

It is equally vital that the international community stop buying Russia's energy resources. Without all that oil and gas money, Moscow's war machine would finally stop.

If history is any indicator, Russia will never stop using energy for its geopolitical goals. Wherever Russian energy resources flow, corruption, blackmail and sabotage will follow.

Let me remind you – this is a country that understands only the language of force. Ukraine's ability to deter aggression will be the decisive factor in the future.

Moreover, peace will never be sustainable without justice. Russia's numerous war crimes – from mass killings and attacks on hospitals to the abduction, deportation and indoctrination of children – demand accountability.

My country strongly supports the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression, under the auspices of the Council of Europe. We call on all states to endorse this initiative. Accountability must have real consequences – legal, political and financial.

As a co-founder of the Register of Damage for Ukraine, Lithuania calls on all eligible states to join this vital effort. Russia's frozen assets must eventually be used to help Ukraine defend itself and rebuild.

I also cannot stress strongly enough that the return of all deported Ukrainian children and illegally detained civilians must be a global priority. We urge all states and institutions to strengthen international efforts to ensure their safe homecoming.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As crucial as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is, it is only part of a broader global upheaval.

Lithuania watches the current situation in the Middle East with deep concern. We join the international community in calling for the full and immediate implementation of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. To prevent starvation, humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach those in need without obstruction. At the same time, the unconditional release of all remaining Israeli hostages remains a crucial step towards ending hostilities.

Lithuania is firmly committed to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. We condemn all the actions that undermine this goal. The ongoing mediation efforts led by the United States, Qatar and Egypt deserve our full support.

There is no alternative but to revitalize a credible political process towards a two-state solution – ensuring that the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign, and viable State of Palestine can live side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the future capital of both states.

Sadly, many States remain trapped in cycles of conflict, crisis and long-term fragility. It is our shared responsibility to support those in need, as destabilization spreads far and wide across international borders, regions and continents.

Our attention must also focus on the growing challenge of disinformation, which is increasingly being used to undermine democratic institutions and destabilize entire nations and societies. Lithuania calls on all members of the international community to defend truth as the supreme value and to fight attempts to rewrite history. Historical memory must be preserved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we face high global uncertainty, one choice remains entirely clear: either we will repeat the mistakes of history or we will find the resolve to defend the core principles of the United Nations.

Today, Lithuania chooses to act. We call on the international community to respond to today's challenges with unity and determination. We call on the United Nations to return to its founding purpose – to prevent the scourge of war, to protect human dignity, and to uphold the rights of nations large and small.

Together, we must ensure that no permanent seat on the Security Council grants any state permanent impunity. We must support those who defend the very principles of the UN Charter.

In this spirit, I welcome the Secretary-General's UN80 reform agenda – a timely blueprint for adapting this institution to the realities of today's world. His call for a more inclusive, effective and accountable United Nations deserves our broad support.

Lithuania stands firmly behind these efforts to reimagine multilateralism. We call on all states to strengthen our collective ability to act across all three pillars – peace and security, human rights, and development.

Our message must be simple and straightforward: aggression cannot win, and the principles of the UN Charter must prevail. Let us rise to the demands of this moment!