

United Nations, Aug 9 (AP) - The United States warned Russia on Friday that any further intervention in Ukraine, including under the pretense of delivering humanitarian aid, would be viewed as "an invasion of Ukraine."

U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power delivered the warning at a Security Council meeting focusing on the human rights situation in Ukraine's east, where government forces are fighting pro-Russian separatists. Recent reports by the West and the Kiev government have accused Moscow of dispatching what NATO estimates is 20,000 troops to the border.

Power said Russia has not only increased aid to the separatists but has amassed "more and more" troops and hardware near the border, began extensive military exercises this week and launched shells across the border into Ukraine.

She noted that Russia has proposed creating "humanitarian corridors" to deliver aid to the separatists.

"The humanitarian situation needs addressing, but not by those who have caused it," she said.

Power welcomed the Ukrainian government's creation of humanitarian corridors to get aid into separatist-controlled areas and allow civilians out.

If Moscow wants to send aid to the separatists, she said, it should be delivered by neutral international aid organizations including the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"Therefore, any further unilateral intervention by Russia into Ukrainian territory, including one under the guise of providing humanitarian aid, would be completely unacceptable and deeply alarming, and it would be viewed as an invasion of Ukraine," Power warned.

At an emergency council meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine called by Russia on Tuesday, Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin had called the situation in the east, particularly in separatist-held Luhansk and Donetsk, "disastrous" and said Moscow wants to send a humanitarian convoy to the two areas under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant on Friday accused Russia of continuing "recklessly to fuel the conflict" by building up its forces on the border, "and now we hear that Russia is ready to intervene on humanitarian grounds to alleviate the suffering that it has manufactured."

U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed deep concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in parts of eastern Ukraine and appealed to the parties "to redouble their efforts" to end the conflict, deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said.

"This is the most effective way to save lives and avoid a humanitarian crisis," Haq said.

Churkin called Friday for an immediate end to military action in the east and lashed out at the latest U.N. report on the human rights situation in Ukraine for being one-sided and blaming "the self-defense formations for ... everything short of cannibalism."

He demanded to know why the report failed to condemn the Ukrainian security forces' use of artillery and other heavy weapons to destroy residential areas and infrastructure, especially in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Power noted that Russia floated the idea again last week of sending Russian peacekeepers to eastern Ukraine.

"A Russian peacekeeper in Ukraine is an oxymoron," Power said. "At every step in this crisis, Russians have sabotaged peace, not built it, and it is particularly worrisome given Russia's purported annexation of Crimea... Peacekeepers are impartial, yet Russia fully supports Russia's armed separatists in this conflict."

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic, briefing the council by videoconference from Croatia, welcomed Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko's proposal for a new round of talks to find a way to restore a cease-fire.

He warned that "the fabric" of Ukrainian society is being torn apart by the ongoing violence, the use of "hate speech" is increasing especially in social media, and there is "what amounts to a reign of fear and terror in areas under control of the armed groups, with a breakdown of law and order."