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## Address by the President of the Republic of Poland at the General Debate of the 81st Session of the UN General Assembly

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**President:** Russia is destabilising the situation in Europe by launching overt invasions, carrying out hybrid operations, acts of sabotage and diversion, and ignoring successive resolutions of this Assembly. It is displaying the same imperial hubris that in the past led to unimaginable suffering and the tragedy of two world wars. However, contempt for international law must not become the norm.

Dear Mr. President,

I am very pleased that we are here together today. Thank you for your hard work in the service of both the United Nations and the Republic of Poland..

Excellencies, Honourable Guests,

The 81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly begins at what is, in my view, one of the most difficult moments since the Organization was called into being. Poland was, in fact, a founding member of the United Nations. Since the very inception of the UN, we have grappled with the question of the foundations of the international order that we are building together within this Organization. Yet, for all its achievements, we must not lose sight of a fundamental flaw embedded in the very foundations of the system – one that continues to undermine its credibility to this day. The United Nations was created in response to the greatest tragedy in human history – the Second World War. Yet it was not founded on the simple and fundamental principle that guilt must entail accountability and, where warranted, just punishment.

For Poland, this is not an abstract issue. At the time, the foundations of the United Nations were being laid, my nation, a victim of two totalitarian regimes, found itself under the domination of one of them – Soviet Russia – having just emerged from years of devastating occupation by the other – Germany. At that very time, thousands of Polish heroes who had fought for the freedom of Europe and the world were being imprisoned, tortured and sentenced to death.

The United Nations already existed at the time. Yet the state responsible for those crimes was simultaneously helping to shape the post-war order as a permanent member of the Security Council. Poland has never received reparations for that period and for the crimes committed against it.

The failure to hold those responsible for these crimes to account was not merely a historical oversight. It sent a signal that violations of international law, aggression and imperial policies could go unpunished and carry no real consequences. It is this absence of justice – this peculiar original sin of the post-war order – that creates fertile ground for the resurgence of old aggressive ambitions and methods.

The aggressive policies pursued by some states today cannot be divorced from history; they are a direct consequence of it. A state that has never been held to account for its actions is more likely to resort to the same methods again.

This is why it is so important for us, as an international community, to restore the principle of accountability to its full meaning. Without it, there can be no lasting peace, and international law will remain little more than a set of declarations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we must show courage. Yet we must also remember that courage alone is sometimes not enough. If it is not coupled with prudence, courage can lead to disaster. True leadership requires both. Prudence, in this case, is not merely about knowing what we want to achieve. It is also about pursuing our goals with determination, calling aggression what it is, condemning those who undermine the international order, and refusing to look the other way when they violate its rules.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For many years now, representatives of my country have warned, both in this Hall and in the Security Council Chamber, that a situation in which Russia — a permanent member of the Security Council — is waging a brutal, yet unsuccessful, war of conquest against a neighbouring state and seeking to destabilise an entire region, stands in direct contradiction to the principles we have all pledged to uphold as signatories to the Charter of the United Nations.

Russia is destabilising the situation in Europe by launching overt invasions, carrying out hybrid operations, acts of sabotage and diversion, and ignoring successive resolutions of this Assembly. It is displaying the same imperial hubris that in the past led to unimaginable suffering and the tragedy of two world wars. However, contempt for international law must not become the norm.

It is not too late to restore the primacy of international law and strengthen the foundations of a system in which principles prevail, and the international community stands in solidarity, united against acts of aggression in stark violation of the UN Charter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Russian Federation, guided by an imperial and neo-colonial vision of the world, seeks to impose its will on others. In essence, it is thereby challenging the right of every nation to decide its own destiny. A neo-imperial and neo-colonial policy is, in essence, an attempt to bring back a world in which the borders, security and future of states and peoples would be decided not by themselves, but by other states that consider themselves stronger and better placed to dominate others; a world in which force would replace law. It is an attempt to return to a concert of powers. There can be no consent to this. The force of law, not the law of force, should prevail.

Poland is particularly aware of the consequences of Russian colonialism and imperialism. History has taught us that freedom and sovereignty do not defend themselves of their own accord. That is why we are determined to counter the threats posed even more boldly by the Kremlin's aggressive policies..

As a representative of a country neighbouring Russia, I want to make one thing clear: it is not us who are seeking confrontation. We are strengthening our alliances, developing our armed forces and modernising their equipment not to wage war, but to prevent it. Our objective is deterrence and defence — the defence of two values that also lie at the heart of the United Nations Charter: freedom and sovereignty.

We invariably view the North Atlantic Alliance as the guarantor of European security. NATO is united in its overarching goal of defending our community on both sides of the Atlantic — in Europe and America — and on both its eastern and northern flanks. We therefore welcome the strengthening of security in the Arctic region, which is becoming a reality as a result of yesterday's agreement signed between our allies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

However, we must be clear that today's security threats are not confined to conventional military operations. Russia is undermining the foundations of international stability by attacking ports and vessels carrying grain, thereby threatening global food security. It is also deliberately provoking crises whose consequences are felt by millions of people far beyond Europe.

In parallel, a large-scale hybrid war is being waged, involving sabotage, cyberattacks and destabilisation efforts on a scale that is unprecedented to-date, including the deliberate engineering of a migration crisis. These actions are planned, coordinated and

carried out with firm consistency. Their aim is to weaken states, erode public trust and fracture the unity of the international community. What we are facing is not a series of isolated incidents, but a sustained and deliberate strategy. This is precisely why our response cannot be ad hoc or half-hearted. It must be firm, consistent and it must be collective. For if aggression — whether military or hybrid — does not trigger an adequate response, it only encourages further acts of aggression.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even if we have reservations about the effectiveness of the Security Council today, we recognise and respect the United Nations' achievements in maintaining and building peace in many parts of the world. The vital role played by UN peacekeeping operations in preventing the recurrence of conflict is undeniable.

Poland is in favour of stable funding for peacekeeping missions with clearer mandates that include civil protection and state institution reconstruction support. Poland fulfils its obligations to global security by participating in UN peacekeeping operations.

Polish soldiers wearing blue helmets are currently serving in Lebanon, performing their duties with dignity despite the difficult security situation throughout the region. We will support efforts to de-escalate conflicts, protect the civilian population and comply with international humanitarian law, and we will work consistently towards the realisation of a two-state solution that ensures the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is precisely why the response to contemporary threats must not be limited to crisis response. It must be based on clear principles and credible partnerships. Poland does not have a colonial past. Our historical experience is different, shaped by our struggle for freedom and our opposition to domination by force.

In international relations, we advocate an approach based on mutual respect, state sovereignty and equality. Poland does not seek to gain an advantage over others. On the contrary, we build cooperation that strengthens all participants.

In a world of increasing geopolitical rivalry, we need partnerships that create real value, rather than deepening dependency. That is why Poland has been working consistently towards a model of international cooperation that allows states to develop and strengthen their resilience, while enabling them to make sovereign decisions. This approach is reflected in our regional policy and global activity. We propose partnership over dependence. It is with this mindset that we approach our role in the global economy and our participation in international initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, Poland is the 20th largest economy in the world. Our path to becoming a developed country was not an accident. It was the result of consistent reforms, including efforts to combat corruption, responsible policymaking and the hard work of society as a whole. We see this experience not as a reason for complacency, but as a responsibility to share what we have learned with others.

We see engagement in the work of the G20 as key to rebuilding trust in international relations and developing responses to today's major challenges, from economic security and supply chain resilience to trading system stability. In this context, the decision to expand this format to include every region was an important step towards a more representative order.

In 2023, the African Union became a permanent member of the G20. This was a good decision: it gave Africa a stronger voice and better reflected the realities of the global economy.

Now it is time for the voice of Central Europe, so far absent from this forum, to be heard in the G20 as well. This is a dynamically developing region, with a perspective and experience that differ somewhat from those of its friends in Western Europe. As a country that understands both the challenges of development and the importance of stable rules governing the international economy, Poland will give voice to this region. Central Europe which is part of the Three Seas Initiative is no longer merely a project enabling Central Europe to catch up with the more developed parts of the continent. Today, Central Europe is a region of dynamic growth,

increasing innovation and remarkable energy. It is one of the most promising regions in the world in terms of economic development.

This dynamism is underpinned by cooperation in areas such as infrastructure and energy, stronger transport links, the development of North–South corridors, and investment in energy security and the diversification of energy sources. All of this directly strengthens the resilience of our economies. Energy sovereignty, including through nuclear power, is no longer an option. It is a prerequisite for security and political independence. The experience of recent years has clearly shown that countries capable of freeing themselves from external energy pressure are also more resilient to blackmail and destabilisation.

That is why we consider the development of regional cooperation to be a vital step towards establishing a more stable and predictable global economic order. We believe that we must work together to overcome the challenges of the 21st century. Countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, with whom we share experience of development, an ambition to modernise, and a desire to strengthen sovereignty, are natural partners in this endeavour. I believe that Poland's membership of the G20 will benefit us all.

This year, we are participating in the group's work, having accepted the invitation extended by the current presidency, the United States. Many thanks to the President of the United States, Donald Trump, for inviting us to the G20 Summit. We are actively involved in preparations for the event, which is due to take place in Miami in December this year.

At the same time, we must recognise that sustainable economic development and international stability cannot be achieved without addressing the structural challenges facing many regions of the world today. One such challenge is the demographic crisis. This is not merely a matter of statistics, but a challenge of civilisational significance. Ageing populations, declining fertility rates and the erosion of social bonds are weakening the foundations of our societies.

Economic measures alone will not provide a solution. We also need to rebuild institutions and culture, protect and strengthen the family, and reaffirm the social importance of parenthood.

Yes, the family – the mother and the father – and recognition of their role are the starting point for reversing the demographic crisis. Without sustainable communities and strong families, there can be neither stable development nor long–term security. Let us do everything we can, through culture and the mass media, to promote bringing children into the world rather than terminating pregnancies.

I believe that the United Nations can provide a framework within which we can work together to find ways of gradually overcoming the demographic crisis, as well as addressing other related challenges, including illegal migration, which, for example, often involves human trafficking. However, illegal migration cannot be the answer to the demographic challenge. It brings hardship, tensions and social unrest. That is not the way forward.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

'Polish Aid' demonstrates our commitment to global solidarity with those in need. This is why we have consistently supported international efforts to resolve the crisis in the Middle East over the years. We provide humanitarian aid and engage in development activities in Palestine and Lebanon, which are the priority countries of 'Polish Aid'.

In Palestine, we support the operation of mobile clinics that provide medical care in the West Bank, and we strengthen employment and professional skills, particularly among women. In Lebanon, we are developing the operational capacity of Lebanese Civil Defence units to enable them to respond to disasters and natural catastrophes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

However, while seeking to strengthen the resilience of states and build stability, we cannot overlook another dimension of responsibility: our responsibility for the world that we will pass on to future generations. It is our duty towards future generations to

leave them a clean and safe environment.

Poland supports measures to protect the environment, recognising its impact on security, including food security. While caring for the environment is undoubtedly our duty, the implementation of the task must not lead to the weakening of our economies or the transfer of problems beyond our borders. Ambitious environmental policies that are not viewed through the prism of their global consequences may result in deindustrialisation, extension of supply chains, and the relocation of production to countries that do not apply comparable standards. This approach does not lead to genuine climate protection; it merely results in emissions being exported to other parts of the globe, causing job losses and the disappearance of production capacity in the original location. We therefore need solutions that combine environmental responsibility with economic competitiveness and economic security.

In this spirit, it is worth recalling the message of St Francis of Assisi, who saw nature not as a resource to be exploited, but as a gift entrusted to man – our common home, for which we are responsible as its guardians and custodians. In short, the protection of our environment cannot be handed over to fanatics. Caring for nature is much older than left-wing ideas – it stems from an ethic that was formed long before the emergence of post-Marxist ideologues. Because care for creation and care for human beings are inextricably linked, human beings and their dignity must remain at the centre of our reflection on the future of the world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human rights are not an addendum to international politics; rather, they form the basis of it and also stem from ethical principles that predate our organisation. Violating these principles invariably leads to violence, destabilisation and conflict. The history of my own country, as well as the broader course of history, teaches us this unequivocally.

The social movement that led to the overthrow of the communist government imposed on Poland was called Solidarity. It was an expression of the courage of people who, despite repression and a lack of freedom, refused to live under a system based on lies and violence. We may differ in our assessments of how far the crimes of the communist system have been addressed; this is a debate that is ongoing in my country. However, it is precisely for this reason that we should pay tribute to all those people, especially the workers, who have given us a free world. They do not flaunt the wealth and position they have gained at the expense of others; they remain true to their values and commitments. They have shown that freedom always begins with courage.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are still too many people in the world who suffer persecution because of their faith. This is true for many religious communities, but today we must speak in particular about the fate of Christians in regions affected by conflict and persecution. Until recently, Christian communities have been an integral part of societies in these regions, having been present for two thousand years and playing a key role in shaping local culture, language and identity. Today, in all too many places, their numbers have declined dramatically. In some areas, only traces of their former presence remain. With these communities, the living traditions and heritage dating back to the earliest centuries of Christianity are also disappearing. In many places, this centuries-old continuity has been irreparably broken, if not lost altogether. Attacks on places of worship, discrimination, violence and even the loss of human life cannot be ignored by the international community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Threats to human dignity are no longer confined to the physical world. Increasingly, they are emerging in areas where, until recently, neither law nor accountability had much reach – in the digital sphere shaped by rapidly developing technologies. As technologies such as artificial intelligence and, potentially, superintelligence continue to advance, they must always remain at the service of humanity, rather than exploit people or prey on their vulnerabilities. This raises a fundamental question: in a world increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence, will human beings remain autonomous subjects, or will they become mere objects of algorithmic influence?

I am well aware that breakthrough technologies offer great opportunities but also pose certain risks. As the eminent Polish writer Stanisław Lem warned in his 1980s novel *Fiasco*, the moment we teach machines to think, we will be faced with questions about

not only their capabilities, but also their ambitions. After all, if they begin to think like humans, it is only natural that they would strive to surpass them. Today, this challenge takes on a new dimension as technology plays a decisive role in shaping the realities of the 21st century.

This is why we need to have a serious conversation about the boundaries of artificial intelligence development. We need clear rules that define where innovation ends and danger to humans begins. AI must not be used to destabilise, manipulate or undermine the international order. Technology should serve humanity and truth, not chaos and manipulation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland's priority remains a rule-based order rooted in our Constitution and derived from our historical experience. That is why we view the United Nations not as a talking shop, but as an institution that must be able to take action. As the world has changed, so must the UN. We need an organisation that can respond to violations of the law, enforce the rules, and prevent impunity. UN reform cannot be reduced to mere declarations. It must deliver real effectiveness and accountability, even when faced with new challenges such as the demographic crisis and the development of artificial intelligence, which render existing rules obsolete and test the limits of our responsibility.

We are at a turning point. On the one hand, the logic of force and impunity is returning; on the other, there are technologies that can perpetuate or stop this logic. Whether the law will be stronger than force and whether man will remain more important than the tools he has created depends on our decisions.

Poland — and I want to convince you of this — will always stand for the rule of law, responsibility, humanity and freedom. Thank you very much.



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