

## 32. DEFINITION OF AGGRESSION

General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 14 December 1974, annex

*The General Assembly,*

*Basing itself* on the fact that one of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace,

*Recalling* that the Security Council, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations, shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken in accordance with Articles 41 and 42, to maintain or restore international peace and security,

*Recalling also* the duty of States under the Charter to settle their international disputes by peaceful means in order not to endanger international peace, security and justice,

*Bearing in mind* that nothing in this Definition shall be interpreted as in any way affecting the scope of the provisions of the Charter with respect to the functions and powers of the organs of the United Nations,

*Considering also* that, since aggression is the most serious and dangerous form of the illegal use of force, being fraught, in the conditions created by the existence of all types of weapons of mass destruction, with the possible threat of a world conflict and all its catastrophic consequences, aggression should be defined at the present stage,

*Reaffirming* the duty of States not to use armed force to deprive peoples of their right to self-determination, freedom and independence, or to disrupt territorial integrity,

*Reaffirming also* that the territory of a State shall not be violated by being the object, even temporarily, of military occupation or of other measures of force taken by another State in contravention of the Charter, and that it shall not be the object of acquisition by another State resulting from such measures or the threat thereof,

*Reaffirming also* the provisions of the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

*Convinced* that the adoption of a definition of aggression ought to have the effect of deterring a potential aggressor, would simplify the determination of acts of aggression and the implementation of measures to suppress them and would also facilitate the protection of the rights and lawful interests of, and the rendering of assistance to, the victim,

*Believing* that, although the question whether an act of aggression has been committed must be considered in the light of all the circumstances of each particular case, it is nevertheless desirable to formulate basic principles as guidance for such determination,

*Adopts* the following Definition of Aggression:

### Article 1

Aggression is the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty, territorial integrity or political independence of another State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, as set out in this Definition.

*Explanatory note:* In this Definition the term "State":

(a) Is used without prejudice to questions of recognition or to whether a State is a member of the United Nations;

(b) Includes the concept of a "group of States" where appropriate.

## Article 2

The first use of armed force by a State in contravention of the Charter shall constitute *prima facie* evidence of an act of aggression although the Security Council may, in conformity with the Charter, conclude that a determination that an act of aggression has been committed would not be justified in the light of other relevant circumstances, including the fact that the acts concerned or their consequences are not of sufficient gravity.

## Article 3

Any of the following acts, regardless of a declaration of war, shall, subject to and in accordance with the provisions of article 2, qualify as an act of aggression:

- (a) The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof;
- (b) Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State;
- (c) The blockade of the ports or coasts of a State by the armed forces of another State;
- (d) An attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State;
- (e) The use of armed forces of one State which are within the territory of another State with the agreement of the receiving State, in contravention of the conditions provided for in the agreement or any extension of their presence in such territory beyond the termination of the agreement;
- (f) The action of a State in allowing its territory, which it has placed at the disposal of another State, to be used by that other State for perpetrating an act of aggression against a third State;
- (g) The sending by or on behalf of a State of armed bands, groups, irregulars or mercenaries, which carry out acts of armed force against another State of such gravity as to amount to the acts listed above, or its substantial involvement therein.

## Article 4

The acts enumerated above are not exhaustive and the Security Council may determine that other acts constitute aggression under the provisions of the Charter.

## Article 5

1. No consideration of whatever nature, whether political, economic, military or otherwise, may serve as a justification for aggression.
2. A war of aggression is a crime against international peace. Aggression gives rise to international responsibility.
3. No territorial acquisition or special advantage resulting from aggression is or shall be recognized as lawful.

## Article 6

Nothing in this Definition shall be construed as in any way enlarging or diminishing the scope of the Charter, including its provisions concerning cases in which the use of force is lawful.

## Article 7

Nothing in this Definition, and in particular article 3, could in any way prejudice the right to self-determination, freedom and independence, as derived from the Charter, of peoples forcibly deprived of that right and referred to in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of

the United Nations, particularly peoples under colonial and racist regimes or other forms of alien domination; nor the right of these peoples to struggle to that end and to seek and receive support, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and in conformity with the above-mentioned Declaration.

#### Article 8

In their interpretation and application the above provisions are interrelated and each provision should be construed in the context of the other provisions.

### 33. DECLARATION ON THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRINCIPLE OF REFRAINING FROM THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

General Assembly resolution 42/22 of 18 November 1987, annex

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* the principle that States shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations,

*Recalling* that this principle is enshrined in Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations and has been reaffirmed in a number of international instruments,

*Reaffirming* the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Definition of Aggression and the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes,

*Reaffirming* the obligation to maintain international peace and security in conformity with the purposes of the United Nations,

*Expressing deep concern* at the continued existence of situations of conflict and tension and the impact of the persistence of violations of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force on the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as at the loss of human life and material damage in the countries affected, the development of which may thereby be set back,

*Desiring* to remove the risk of new armed conflicts between States by promoting a change in the international climate from confrontation to peaceful relations and co-operation and by taking other appropriate measures to strengthen international peace and security,

*Convinced* that, in the present world situation, in which nuclear weapons exist, there is no reasonable alternative to peaceful relations among States,

*Fully aware* that the question of general and complete disarmament is of the utmost importance and that peace, security, fundamental freedoms and economic and social development are indivisible,

*Noting with concern* the pernicious impact of terrorism on international relations,

*Stressing* the need for all States to desist from any forcible action aimed at depriving peoples of their right to self-determination, freedom and independence,

*Reaffirming* the obligation of States to settle their international disputes by peaceful means,

*Conscious* of the importance of strengthening the United Nations system of collective security,

*Bearing in mind* the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms as essential factors for international peace and security,