

FORUM: Security Council

QUESTION OF: The Recent Developments in Ukraine

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POSITION: President

INTRODUCTION

For the past 10 years, tensions have been constantly rising between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Starting on 20 February 2014, and climaxing on 24 February 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has affected Europe's geopolitics and international stability. Even though the issue might seem recent, it dates back to the Soviet era when Ukraine and Russia were under one Union, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), broadly known as the Soviet Union.

After the fall of the Union in 1991, Russia and Ukraine were divided into two independent sovereign states recognised by the United Nations. However, for the past ten years, Russia has been constantly asserting its political influence and power over Ukraine in various ways, with a key event being the annexation of Crimea in 2014.¹ Since then, the two nations have been in constant tension with armed conflicts erupting and diplomatic relations worsening.

As can be seen, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is a multilateral issue that involves political instability, international security concerns, the asserting of power over sovereign states and, of course, humanitarian catastrophes. For the past two years, the two countries have been involved in a strong armed conflict that has shaken the international community and global organizations. Since Russia's full invasion of Ukraine, more than 250\$ billion dollars has been given to Ukraine supporting their actions, more than 30.000 casualties have been reported, while the number of people highly affected by the war is constantly rising.² The reason behind the conflict is viewed differently by the parties involved; the Russian Federation considers the invasion as a mission to protect the Ukrainian people and Russian minority in Ukraine by the alleged extremist Ukrainian government, while the Western world sees the invasion as a territorial dispute and assertion of power. Moreover, Russia claims that

¹ "Ukraine - Crimea, Eastern Ukraine, Conflict." *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-crisis-in-Crimea-and-eastern-Ukraine>.

² "War in Ukraine | Global Conflict Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

the ongoing conflict is a response to Ukraine’s initiatives to join the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), implying that they feel threatened by them.³

The importance of the Security Council discussing the issue at this given point is paramount. The dynamics of the war have changed as of recently; Ukraine has regained nearly 58% of its lost land while Russia still has control of 18% of the Ukrainian territories.⁴ Seeing that the conflict involves the Russian Federation, which is undoubtedly a global power with great political influence, proposing feasible solutions to end the conflict is highly demanding but of high importance. Bearing in mind Russia’s veto power that can alter the change of events in the Security Council, an international collaboration concerning diplomatic dialogues, sanctions and humanitarian aid is crucial. All events in the study guide will be as of October 2024.



Figure 1: “The recent developments in Ukraine”⁵

³ Hill, Ian. “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine: Why and why now?” *Lowy Institute*, 22 June 2023, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-s-invasion-ukraine-why-why-now>.

⁴ “War in Ukraine | Global Conflict Tracker.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

⁵ “Ukraine in maps: Tracking the war with Russia.” *BBC*, 22 August 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60506682>.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Annexation

“Possession taken of a piece of land or a country, usually by force or without permission”⁶. In the case of the Russian-Ukrainian dispute, Russia annexed the territory of Crimea in Ukraine in 2014.

Crimean Tatars

The indigenous people of Crimea that consisted its ethnic majority. They have affected Crimea’s legal status throughout history and have advocated for its independence.

Oblast

The term Oblast refers to an administrative division or region in Russia and the former Soviet Union and in some constituent republics of the former Soviet Union. It is used to describe parts of land belonging to Russia, without having any independence or autonomy.

Pariah State

“Pariah states are those states that are considered outcasts because of their government. Anyone who does not abide by international rules or refuses to cooperate with the international community in wide areas must expect sanctions. Many of the former and current pariah states owe their classification to their autocratic rule”.⁷ As a pariah state can be considered the Russian Federation after its actions in Ukraine.

Self-determination

“Self-determination [is] the process by which a group of people, usually possessing a certain degree of national consciousness, form their own state and choose their own government”.⁸ After the dissolution of the USSR, Ukraine appealed to its self-determination resulting in their independence.

Territorial dispute

This term refers to the conflict between two nations about the ownership of certain land. It often involves armed conflict with the two countries aiming at the claim of said land.

⁶ “ANNEXATION | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, 23 October 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/annexation>.

⁷ “List of the 13 current Pariah States.” *Worlddata.info*, <https://www.worlddata.info/pariahstates.php>.

⁸ “Self-determination | Definition, History, & Facts.” *Britannica*, 6 September 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/self-determination>.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict is seen by the Western world and Ukraine as a territorial dispute aiming at the occupation of Ukraine by Russia.

Referendum

“A vote in which all the people in a country or an area are asked to give their opinion about or decide an important political or social question”.⁹

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

The Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR), also known as the Soviet Union, was a transcontinental country spanning through Eurasia consisting of 15 Republics; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (now Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya (now Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (now Moldova), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The breakdown of the Union in 1991 was inevitably one of the most significant political, social, and economic events of the 20th century, next to the two World Wars. Long standing conflict with the West, and most predominantly with the United States of America, economic failure during the last three decades of its existence through the exhaustion of natural resources and negative demographic developments, as well as issues such as corruption and wider foreign policies¹⁰ ultimately led to the secession of Ukraine, and other Republics, on August 24th 1991. The Union itself fell on the 26th of December of the same year.

It is crucial to mention that Ukraine, in its sovereign borders, does have ethnically Russian territories, with Russian speakers. Ethnically the breakdown is: Ukrainian 77.8%, Russian 17.3%, while language wise: Ukrainian 67.5%, Russian 29.6%¹¹. It also included the Crimean Peninsula, in southern Ukraine, which lies between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Crimea is separated by Russia to the east, through the Kerch Strait. Both the ethnically Russian territories within Ukraine’s borders, and the Crimean Peninsula have been of major territorial interest to Russia, playing a key role in the events that will be described below.

⁹ “REFERENDUM | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, 23 October 2024, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/referendum>.

¹⁰ McCauley, Martin. *The rise and fall of the Soviet Union*. Longman, 2008. Accessed 10 September 2024.

¹¹ “Photos of Ukraine - The World Factbook.” *CIA*, 28 October 2024, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ukraine/#people-and-society>. Accessed 30 October 2024.



Figure 2: Map of Ukraine. Shaded orange areas indicate Russian interest.¹²

A key event that has shaped modern Russia-Ukraine relations is the 2004 Orange Revolution. The revolution was a series of peaceful protests, which were sparked among the Ukrainian people, due to extreme allegations of election fraud and corruption during the country's presidential election. In the second round of the elections, Viktor Yanukovych was declared president, over his opponent Victor Yushchenko. Yanukovych was heavily supported by Russia's Vladimir Putin and had generally pro-Russian policies, in opposition to his opponent who led a pro-European, anti corruption, democratic campaign. Yushenko's supporters charged election fraud, and rigging of the results and marched Kyiv's streets wearing orange, thus triggering the Orange Revolution. The uprising was extremely successful, with the Ukrainian Supreme Court ruling the election invalid and hosting another round, which ultimately declared Yushenko as the winner and President of Ukraine. At this point, it is extremely important to understand what the Orange revolution is telling us about the Ukrainian people: eastern regions, which are majorly Russian ethnically- as showcased above, threatened to secede if the results of the elections were annulled, while the rest of the nation called for a self standing Ukraine. The revolution is a landmark point when assessing Russia-Ukraine relations. Firstly, it was a people-led expression of pro-European values and of an internal need to weaken reliance on Russia. To add to that, it acts as a

¹² "Mapping the occupied Ukraine regions Russia is formally annexing." *Al Jazeera*, 21 September 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/21/mapping-the-ukraine-regions-voting-on-joining-russia>. Accessed 6 September 2024.

foreshadowing of the conflict between a European or Russian Ukraine, and Russia's reaction towards that shift.

The question of Crimea

The issue of Crimea is a long-standing issue between Ukraine and Russia that has concerned the international community for many years and is considered a core reason for their tensions. On February 20, 2014 the Russian Federation launched its mission to annex the Crimean Peninsula, part of Ukraine's sovereign land, sparking the ongoing armed conflict between the two nations. However, the events resulting to the annexation are various and complicated.

Crimea's modern history dates back to the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in 1917. During that time, the Crimean population consisted of the Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people of Crimea. While Lenin declared socialism in 1917 with the Russian Empire falling after the revolution, the Crimean Tatars wished to remain independent and declare Crimea an independent democratic republic. That also explains Crimea's abstention from the Russian Civil War (1918-1920). However, the winning forces defeated Crimea's people breaking their independence. With the formation of the USSR in 1921, Crimea was recognised as the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, meaning that it had minimum legal rights and political representation.

Stalin's rule in the USSR was known to be harsh. His collectivisation policy of gathering the Union's peasants and sending them to organised camps to work on farming and production highly affected the Crimean people. During World War II (WWII), the peninsula was captured by the Axis powers and Nazi Germany. Stalin unprovenly accused the Tatars of collaborating with Hitler's forces to gain an advantage over the Union, sentencing them to deportation to Siberia as a form of punishment. Stalin's suppression of Crimea's ethnic minority can be seen by the 200.000 Tatars deported to Siberia.¹³ With the end of WWII, many changes occurred within the USSR. One of them was Crimea's downgrade to an oblast of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic meaning that Crimea lost their democratic institutions. On 19 February 1954, the Crimean Oblast was shifted under the rule of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the deported Tatars were allowed to return to Crimea under Khrushchev's administration.

¹³ Ray, Michael. "Crimea - Russian Annexation, Crimean War, Tatar Rule." *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Crimea/History>.

Following the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Crimea's status was reconsidered; it was made again an autonomous republic, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) and was integrated with the new independent Ukrainian state. As part of Ukraine, it was the only self-governing region of the state, and had its own constitution and government. Crimea at the time was populated by a Russian ethnic majority and a Ukrainian minority. For that reason, the relations between Ukraine and Crimea were never very tight. After Ukraine's independence, the Russian majority expressed pro-Russian beliefs wanting Crimea to consist of an independent republic ruled by them. Political figures from the local Russian community sought to strengthen diplomatic bonds with Russia and assert their sovereignty.

Yet, this was not achieved. As mentioned above, in 2014 Russian forces annexed Crimea, re-organizing it as a Russian Republic. Part of it consisted of anti-Ukraine campaigns, and a referendum which has been widely criticized to have been a fraud, with Russian forces threatening the population to vote for Crimea to be Russian, and not Ukrainian, excluding the option of complete autonomy. The referendum has been deemed illegal by international bodies, such as the Council of Europe and The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the UN General Assembly¹⁴.

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and recent developments

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict never stopped since 2014. After appealing to the United Nations Charter, on 24 February 2022, President Putin commanded the invasion of Ukraine from multiple fronts, starting a more intense armed conflict between the two nations that is still in progress. The Russian President in his speech justified their attack as a "special military operation" trying to save the people of Donetsk and Luhansk from the "genocide by the Kiyv regime". Specifically, he stated: "I decided to conduct a special military operation. Its goal is to protect people who have been subjected to bullying and genocide by the Kiev regime for eight years. And for this we will strive for the demilitarisation and denazification of Ukraine, as well as bringing to justice those who committed numerous, bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation."¹⁵ During the first day, the two nations had already managed to exchange fire; Russia captured the important Ukrainian cargo "Antonov airport" marking its first major victory.

¹⁴ "Myth 12: 'Crimea was always Russian.'" *Chatham House*, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/05/myths-and-misconceptions-debate-russia/myth-12-crimea-was-always-russian>.

¹⁵ Clark, Ross. "Full text: Putin's declaration of war on Ukraine." *The Spectator*, 24 February 2022, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/full-text-putin-s-declaration-of-war-on-ukraine/>.

In the early days of the invasion, the international community acted swiftly. Counting at least 441 Ukrainian casualties by the first month, the United Nations gathered to discuss the legality of the war and how it should be tackled.¹⁶ Apart from that, Ukrainians started fleeing the country to seek safety in neighbouring countries, counting around 3 million refugees.¹⁷ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was tasked to report the number of displaced people and provide them with basic human needs such as food, medical aid and safety.

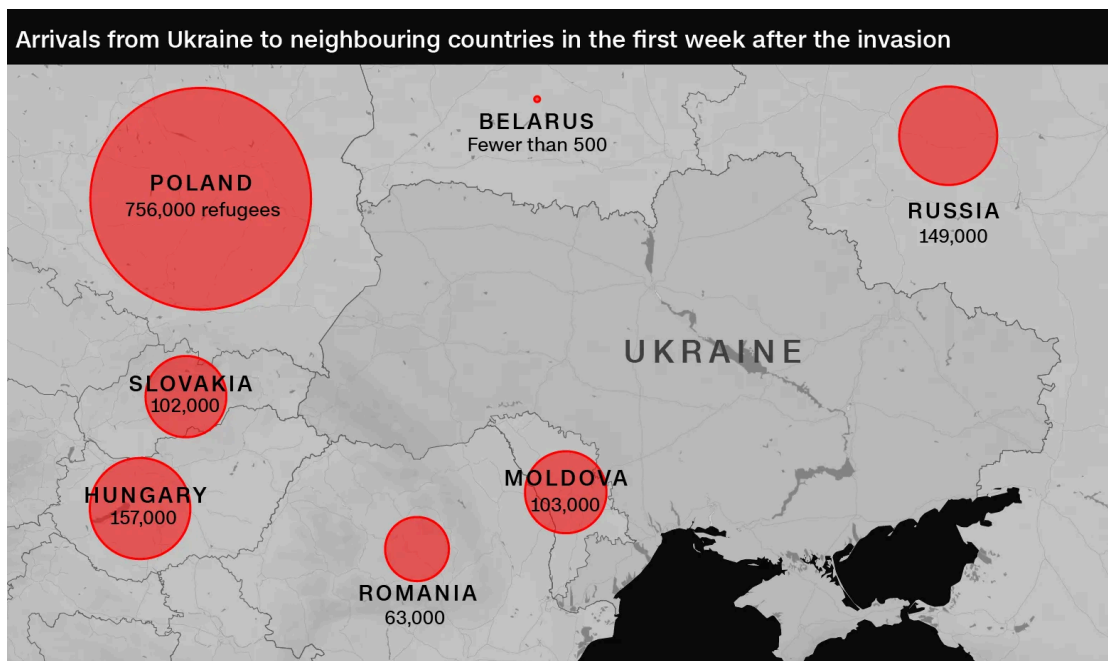


Figure 3: Ukrainian refugees during the first days of the conflict.¹⁸

As in every conflict, Russia aimed as well at the capturing of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv. Trying to approach it, Russian forces caused the destruction of several cities such as Irpin and Bucha. In Bucha many atrocities were reported; savage deaths and violations of humanitarian law marked Russia’s actions in the area, resulting in Russia’s prosecution for war crimes.¹⁹ Apart from Kyiv, Russia sought to gain control over key strategic cities like

¹⁶ “1 year on: A timeline of the war in Ukraine.” *The World Economic Forum*, 23 February 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/02/ukraine-war-timeline-one-year/>.

¹⁷ “See How 3 Million Refugees Have Fled Ukraine.” *CNN*, 16 Mar. 2022, edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2022/03/03/refugees-ukraine-russia-europe-crisis-lon-orig.cnn.

¹⁸ “Russian invasion of Ukraine: A timeline of key events on the 1st anniversary of the war.” *CNN*, 23 February 2023, <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2023/02/europe/russia-ukraine-war-timeline/index.html>.

¹⁹ Fylyppov, Oleksandr. “Bucha: Bodies tied up, shot and left to rot hint at gruesome reality of Russia’s occupation in Ukraine.” *CNN*, 5 April 2022,

Mariupol. The siege of Mariupol began on the first day and ended on May 20, 2022 with Russia capturing it. During the siege Mariupol experienced grave destructions; many hospitals were attacked and the city’s drama theatre was destroyed. It was estimated that 1.300 people were sheltered there since the first weeks of the siege and around 300 civilian deaths were counted.²⁰

Putin’s wish to recapture and “free” the Donbas region by the Kyiv administration was not forgotten. After months of continuous siege, Russia managed to capture Donbas meaning the Donetsk and Luhansk territories in September.



Source: UK MoD / Institute for the Study of War (21:00 GMT, 22 May) **B B C**

Figure 4: Map representing Russia’s strategy for capturing Southeastern Ukraine²¹

As of recently, the conflict has developed widely and its possible outcome has been altered by several factors. After huge help by the United States and the EU, Ukraine has recaptured 54 percent of occupied territory, while Russia still occupies 18 percent of the country²² meaning that Ukraine has regained power. Russia, fully isolated by the international community, has appealed to the DPRK seeking military help. Seeing that the

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/04/05/europe/bucha-ukraine-russian-occupation-reality-intl-cmd/index.html>.

²⁰ “See what bombed Mariupol theater looks like now.” *CNN*, 11 April 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/videos/world/2022/04/11/mariupol-theater-ukraine-drone-long-orig-mrg.cn>.

²¹ “Donbas: Why Russia is Trying to Capture Eastern Ukraine.” *BBC News*, 1 Apr. 2022, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60938544.

²² “War in Ukraine | Global Conflict Tracker.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>.

two nations share tight diplomatic bonds, the DPRK responded positively, sending more than 11.000 Korean troops to fight against the Ukrainian frontline.²³ Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy still seeks help from the West, with more financial aid being provided by the White House and the EU.

The impact of the war

As in every war, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has caused many humanitarian and international security concerns. The impact it has had on the international community is huge and it can be seen in fields like the economy, diplomacy and society. Russia is currently considered a pariah state, meaning an outcast by the international community because of its inability to adhere to international law and the United Nations' suggestions. The United States in collaboration with the European Union, have implemented restrictive measures against Russia such as sanctions and trade embargos as an attempt to limit its expansion in Ukraine. This has destabilised the Russian economy and has diplomatically isolated Russia by international organisations and events.

The humanitarian impact of the war is immense. Since 2022, over 10.000 civilians have been killed while the injured ones are numerous. These two years of full-scale invasion have led more than 10 million people to abandon their homes and seek help from neighbouring countries as refugees. About one-third of the population including millions of children fight to maintain their mental stability while many of them have already experienced trauma and psychological damage. Ukrainian refugees despite establishing their new homes in Europe still encounter obstacles being struck by unemployment and poverty. Attacks on educational and health institutions have become a reality throughout the 10-year war between the two nations. Since February 2022, more than 4.000 attacks on educational institutions and around 1.300 on health ones have been reported, showing Russia's violations of International Humanitarian Law. Concerning the casualties, more than 27.000 civilian casualties and over 1.5 million home destructions have been counted.²⁴

Taking advantage of the situation, the Russian Federation has taken measures of "re-educating" Ukraine's youth. According to a research conducted by Yale University, Russia

²³ "Ukraine says it fought N Korean troops for first time." *BBC*, 6 November 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c14le0p4310o>.

²⁴ "Ukraine: Families mark two years of full-scale war, a decade of conflict and displacement." *International Rescue Committee*, 21 February 2024, <https://www.rescue.org/eu/article/ukraine-families-mark-two-years-full-scale-war-decade-conflict-and-displacement>.

has relocated more than 6.000 children to schools in Crimea and other Russian-controlled regions with at least 43 facilities involved. Children often taken by their families against their will are moved to camps where they are being provided with healthcare and “proper education”, learning about Russian history and culture. These actions can be considered illegal under international law and a “grave breach of the Geneva Convention”.²⁵ As a response to all these humanitarian breaches, on 17 March 2023, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova the Russian Children’s Rights Commissioner.

The ongoing conflict has greatly destabilised the global economy. Since 2022, the prices of several products such as food and energy have skyrocketed. Russia and Ukraine are two countries that combined supply around 30% of global wheat exports, making them stakeholders in the trade market. Due to the war, shortages have occurred since the two nations stopped trading, resulting in a 12.6% increase in global food prices.²⁶ Apart from that, the conflict has caused an international energy crisis with prices rising and energy being at stake. Seeing that Russia is a major gas exporter, “Half a year into the Ukraine war, gas was nine times more expensive than renewables”²⁷, having a major impact on European countries like the United Kingdom, Germany and Greece that are not involved at all in the conflict.

The international community has recognised that Russia has been violating international law and important Articles of the UN Charter for the past 10 years of being involved in the war. Apart from the illegal annexation of Crimea, Russia has committed to actions that do not respect humanitarian laws including Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and Articles from the Geneva Convention.²⁸ Russia has highly affected the outcome of the conflict by using its veto power on Security Council Resolutions. This assertion of power has been an obstacle to the international community’s attempts to implement ceasefires and deliver

²⁵ “Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health - Russia's systematic program for the re-education & adoption of Ukraine's children [EN/RU/UK] - Ukraine.” *ReliefWeb*, 14 February 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/humanitarian-research-lab-yale-school-public-health-russias-systematic-program-re-education-adoption-ukraines-children-enruuk>.

²⁶ “These charts show food prices have increased sharply.” *The World Economic Forum*, 19 April 2022, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2022/04/food-prices-fao-index-cereals-commodities-exports/>.

²⁷ Ralston, Jess. “Two years of Russia’s war on...” *Energy & Climate Intelligence Unit*, 22 February 2024, <https://eciu.net/insights/2024/two-years-of-russias-war-on-ukraine-the-gas-crisis-price-rises-and-energy-security>.

²⁸ Maizland, Lindsay, et al. “How Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Violates International Law.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 28 February 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/article/how-russias-invasion-ukraine-violates-international-law>.

humanitarian aid in Ukrainian areas. Thus, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is currently examining Russia's actions against Ukraine, adding up to the open cases of examining Crimea's status.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

United States of America (USA)

The United States, despite being located away from the conflict, has been one of Ukraine's major allies through the ten years of conflict. Siding with Ukraine, they have expressed their support to Ukraine by urging them to join both NATO and the EU. With Russia being the USA's biggest military rival, for the past 7 years the US has actively provided Ukraine with military aid. The two nations have been involved in open trade of weaponry; Ukraine has received American anti-tank weapons and several defence mechanisms such as anti-armour systems, anti air-missiles, radars, night-vision devices and all kinds of ammunition. Concerning the annexation of Crimea, the United States openly supports Ukraine condemning Russia's actions and acknowledging their illegality.²⁹ Since the start of the conflict, Ukraine has received more than 174\$ billion from the USA while the amount monthly increases.³⁰ Taking into account the USA's unfriendly relations with the Russian Federation, we can understand the States' huge support towards Ukraine. Stating that "it is the right thing to do", the United States reaffirms Ukraine's sovereignty and its right to self-defence, helping them ultimately be part of NATO.³¹

Republic of Moldova (Moldova)

Despite being a small country without major political influence in Europe, Moldova is considered a stakeholder in the ongoing conflict mainly because of the great support it has shown to Ukraine. Siding with the West and trying to break away from its dependency on Russia, Moldova has expressed European beliefs and has aided Ukraine by providing humanitarian aid. The Moldovan government has granted temporary protection to refugees coming from Ukraine ensuring the protection of their rights and the fulfillment of needs such

²⁹ "Funding." *Ukraine Oversight*, <https://www.ukraineoversight.gov/Funding/>.

³⁰ "U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine - United States Department of State." *State Department*, 21 October 2024, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/>.

³¹ Garamone, Jim. "U.S. Will Not Back Down on Support for Ukraine." *Department of Defense*, 19 March 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3711625/us-will-not-back-down-on-support-for-ukraine/>.

as food and shelter. Since the start of the conflict, the Moldovan borders have remained open for Ukrainian refugees to flee the country. More than 1.8 million Ukrainians have passed the borders seeking help in Europe, while the country itself hosts more than 123.000 refugees running humanitarian projects for their needs.³² However, the breakaway region of Transnistria - a part of Moldova claiming self-determination and clearly standing with the Russian government - causes concern to Europe and its allies. Nevertheless, Transnistria is considered a part of Moldova so it cannot have a significant influence due to its lack of political or military power as it is not considered a sovereign state. Lastly, on 3 November 2024, Moldova reelected the democratic pro-European government of Maia Sandu, opening new diplomatic relations with the EU and giving hope to the Ukrainian people.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

Having close relations since the Soviet era, on the 19th of June 2024 Russia and the DPRK signed a non-aggression treaty bringing the two nations closer than ever. Since then, the DPRK has had tight diplomatic relations with Russia, supporting them both economically and militarily. Throughout history, Russia has provided help to the DPRK (North Korea) during several conflicts such as the Korean War. As of November 2024, the DPRK has supplied Russia with troops, something that highly alarmed the international community and the West. With these developments, the outcome of the war is at stake since both Russia and the DPRK hold great political and nuclear power. Currently, it is estimated that over 11.000 Korean troops are fighting at the frontline against Ukraine³³, decreasing Ukraine's chances of reestablishing its sovereignty. Apart from that, it has been reported that DPRK provides Russia with missiles that are being used against the Ukrainian population.³⁴ Overall, Russia's relations with the DPRK may cause the escalation of the war, making them some of the most important developments of the conflict.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

Highly supported by the United States, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation has been actively supporting Ukraine in its efforts to maintain its sovereignty. After the illicit

³² "Moldova - European Commission." *European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations*, 24 September 2024, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/europe/moldova_en.

³³ "Ukraine says it fought N Korean troops for first time." *BBC*, 6 November 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c14le0p4310o>.

³⁴ Guinto, Joel, et al. "North Korea: Putin and Kim pledge mutual help against 'aggression.'" *BBC*, 19 June 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ceddqkqzd5wo>.

annexation of Crimea by Russia, NATO has provided Ukraine with both financial and military support to reform its armed forces and defence mechanisms in case of a conflict between the two nations. Apart from that, Ukraine is considered a NATO ally, meaning that they have the organisation's support without being an official member. Ukraine has been participating in military exercises issued by the United States and other NATO Member States empowering Ukraine's military strategies. Despite Russia's warnings about these close relations, NATO has not stopped providing military aid to Ukraine including cyber-attack defence mechanisms and trust funds. It has also supported Ukraine diplomatically issuing its Member State status in the organisation, something perceived as a threat by the Russian Federation. NATO has been highly condemning Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and regions that Russia seeks to annex like Donetsk and Luhansk. Lastly, the organisation has posed unprecedented sanctions to Russia aiming at the end of the armed conflict.

European Union (EU)

The European Union is one of Ukraine's major diplomatic allies. After Russia's invasion in 2022, the EU responded rapidly by taking measures against them. The EU has shown its support by providing diplomatic, humanitarian, military and financial support to Ukraine worth over €118 billion.³⁵ Ukraine has tight diplomatic relations with the EU holding the membership status of "candidate country". Ukraine's initiative to join the EU is one of Russia's reasons to justify its invasion. The Union has implemented significant sanctions on Russia as an attempt to isolate them economically and diplomatically from Europe. These sanctions range from the halting of Russia's economic assets and implementing travel bans, to trade embargos, effectively affecting Russia's economy. Due to these European initiatives, Russia is considered a pariah state, completely cut out from the West.

The Group of Seven (G7)

The G7, an informal forum of the heads of the seven major industrial countries, recognises the Russian-Ukrainian conflict's threat to international stability and reaffirms its support to Ukraine. The G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the USA. It has committed itself to helping Ukraine reestablish its territorial sovereignty and regain its energy infrastructure. Being an advisory economic forum, the G7 has urged

³⁵ "EU solidarity with Ukraine - Consilium." *Consilium.europa.eu*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-solidarity-ukraine/>.

governments and the private business sector to expand their industrial branches in Ukraine to promote the social and economic recovery of the nation.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
February 24, 2022	Russia begins a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, targeting Kyiv and other major cities in a multi-front attack.
March 1, 2022	Russia captures Kherson, marking the first major Ukrainian city to fall under Russian control.
April 2, 2022	Ukrainian forces retake control of areas around Kyiv; reports emerge of mass civilian casualties in Bucha.
May 20, 2022	Mariupol falls to Russian forces after a prolonged siege, with Ukrainian fighters surrendering at the Azovstal steel plant.
September 6, 2022	Ukraine launches a surprise counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region, reclaiming large areas by mid-September.
November 11, 2022	Ukrainian forces recapture the city of Kherson after Russian troops withdraw from the western bank of the Dnipro River.
January 25, 2023	Germany and the U.S. agree to send advanced weaponry to Ukraine, a significant boost to Ukraine's capabilities.
March 17, 2023	The International Criminal Court (ICC) issues an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin, accusing him of war crimes in Ukraine.
June 8, 2023	Ukraine launches its counteroffensive in the Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions, aiming to break through fortified Russian defences.
September 22, 2023	Ukraine regains southeastern territories advancing in its southern counteroffensive to try to reach the Sea of Azov.
October 11, 2023	At a NATO meeting in Brussels, members reaffirm support for Ukraine, pledging more military aid and financial assistance.
May 24, 2024	U.S. announces additional security assistance to Ukraine, with a \$275 million aid package for urgent battlefield needs. ³⁶
June 13, 2024	NATO and the U.S. hold a defence meeting to coordinate continued support for Ukraine amid sustained Russian offensives.

³⁶ "Funding." *Ukraine Oversight*, <https://www.ukraineoversight.gov/Funding/>.

September 30, 2024	Russia claims new advances in eastern Ukraine, and the Kremlin confirms a 25% increase in defence spending for 2025. ³⁷
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UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/ES/11-3³⁸

The United Nations General Assembly, through resolution A/RES/ES/11-3, adopted on the 8th of April, 2022 and ultimately suspended the membership of the Russian Federation from the UN Human Rights Council. This was a result of the human rights violations that Russia has infringed on the Ukrainian innocent people, as part of their invasion. The resolution itself, or the Human Rights Council, fails to actually address the human rights violations, but the suspension of Russia from the council is a significant move as part of the shift towards the isolation of Russia from the international community, and the weakening of its soft power.

ICJ case- Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Ukraine v. Russian Federation).³⁹

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), as the main and only judicial power of the UN, and the only legally binding body, beside the SC, in February 2022 opened the case, accusing Russian on the crime of Genocide in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The case was brought up by Ukraine and majorly concerns the illegality of the Russian invasion and the crime of Genocide against the ukraine people (under the Convention on the Crime of Genocide-1948). While the case is a major component in condemning and punishing Russia, if found guilty, for their crimes under International Law, the jurisdiction has not been announced yet, not allowing for any action to be taken.

UNSC involvement⁴⁰

The United Nations Security Council has made multiple attempts to address the crisis, primarily through draft resolutions calling for ceasefires, humanitarian aid access, and the

³⁷ Sauer, Pjotr. "Russia to raise defence budget by 25% to highest level on record." *The Guardian*, 30 September 2024,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/sep/30/russias-defence-spending-to-rise-by-25-next-year-the-highest-since-the-cold-war>.

³⁸ "A/RES/ES-11/3 General Assembly." *United Nations Digital Library System*, 8 April 2022, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3967950/files/A_RES_ES-11_3-EN.pdf.

³⁹ *Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Ukrain, 9 September 2024*, <https://www.icj-cij.org/case/182>.

⁴⁰ "UN Documents for Ukraine." *Security Council Report*, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/ukraine/>.

protection of civilians. These efforts, however, have been repeatedly hindered by the veto power of Russia, a permanent member of the Council and a direct party to the conflict. On February 25, 2022, the Security Council introduced a draft resolution condemning the Russian invasion and calling for an immediate ceasefire. Although 11 members voted in favor, Russia vetoed the resolution, ultimately blocking it, leading to an emergency session of the General Assembly under Resolution 2623 (2022), where the veto did not apply.

Further attempts included calls for humanitarian ceasefires and condemnation of referenda in occupied Ukrainian territories. In October 2022, a resolution condemning Russia's annexation of Ukrainian regions also failed due to a Russian veto. These repeated deadlocks highlight the Security Council's limitations when a permanent member is involved as a party to the conflict, emphasizing the challenges in achieving consensus during the ongoing crisis. The General Assembly has increasingly taken on a larger role in addressing these issues.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Minsk Agreements, September 2014, February 2015

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), France and Germany initiated the signing of the two Minsk Agreements, as a formal European diplomatic solution to the Russian Aggression towards Ukrainian Territories in 2014, and the annexation of Crimea. They were signed by both Russia and Ukraine, as well as the OSCE. Minsk 1 initially outlined a 12-point ceasefire (which would be monitored by the OSCE), the withdrawal of forces and heavy weapons on both sides, the disarmament of illegal groups as well as the withdrawal of foreign fighters.⁴¹ Minsk 2 was a supporting "Package of Measures" for the Implementation of the Minsk 1 agreement. The agreements further, and most importantly, aimed to establish formal Russian commitment for the return of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, having followed local elections and signaling the start of diplomatic negotiations on interim self-governments under Ukrainian constitutional decentralization auspice.

⁴¹ Zemlianichenko, Alexander, and Engjellushe Morina. "Ukraine, Russia, and the Minsk agreements: A post-mortem." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 19 February 2024, <https://ecfr.eu/article/ukraine-russia-and-the-minsk-agreements-a-post-mortem/>. Accessed 13 September 2024.

Though, their provisions were implemented loosely or with a failed outcome. This was due to their lack of explicit obligation expected by Moscow, presenting this solution as a reaction to Ukrainian internal conflict.⁴² To add to that, the agreements held an unconditional character, ultimately proving as an ineffective way of ending the hostilities of 2014 and 2015, as well as intensifying the territorial disputes for Luhansk and Donetsk, a key aspect in the more recent conflict.

European Union Sanctions, February 2022- Present

The European Union has inevitably played one of the most important roles in the conflict, as a non-state actor. Since February 2022, the EU has imposed aggressive economic, diplomatic, trade and arms embargoes and sanctions on Russian officials and products. With the latest one announced in June of 2024, the EU has imposed 14 comprehensive packages of sanctions against Russia, and its allies, including Belarus. Economically, the EU has restricted Russian banks from the SWIFT international payment system, as well as European capital markets. It has banned the import of Russian coal into the EU, and restricted the import of Russia crude oil and petroleum products, which are heavily involved in the current energy crisis the international community is experiencing. Asset freezes and travel bans, from entering the EU, on over 1600 individuals and 180 entities have been imposed by the EU. These include Russian oligarchs, and high ranking officials⁴³. Whether the sanctions have been effective in marring the Russian economy, and subsequently its military spending is conflicted. While in 2022, the Russian economy depleted by 2.1%, in 2023 it grew by 2.2%⁴⁴.

International Criminal Court (ICC) Involvement, March 2023

On the 17th of March 2023 the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants against Russian President Vladimir Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation. These arrest warrants were issued on the basis of "the war crime of unlawful deportation of population (children) and that of unlawful transfer of population (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation (under articles 8(2)(a)(vii) and 8(2)(b)(viii) of the

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ "EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine." *Consilium.europa.eu*, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/#sanctions>. Accessed 5 September 2024.

⁴⁴ "What are the sanctions on Russia and have they affected its economy?" *BBC*, 23 February 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60125659>. Accessed 5 September 2024.

Rome Statute).⁴⁵ In June of 2024 the ICC released arrest warrants for Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu and Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov, for the war crime of “directing attacks at civilian objects, and the war crime of causing excessive incidental harm to civilians or damage to civilian objects” as well as crimes against humanity⁴⁶.

While the court has officially condemned, and mandated the arrest of the aforementioned persons, these decisions can be seen as highly symbolic. The ICC’s mandate and decisions are not recognised by more than 40 states. Both Russia and the United States have signed the Rome Statute (the court’s founding treaty), but not ratified it, making them non-parties to it. Russian allies, including China, have also either not signed or not ratified it.⁴⁷ Effectively, this means that Russian officials do not have any legal obligation to arrest the persons prosecuted by the ICC, determining the arrest warrants superficial and ineffective.

Ukrainian Counter Offensives

After more than one year of fighting, the Ukrainian counter offensive strategy started having an impact on the conflict. On June 11 the first major win was made, with Ukrainian forces breaching Russia’s fortified defences in the south of the Donetsk Region, liberating 7 villages, over 2 days, in the region. The counteroffensive that started that summer is modest, while Ukraine managed to regain some territories it has ultimately failed to maintain them. , Considering the proportionality factors of the war, that fact is not surprising. . Russia’s defence line was the largest and strongest in Europe, since WW2⁴⁸. One big success points to the counter offensive strategies in Crimea (which include sea drone strikes) with Russian losses which include 315.000 dead and wounded⁴⁹.

⁴⁵ “Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova.” | *International Criminal Court*, 17 March 2023, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and>. Accessed 5 September 2024

⁴⁶ “Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu and Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov.” | *International Criminal Court*, 25 June 2024, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-sergei-kuzhugetovich-shoigu-and>. Accessed 7 September 2024.

⁴⁷ Maizland, Lindsay, and Irina A. Faskianos. “The Role of the ICC.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/role-icc>.

⁴⁸ Zafra, Mariano, and Jon McClure. “Ukraine counteroffensive maps.” *Reuters*, 21 December 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/graphics/UKRAINE-CRISIS/MAPS/klvygwawavg/>.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Reconsidering Russia's status in the Security Council

Reconsidering Russia's permanent status in the Security Council can be considered feasible but of high difficulty. As a P5 member, Russia holds the power to "veto" resolutions and UN decisions that do not align with their national policy, being a challenge to the international community's attempts to resolve the issue. Removing Russia's veto power cannot be done directly through the Security Council; the Council can issue the request but the General Assembly has to vote in favour of an amendment to the UN Charter concerning Russia's status. In any case, this proposal would not be easily accepted. However, according to Chapter V, Article 23 of the UN Charter, it is the USSR that is considered a permanent member⁵⁰, meaning that the Russian Federation is the unofficial legal successor of the USSR in the Security Council. For the solution to be implemented there are a lot of factors that have to be taken into consideration such as the future status of Russia, the duration of these alterations and the effects it might have on international security.

UN-mandated ceasefire

The Security Council being the only legally binding body of the United Nations, holds the power to suggest and implement ceasefires halting any aggressions between states in conflict. The ceasefire is the UN's most feasible way of stopping a conflict provided that the States involved adhere to its decisions and aim at achieving peace. It could be implemented for a short time for humanitarian aid to be delivered and diplomatic dialogues discussing negotiations to take place or as an ultimate way of resolving the issue. However, in the specific issue implementing a ceasefire is demanding, seeing that Russia holds the veto power that can unconditionally reject any resolution that violates their interests. Russia's veto power and close relationship with China, another P5 member, is the reason why previous ceasefires and agreements favouring both sides have failed. So, for a ceasefire to be accepted factors such as Russia's interests and its national security have to be taken into consideration. In order to achieve a common ground, the ceasefire could contain agreements between the two states regarding Ukraine's diplomatic approach to the West and Russia's concerns of territorial integrity.

⁵⁰ "Chapter V: The Security Council (Articles 23-32) | United Nations." *the United Nations*, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5>.

Appeal to Justice

Following the suspension of Russia from the Human Rights Council, and accounting for the severe accusation of human rights violations, a Special Tribunal could be established in order to recognise, justify and persecute all individuals or entities that have committed crimes against humanity, including the crime of genocide, during the war. Previous tribunals have been successful, but they were created after the end of a war. In the case of Ukraine, a specific judicial body, controlled and monitored by international organizations, could have the desired effect of condemning and penalizing those responsible for the violations, and minimizing the humanitarian impact of the war.

Further Implementation of Sanctions

Perhaps one of the only ways the international community can react is sanctioning, considering Russia's massive power in international relations. Its isolation from trade, and more specifically energy related markets, can weaken its economic state and thus reduce its military spending. But for this to be achieved, its allies would have to limit their transactions with Russia. This could be achieved by the international community heavily and harshly sanctioning Russian allies, creating a "domino effect" that will force them to comply with the demands of isolation, halting of arms and energy trade and political seclusion.

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