

APPEAL TO WORLD LEADERS AND THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 77TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

by the former UN system staff members signing below

In a couple of weeks the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly will be opening, with world leaders flocking to New York for the “General Debate” high-level segment. With the military confrontation in Ukraine now in its seventh month with no end to the destruction, killing and suffering in sight, the expectation is that world leaders will refer to it in their speeches.

We appeal that this occasion be used productively, in addition to reasserting the values of the UN Charter, the principles of non-aggression and of the peaceful resolution of disputes, to actually advance efforts to end the fighting and set in motion a negotiation process. Such a process could gradually allow for the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the broader context of regional and global peace and security.

The authors of this appeal, former UN civil servants from many corners of the globe, constantly inspired by the UN Charter and its vision of a peaceful, prosperous and just world, expect the UN to do more to assist the parties in ending the war and finding a peaceful, just and lasting solution to their differences. We are encouraged by the success of UN-led negotiations that have enabled the resumption of exports of Ukrainian grains and facilitate the export of Russian grains and fertilizers, so that a major famine can be averted, especially in the poorest countries. We are also encouraged by the involvement of the UN and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in avoiding a catastrophe at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. The UN and its Secretary-General need to capitalize on these functional arrangements and pursue political channels of communication in parallel, so as to secure a ceasefire and get a negotiation process started the soonest possible.

As the interests of Russia, as well as those of Ukraine’s main supporters, namely the US and the EU, extend way beyond this conflict and have geopolitical dimensions, we urge that a negotiating mechanism be created to address related concerns from all sides. We therefore urge UN Secretary-General Guterres, with the support of world leaders, to convene an international contact group of key countries and to appoint a special envoy, thus facilitating the discussion of these divergent interests and making it possible for them to be overcome through compromise and mutual guarantees.

The countries which are party to this conflict are members of the United Nations, and are thus committed to the UN Charter’s core principle of settling international conflicts by peaceful means (Chapter VI of the UN Charter) or, if that fails, by collective action led by the Security Council (Chapter VII). Membership in regional organisations and/or military alliances does not render the above principles invalid. As for unilateral action by Permanent Members of the Security Council to block decisions from being taken, the Veto Initiative by Liechtenstein or the application of provision 27.3 of the Charter shows the way forward for such situations in future.

While looking up to the UN Secretary-General to deliver on the above, we request that all those who hold high office in countries and international organizations, and thus have the power to change the course of events, act in that direction immediately. This would give real meaning and usefulness to this year’s world leaders’ gathering in New York. We cannot rewrite the past, but we can write the future for a world, where all people can live decent lives in peace, free of fear and want. Economic and technological competition may continue, the same applies for political interests and concerns. But war has to end, if we want to avoid situations where attempted winner-takes-all approaches more often than not lead to having only losers in the end.

7 September 2022

[List of signatories follows]

1	ABU-NUWAR	Abdul Muniem	65	JOSEPH	Carol
2	AGUILAR	Pilar	66	KAHANE	Matthew
3	AKOPYAN	David	67	KAHLON	Himmet
4	AMODEO	Margherita	68	KAKUCSKA	Peter
5	ANDERSEN	Terje	69	KANNINEN	Tapio
6	ANGELO	J.Victor	70	KLECKNER	Simone
7	ASKWITH	Michael	71	KOEHLER	Gabriele
8	BÁEZ	Julio A	72	KOLLIES	Ute
9	BANERJEE	Ajit M	73	KOSTAKOS	Georgios
10	BEIGBEDER	Yves	74	KRONFOL	Fouad
11	BERLINGHOF	Barbara	75	LANDON	Carole
12	BETTELLI	Paola	76	LECOMTE DU NOUY	Patricia
13	BHALLA	Karunesh	77	LEE	Donald
14	BIELLIK	Robin	78	LEITNER	Kerstin
15	BODDEN	Vernett	79	LEWIS	Gary
16	BORCHARDT	Katharina	80	MALDONADO	Maria Delia
17	BREINES	Ingeborg	81	MALHOTRA	Kamal
18	BURBIDGE	Robert	82	MANUEL	Susan
19	BURLEY	John	83	MARTIN	Mary
20	CAILLIEZ	Elize	84	MARTINEZ	Theresa
21	CARRASCO-BATTIN	Lucia	85	MENON	Saraswathi
22	CHATURVEDI	Suvira	86	MEYLAHN	Angela
23	CHAVEZ	María-Luisa	87	MIMICOPOULOS	Michael
24	CLAYCOMB	Paula	88	MOLINIER	Cécile
25	COHEN	Robert	89	MOUSOURIS	Sotiris
26	COOK MAUDE	Denise	90	MURRAY	Gillian
27	COPPENS	Bertrand	91	NELSON	Janet
28	COSTA-ESNARD	Aurora Lola	92	NILAND	Norah
29	DAHL	Arthur	93	NORTON	Christine
30	DAMEN	Conradus	94	OCKWELL	Ron
31	DAVIS	Gary E	95	OLVER	Richard
32	DE LA FUENTE	Brenda	96	OSORIO	Maria Clara
33	DE VITA	Maria Gabriella	97	PÉREZ DEL CASTILLO	Gonzalo
34	DE ZAYAS	Alfred	98	REYNOLDS	Phil
35	DICK	Alain	99	RICKARD-MARTIN	Lorraine
36	DJIBO	Boubacar	100	RIDDLE	Margaret
37	DONINI	Antonio	101	ROBERFROID	Andre
38	EVANGELISTA	Douglas	102	RUSSELL	Andrew
39	FLORES	Gilberto	103	RYAN	Jordan
40	FOX-PRZEWORSKI	Joanne	104	SACKSTEIN	Edward
41	FRANCAIS	Ariel	105	SCHUMANN	Peter
42	FREEMAN	Carl	106	SEVAN	Benon
43	GANIATSOS	Thomas	107	SIERRA	Enrique
44	GARCIA MENDEZ	Emilio	108	SKURATOWICZ	Jerzy
45	GARDNER	Douglas	109	SLUTKIN	Gary
46	GELDOF	Lynn	110	SUZUKI	Rie
47	GIBBONS	Elizabeth	111	SWIETERING	Jan
48	GORLICK	Brian	112	SZAL	Richard
49	GRANT	Elizabeth	113	TABLANTE	Zenaida
50	GRIEGER	Wolfgang	114	TAKASE	Chikako
51	GROSE	Kevin	115	TAMAGNINI	Andrea
52	GUINDO	Adama	116	THALMANN	Anne-Marie
53	GULUMA	Esther	117	TOLMIE	Ellen
54	GURNEY	Michael	118	TORTORA	Manuela
55	GURUN	Sema	119	TOSO	Francesca
56	HADJ-HAMMOU	Nadir	120	URSINO	Steven
57	HALLIDAY	Denis J.	121	VAN DRUNEN	Jiddo
58	HARRISON	Richard	122	VANDEMOORTELE	Jan
59	HEYN	Michael	123	VANDEWEERD	Veerle
60	HIGHAM	Andrew	124	VAZQUEZ	Lilia
61	HIJAB	Nadia	125	WEISBROT	Barada
62	HOEFFEL	Paul	126	WILLIAMS	Michael
63	INGRAM	Joseph	127	ZHAGORA	Vladimir
64	JENSEN	Tomas	128	ZVEKIC	Ugljesa