

KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Statement by

H.E. Mr Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve,
Permanent Representative
of Belgium to the United Nations

Security Council - Open Debate

*“Upholding the UN Charter to Maintain International
Peace and Security”*

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Mr President,

On behalf of Belgium, I thank Vietnam for this open debate.

I also thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres and the Chair of The Elders, Ms Mary Robinson for their presentations.

Seventy-five years ago, our organisation emerged from the ashes of two world wars. Driven by the shared memory of unspeakable horror, the Charter's authors wanted “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.

We must reaffirm this objective, but also consider the major principles of international relations, the most important of which is multilateralism. It is a key factor of international stability, democracy and prosperity. It is central to the Charter.

For Belgium, this week more than ever, multilateralism must not be limited to fine words during the Ministerial Week of the General

Assembly. Multilateralism must be translated day by day into practical actions, calling on the institutions created by the Charter. Belgium believes that this Council plays a vital role when there is a threat against international peace and security.

Mr President,

In 1945, fifty-one of us signed the Charter and joined the new organisation. Our UN family has almost quadrupled since then. However, joining this family means accepting obligations that benefit a higher purpose.

In recent decades, we have developed new instruments to implement the Charter such as international criminal tribunals, strengthening the mandates for peacekeeping operations in terms of civilian protection and imposing targeted sanctions.

We should also mention the efforts of the Secretary-General who, through mediation, facilitates the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Similarly, regional organisations play an essential role, one that has continued to grow, particularly in terms of prevention and early warning.

However, we have been unable to protect all generations from the "scourge of war". One glance at the world map is enough to see the fragility of peace. Furthermore, new challenges are testing our resilience as an international community including the increase in non-

State actors threatening our security, the risk of an arms race and climate change and its impact on security.

In order to respond to these challenges, we must make the system that we have created more operational and there are practical initiatives in this respect.

It is each State's primary responsibility to fight against **war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide**. However, the Security Council is also responsible for timely action. For example, referring a situation where one or several such crimes appear to have been committed to the International Criminal Court.

Indeed, despite the tools and resources available to us, we often react too slowly, and sometimes too late. We are slow to agree on the interpretation of crisis warning signals, such as large-scale Human Rights abuses and the appropriate collective responses.

The Charter also sets out the primacy of **conflict prevention and peaceful settlement**. The International Court of Justice plays a crucial role in this area, particularly through its advisory opinions. However, the Court will only be fully effective if all the Member States accept its compulsory jurisdiction.

Finally, Belgium believes that reforms are required to strengthen the legitimacy, representativeness and effectiveness of this Council. This is

why we are fully supportive of the Code of Conduct drafted in the *Accountability, Coherence and Transparency* Group and the Franco-Mexican initiative on limiting the right of veto.

In particular, we cannot ignore the **principle of the rule of law** in our working methods and procedures. For consistency, the Security Council must guarantee individuals the right to due process or fair and clear procedures regarding sanctions.

Mr President,

As a founding member of the United Nations, Belgium remains committed, not only to the letter of the Charter, but above all, to its spirit and we wish to translate this commitment into practical actions.

Thank you.