

Forum:	Security Council (SC)
Issue:	The situation in Ukraine
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Positions:	President, Deputy President

Introduction

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine is one of the most urgent challenges impacting global peace and security⁷. It started with political unrest in 2014, and turned into a full-scale war after the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022⁶. This war has had massive humanitarian, political, and economic impacts around the entire globe.

The situation in Ukraine is not only about territory but international law^{3,14} and Ukraine's sovereignty. This humanitarian crisis has led to thousands of civilians dead, millions displaced, and cities destroyed³². Apart from that, global food and energy markets have been disrupted worsening an already tense conflict. In addition, the war has reshaped international alliances, strained relations between major powers, and sparked debates on the role of international organizations in preventing and responding to aggression^{13,15}.

The Security Council has been divided on this issue¹², which shows just how complex it really is. Many resolutions have been discussed, but a consensus has been difficult to achieve due to the veto power of the permanent members. Still, the seriousness of this issue cannot be forgotten, especially considering the risk of escalation and even nuclear threats^{2,18}. The continued instability emphasizes the urgent need for dialogue, cooperation, and innovative solutions within the international community¹².

Key Terms

Annexation

The act of forcibly incorporating a territory into another state¹. In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea, which remains widely unrecognized internationally.

Donbas

A region in eastern Ukraine made up of Donetsk and Luhansk. It has been the main point of conflict between Ukrainian forces and Russian separatists since 2014³⁴.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

A military alliance of 32 member states including the United States and most of Europe. Ukraine is not a member but has aligned with NATO, which Russia opposes¹⁸.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDP)

People forced to flee their homes due to conflict but who remain within their country's borders. Ukraine has had millions of IDPs since the escalation in 2022³².

Sanctions

Penalties or restrictions placed by countries, usually related to economic matters, used to pressure another state to change its behavior. The US, EU, and other countries have imposed wide-ranging sanctions on Russia since 2014, which worsened after 2022⁴⁰.

Nuclear Deterrence

A strategy involving the threat of nuclear weapons use to prevent other nations from being involved. Russia's nuclear arsenal has added to global fears during this conflict².

Kyiv

The capital city of Ukraine which was targeted heavily during the early stages of the 2022 invasion but has remained under Ukrainian control since²⁰.

Referendum (Crimea and occupied regions)

A vote held in Crimea in 2014, and later in 2022 in several occupied Ukrainian territories, which Russia uses as its justification for annexation. These referendums have not been recognized by the majority of UN member states²⁴.

Humanitarian Corridor

Safe routes established to allow civilians to evacuate conflict zones and to deliver aid. In Ukraine these corridors have been fragile or broken due to ongoing conflicts³².

Background

This conflict initially began in 2014, when the pro-Russian president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, was removed from office after protests demanding for closer ties with the European Union^{23,25,26}. Shortly after, Russia annexed Crimea and supported separatists in eastern Ukraine. The conflict in Donbas led to thousands of deaths in the following years⁶, and despite peace agreements like the Minsk accords^{16,17} the fighting never fully stopped.

The 2022 Invasion

On the 24th of February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine²⁰. Initial attacks targeted Kyiv and major cities while Ukrainian armed forces created resistance. The conflict has since turned into prolonged warfare, with major battles occurring in Mariupol, Bakhmut, and other eastern and southern cities. Civilian casualties continuously increase in number, and infrastructure, like energy grids, has been severely damaged¹³.

Global Impact(s)

The human cost of the war has been immense. Millions of Ukrainians have fled abroad³². Inside the country, many more remain displaced. According to UN estimates, over 17 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance³². Bombings and missile strikes have left towns without water, electricity, or heating during harsh winters. An estimate of the death toll reflects this, with over 1 million soldiers and nearly 50 thousand civilians killed⁹.

The war in Ukraine has also disrupted the economy across the globe²⁵. Russia and Ukraine are both major exporters of grain²⁸ and this disruption in supply chains have contributed to global food insecurity, especially in Africa and the Middle East¹⁵. Additionally, since many European countries depended on Russian energy, these countries underwent forced shifts in energy policy, including new investments in renewables and other imports¹³.

Diplomacy

Multiple peace talks have been attempted with Turkey and the UN involved in mediation^{21,33}. While agreements like the Black Sea Grain Initiative were temporarily successful²⁸, larger negotiations have since failed. The Security Council is unable to find a solution, as Russia holds veto power and has used it to block resolutions condemning its actions^{12,30}. This has reduced the effectiveness of the Security Council.

Major Parties and Organisations Involved

Ukraine

Ukraine is the state defending its sovereignty as well as its territory from the Russian Federation. Ukraine has received a lot of international support, militarily and financially¹⁸.

Russian Federation (Russia)

The aggressor in the current conflict, controlling Crimea since 2014 and parts of eastern and southern Ukraine since 2022⁷. Russia justifies its actions as protecting Russian-speaking populations, but most of the world views it as illegal aggression for land³.

United States

A major supporter of Ukraine, the US has appropriated over \$175 billion for military, financial and humanitarian aid and the development of advanced weapons systems⁸. The US has also created and coordinated wide-ranging sanctions on Russian imports and exports, impacting its economy⁴⁰.

European Union (EU)

The EU has allowed millions of Ukrainian refugees to be hosted across its member nations⁴⁰, and has also motioned to grant Ukraine candidate status for membership¹⁰.

NATO

NATO is not only officially promoting Ukraine, but is also providing training, intelligence, and weapons to Ukrainian forces, despite Ukraine not being a member¹⁸.

United Nations (UN)

The UN has been heavily involved in humanitarian relief, with agencies like UNHCR and WFP delivering aid. However, division of the Security Council has limited direct action¹².

Timeline

2014: Euromaidan Protests

Protests erupted after President Yanukovych suspended an EU agreement for closer Russia ties, leading to his February ouster and political division between pro-European and pro-Russian factions [House of Commons Library](#).

2014: Annexation of Crimea

Following the Revolution, Russia annexed Crimea in March, citing the protection of ethnic Russians, an action widely condemned as a violation of international law [Wikipedia](#).

2014: War in Donbas

Pro-Russian separatists in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions declared independence, supported by Russian forces, escalating the conflict into a full-scale war that continued despite repeated ceasefire agreements under Minsk I and II [Wikipedia+1](#).

2019–2021: Ceasefire Violations

Ceasefire violations were frequent, and Russia continued supporting separatists. Diplomatic efforts stalled, leading to international sanctions on Russia and increased military aid to Ukraine [European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

2022: Invasion

On February 24, Russia launched a new, catastrophic invasion, drawing widespread condemnation and severe sanctions (US, EU). Ukraine mobilized with heavy Western military, intelligence, and financial support [Reuters](#).

2023–Present: Ongoing Conflict

Intense fighting persists, especially in the eastern and southern regions. Despite diplomatic talks, no significant progress toward peace has been achieved, with Western support continuing against Russia's stated military objectives [The Guardian](#).

Relevant Treaties

Budapest Memorandum (1994)

Ukraine surrendered its Soviet-era nuclear arsenal in exchange for security assurances from Russia, the US, and the UK. Russia's actions in Crimea and Donbas are widely viewed as violations of this agreement [Harvard Kennedy School](#).

Minsk I and Minsk II Agreements (2014–2015)

These OSCE-brokered agreements aimed to establish a ceasefire and a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Donbas. They failed due to rampant violations and continued Russian support for separatists, and were never fully implemented [Reuters](#).

United Nations Charter (1945)

Many states have invoked the Charter, which emphasizes principles like sovereignty and territorial integrity, in condemning Russia's invasion as a violation of international law [Council on Foreign Relations](#).

The Paris Agreement (2015)

While not directly related to the conflict, Ukraine remains a signatory striving to meet its climate change goals despite the significant environmental impacts and demands of a prolonged war [UNFCCC](#).

Previous Solutions

The Minsk Agreements (2014–2015)

Meant as a peace framework requiring a ceasefire, weapons withdrawal, and political reform in eastern Ukraine, these agreements largely failed due to mutual violations, especially the continued presence of Russian forces and ongoing fighting [European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

The Normandy Format (2014)

This diplomatic initiative involving France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine aimed to mediate the conflict and support the Minsk Agreements. It failed to yield substantial progress as Russia remained committed to its strategic objectives [Wikipedia](#).

Sanctions and Diplomatic Pressure

The international community (US, EU, etc.) imposed comprehensive sanctions (financial,

trade, travel bans) on Russia and provided Ukraine with military aid. However, these measures have not significantly altered Russia's behavior [European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

NATO Support for Ukraine

NATO provides Ukraine with non-lethal aid, training, and intelligence, while strengthening its eastern flank defenses. NATO avoids direct intervention due to the risk of escalation and Russia's nuclear capabilities [Reuters](#).

Peacekeeping Proposals

Discussions regarding the deployment of peacekeeping forces to monitor ceasefires in Donbas have stalled due to a lack of consensus, with Russia opposing foreign intervention [Wikipedia](#).

Possible Solutions

Negotiated Settlement and Ceasefire

Proposes an internationally overseen ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign forces, and a return to political dialogue based on the Minsk Agreements (or a revised version). Challenges include deep lack of trust and complicated Russian long-term goals [European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

Increased Military Support for Ukraine

Proposes increasing Western (especially NATO) supply of advanced weapons (like air defense) and intelligence to shift the military balance and force Russia to negotiate. The main challenge is the high risk of escalation and direct confrontation with Russia [Reuters](#).

Diplomacy and Neutrality for Ukraine

Proposes Ukraine adopt a neutral status (not joining NATO), coupled with security guarantees from both Russia and the West, while still pursuing closer ties with the EU. This faces skepticism regarding Russia's willingness to honor it and opposition from Ukrainians who prioritize EU integration [European Council on Foreign Relations](#).

International Recognition of Territorial Integrity

Proposes strong international treaties and legal action, including potential peacekeeping forces and sustained sanctions, to formally recognize and enforce Ukraine's pre-2014

borders. This is challenged by Russia's refusal to relinquish Crimea and its veto power European Council on Foreign Relations.

Humanitarian and Economic Support for Ukraine

Proposes a large international package for reconstruction (infrastructure, economy) and humanitarian aid to ensure Ukraine's long-term stability and resilience. Challenges include coordinating aid and the risk of Russian interference European Council on Foreign Relations.

Conclusion

The situation in Ukraine remains one of the most urgent and complex crises facing the international community. The ongoing conflict has led to a humanitarian disaster, destabilized the region, and strained international relations. While several potential solutions exist, each carries significant challenges, from Russia's territorial ambitions to the deeply entrenched political divisions within Ukraine. Diplomatic efforts, including a negotiated settlement, increasing military support, or an approach based on Ukraine's neutrality, all carry the potential for addressing different facets of the conflict. However, for any solution to succeed, it will require the cooperation of multiple stakeholders, including Ukraine, Russia, the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations. The international community must remain committed to seeking a peaceful resolution while ensuring the protection of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Map of Ukraine's Pre-2014 Borders source the Washington post

