

## **The United Nations and the Russia –Ukraine Conflict**

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**Abstract:** This study examined the United Nations and the Russia-Ukraine conflict with special focus on the mediation role of the United Nations in the face of the conflict. It painstakingly analyzed the root causes of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict from State, Regional and Global perspectives. The study adopted the historical research design which accounted for the qualitative nature of the data analysis. It also adopted the conflict theoretical framework in analyzing the variables of the study. The study found out that the realpolitik of the 5 permanent (P5) members of the Security Council has rendered the United Nations impotent in resolving conflicts. Amongst others, the study recommends that effort should be made by the United Nations to check the overbearing Cold War mentality between Russia and America. It further recommends that the UN should step down its mediation role and allow other critical actors with relatively neutral posture such as China, Turkey, India, South Africa etc to mediate with a view to achieving rapprochement between Russia and Ukraine.

**Keywords:** Russia-Ukraine conflict, United Nations

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## INTRODUCTION

Every human society that is marked by ethnic, religious, intellectual, and other forms of plurality will inevitably experience conflict. Conflict can sometimes be useful for bringing about change, generating fresh ideas, and expressing strong emotions. This, however, is considered to be a mirage when a dispute turns violent, unmanageable, and kills or injures defenseless civilians while also violating their human rights and resists the efforts of international or regional actors to mediate in a peaceful manner. The Ukrainian state's citizens are essentially divided along ideological, ethnic, and religious lines. The majority of Ukrainians in the western part of the country is pro-western in their ideological belief and therefore chooses the institutionalization of democratic principles and policies whereby Ukrainians can participate in democratic processes. The Russo-Ukrainian conflict, which is a major issue for all of Europe and the rest of the world, is deeply rooted on ideological, ethnic, and religious dualism in the Ukrainian state.

Since Ukraine earned its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991, tensions between Russia and the former Soviet republic have been evident. Since that time, Ukraine has become one of the most powerful Russian satellite states, influenced by Russian authorities, oligarchs, and corporations. The Ukrainian government was dishonest and did a poor job of serving the demands of its people. The Orange Revolution (2004–2005) in Kyiv resisted Russian political influence on the constitutionally independent country of Ukraine and demonstrated that country's determination to institutionalize its democracy. Despite this, ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions exist throughout Ukrainian society, with some regions—such as the Crimean Peninsula and the Donetsk and Luhansk Provinces—strongly identifying as being part of

Russia. The international crisis between the two states began in 2014 as a result of Russian military action in Crimea. We shall analyze these social divisions and the disparate domestic interests of Russian and Ukrainian actors as we consider potential peace settlements. A strong neo-imperial foreign policy pursued by Vladimir Putin contributed to the crisis and illustrated the difficulty in settling the dispute due to the interests of other international entities like the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, and the United States. It will be argued that due to Ukraine's strategically significant geopolitical location and the worsening of human rights on Ukrainian territory, the Russo-Ukrainian war necessitates outside intervention and international action.

In light of this, Turkiye's role and China's peace plan to resolve the conflict in Ukraine both gained importance. China made its 12-point peace proposal to resolve the conflict in Ukraine on February 24, 2023, exactly one year after Russia's invasion of the country. The draft resolution that affirms China's neutrality in the conflict despite its support for Russia during the UN Security Council (UNSC) vote, in which she abstained. China criticizes the sanctions imposed on Russia, agrees with Russia's concerns that western governments are to responsible for the invasion of 24 February 2022, and urges for a cease-fire and peace negotiations. Furthermore, it demanded that the pertinent nations stop misusing unilateral sanctions and contribute to de-escalating the Ukraine Crisis. On the other hand, Turkiye has similarly played a very important role in mediating a long-term truce and eventual peace between Russia and Ukraine in the wake of fruitful grain and prisoner swap agreements. Despite pressure from the US and Europe, Turkiye has remained largely neutral in the Ukraine-Russia crisis. Turkiye has resisted joining western sanctions against Russia

because it thinks that dialogue with Moscow is preferable to isolation.

One of the biggest sources of tension in Europe and the rest of the world since 2014 has been the Russian-Ukrainian crisis, which has actually turned into an armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Millions of people fled as refugees from the atrocities of the First and Second World Wars, and the images of millions of Ukrainians and inhabitants of other nations, especially African nations, fleeing the Russian onslaught at the start of the conflict bring back those memories. It is impossible to overstate the ferocity of the Russian attack on Ukraine, and it is obvious that mediation efforts are urgently needed. In this sense, efforts to mediate on the current and upcoming crises in which one or more members of the Permanent Five (P5), members of the Council, will be confronted by the same systemic failure, would be hindered by the institutional gap created by a dysfunctional UNSC. A rise in power politics and the spread of authoritarian regimes that are willing to defy the international system of rules and regulations governing the conduct of relations between states are results of the UNSC's inability to intervene through mediation and preventive diplomacy.

### **Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study is the United Nations role in mediating the Russia -Ukraine conflict whereas the specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the root causes of the Russia - Ukraine conflict.
- ii. Evaluate the role of the United Nations in the crisis.
- iii. Assess the challenges facing United Nations in its effort to mediate in the Russia - Ukraine crisis.
- iv. Examine the role of external actors such as China and Turkiye in the crisis

### **LITERATURE VIEW**

#### **Historical Background to the Russian - Ukraine War**

The nation of Ukraine is a young one. After being divided between Poland and Moscow for centuries, followed by Soviet administration, it finally achieved independence in 1991. According to Olzacka (2017), it is divided into "Orthodox Ukraine and "Catholic" Ukraine or differences between the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate" based on ethnicity, with a Ukrainian majority and a Russian minority. Furthermore, the situation is made worse by the ongoing development of the Ukrainian sense of identity as a result of these protracted splits. The demographic data for Ukraine is quite dated because the country's last official census was held in 2001. However, it provides a rough estimate that is required to comprehend this struggle. According to statistics from 2001, there were 77.8% Ukrainians and 17.3% Russians. In addition, 29.6% of Ukrainians and 67.5% of Russian-speakers respectively (Central Intelligence Agency, 2001).

Lakomy (2016) noted that "Ukraine has been a region of increasing divisions and tensions, partially inherited from tough historical processes, and partly formed throughout the post-Cold War era. It has evolved into a nation rife with competing interests and enduring divisions. Numerous problems have arisen and complicated the relations between Russia and Ukraine as a result of its dependence, first on the Soviet Union and now on the Russian Federation. Although the Russian Empire controlled practically the entirety of Ukraine, there was one significant organization that had a noticeable impact on the ongoing struggle in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. It was Novorossiia (sometimes known as "New Russia"). A historical area known as Novorossiia stretches from Odesa to Donetsk and farther north to Dnepropetrovsk. Since then, the

Russian feeling of identity has grown in these territories. Additionally, it sparked a claim among the Russians that they should be in charge of the ancient region. Due to Ukraine's protracted reliance on the Soviet Union and Russia, the ethnic and linguistic divisions were exacerbated, preventing the growth of a strong sense of national identity among Ukrainians. The opposing views on whether Ukraine should lean more toward the West (the European Union) or the East (the Russian Federation) were also exacerbated by its status as a post-Soviet satellite state, even after its nominal declaration of independence. However, many Ukrainians wanted to forge their own sense of Ukrainian identity free from Polish and Russian influence, especially after obtaining independence in 1991.

Supporters of an independent Ukraine have opposed Russian efforts to increase their influence over the Ukrainian government on numerous occasions. As an example, the Orange Revolution of 2004 was the outcome of fraudulent presidential elections in Ukraine. For many years, the dictatorial and oligarchical rule of Russia left the Ukrainians with the impression that they were deprived of the means to meet their basic necessities, such as food, healthcare, and safety. Victor Yanukovich's declaration as the election's victor inspired supporters of Viktor Yushchenko, a pro-European candidate, to launch a series of demonstrations in Independence Square in Kyiv and other major cities. It was an obvious indication that the Ukrainians were tired of being reliant on Russia. The mediation mission of the European Union, which was overseen by the then-President of Poland, Aleksander Kwaniewski, was effective in that it established a foundation for resolving the conflict within Ukraine.

Zwolski (2018) pointed out that the Russians interpreted it as a Polish effort

to distance itself from Russia by freeing Ukraine from the influence of its Eastern neighbor. The dispute was resolved when the Supreme Court of Ukraine declared that the elections were rigged and that the Central Election Commission's results should be invalidated. Following his victory in the subsequent elections, Yushchenko was elected president with the mission of reducing Russian influence in Ukraine and ending oligarchical pressure on the executive branch and its decisions. Despite the high hopes of the Ukrainian people, Yushchenko was unable to accomplish the goals he had set forth, and as a result, Ukraine continued to be ruled by Russia and to be subject to its corruptible government's oligarchical influence. The European Union, which had some concerns about Ukrainian aspirations to become a member of Europe, was interested in Polish initiatives and attempts to bring Ukraine closer to Western Europe or perhaps to cut off the Russo-Ukrainian relations (Zwolski, 2018). Radoslaw Sikorski of Poland and Carl Bildt of Sweden introduced the Eastern Partnership proposal in 2008 in an effort to bring Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Belarus closer to the European Union. The European Commission (EC) approved the plan despite significant opposition to it. It was made possible by the growing danger signaled by Russia's military intervention in Georgia in 2008, the election of President Nicholas Sarkozy of France, who was more sympathetic to Eastern issues, and the realization by Western European nations that they needed the support of Eastern European nations to create the Mediterranean Union (Zwolski, 2018).

The goal of the talks between the European Union and Ukraine was to create an association agreement that would help Ukraine institutionalize democracy. Everything appeared to be in place for the signing of the agreement,

and the negotiations were anticipated to be successfully wrapped up in November 2013. The rapid deterioration of Ukraine's improving relations with Western Europe and the subsequent decision by the Ukrainian administration to concentrate on Russo-Ukrainian cooperation surprised the country's society. As a result, the majority of Ukrainians—especially those who lived in the West of the nation—were extremely dissatisfied.

One of the objectives was the reinstatement of the president's power-limiting 2004 constitution, although President Yanukovich's resignation was also a goal due to the revolutionaries' resistance to him. Euromaidan refers to a series of protests against Yanukovich's decision to leave the Eastern Partnership in favor of a better economic relationship with Russia. It was somewhat similar to the Orange Revolution of 2004, but only slightly. While there were still some expectations for improving the situation in Ukraine following the Orange Revolution, Euromaidan should be seen as the direct cause of the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Putin's decision to annex the Crimea in March 2014 and then support the pro-Russian demonstrations in the Donbass area led to the emergence of the current conflict.

### **Ukraine's Sovereignty**

Since 1991, Russia has consistently violated Ukraine's sovereignty. The root reasons of Euromaidan and the Orange Revolution stated above are simply two instances of Russian meddling in Ukraine. Instead of having to navigate the constraints of international law or economic reliance, President Putin would like to control a person who is in charge of the Ukrainian government. That was the case with Yanukovich, despite prior attempts by Yushchenko to seize this economically and strategically significant port, the lease on Russia's naval station in Sevastopol (the Crimean

Peninsula) was extended during his administration until 2042. Deals were made in exchange for price reductions on Russian gas imported into Ukraine. In addition, many of the oligarchs that dominate the Ukrainian economy do business with the Russian government, banks, businesses, etc. It has been stated that the wealth of the top 100 Ukrainians equals 23% of the country's GDP (Datskevych, 2019). We'll talk more about their impact on the continuing battle later. How come Ukraine's sovereignty is now under even greater danger? Putin makes sure that his foreign policy initiatives are in accordance with international law, or at least appear to be. Crimea is essentially under Russian control even if the majority of UN members do not recognize it as Russian territory. The war in Donbass is more complicated; however, the precedent set by the annexation of Crimea puts into question future foreign policy steps of Putin in regard to Ukraine and its sovereignty.

### **Status of Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk**

"On February 27th and 28th 2014, when pro-Russians seized significant buildings in the Crimean capital, Simferopol, and within days they organized a referendum," according to the official account, "a series of events were set in motion that directly led to the annexation of Crimea." 2018 (Blidaru). Surprisingly, 83% of the Crimean populace participated in the referendum, and 97% of them voted "for" unification into the Russian Federation. The Russian campaign was successful because it was able to seize all Ukrainian military bases and demoralize the Ukrainian people in about three weeks without resorting to violence or other coercive measures. The legal situation of Crimea is still unclear, as was already stated. Most nations and intergovernmental organizations reject Putin's worries about the safety of Russian minorities. The assertions by Russia that their military involvement

was lawful and that they had called a referendum should not be seen as an effort to protect the Russian minority or as an invitation from Yanukovich. Both the specifics of Yanukovich's offer and the deployment of Russian armed forces in Crimea remain mostly unknown.

Other pro-Russian protests were sparked by the vote on Crimea's status in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, which border the Russian Federation. With 39% Russians in Luhansk and 38.2% in Donetsk, these two regions have the highest proportion of ethnic Russians (Eurasian Geopolitics, 2014). Additionally, 92.7% of inhabitants in these regions speak Russian, which is the highest percentage (Eurasian Geopolitics, 2014). Due to their rich natural resources and more developed industrial sector, the areas of Donetsk and Luhansk are significant. Pro-Russian organizations quickly established the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics once the protests started. Domestic strife in Ukraine, according to Lakomy (2016), was the initial cause of the conflict. The conceptions of European integration, relations with Russia, shared history, language, and culture, the post-Euromaidan government, and ideologies (Banderism vs. communism) have all caused disagreement in Ukraine (Lakomy, 2016). Leading oligarchs' funding of pro-Russian organizations, combined with Russian military assistance to those organizations, raises severe worries for the Ukrainian government and Volodymyr Zelensky, the country's current president.

### **Ukraine's Sense of Identity**

The Ukrainians understood the importance of enhancing their feeling of national identity. The fact that Ukraine is a multi-ethnic nation with sizable minorities, particularly Russians in the East, makes this identity rather problematic. Additionally, numerous spheres of influence have sought to affect it, including Poland and the Soviet

Union/Russian Federation. Lakomy (2016) and Zwolski (2018) proposed that one might comprehend the development of Ukrainian identity as a reaction to the complexity of its situation in relation to Poland, Russia, the European Union, and, perhaps most significantly, in relation to itself. If Ukraine acted as a stopgap for an EU member state between Poland and Russia, Poland would feel more at ease. Polish policies appeared to view Ukraine as a tool for enhancing Poland's security. The Ukrainians must contend with Russia's desire to preserve its post-imperial status at the same time. As a result, Ukraine is divided between its two neighbors, and this fragmentation hinders the growth of their feeling of national identity. Additionally, ideological divisions that permeate Ukrainian society make it difficult for a strong, cohesive national identity to emerge. While the majority of the Eastern Ukraine is made up of Russians, some people, particularly those who reside in Western Ukraine, would want to be a part of the European Union.

### **Leaders and interests in the Russian Ukraine crisis**

Understanding the dispute, which is in part driven by the intricate relationships between those involved as well as their unique goals in the fight, depends on the influence of specific leaders and their interests. Putin is unquestionably the figurehead for both internal and exterior politics in Russia. He spent many years in the Soviet KGB (army), after which he became involved in politics. Putin is currently in his fourth term as president; he has also served as prime minister twice and in an acting capacity once. He has ruled Russia for more than twenty years in all. Putin is viewed as an expansionist successor to the USSR. Putin desires that Crimea, Luhansk, and Donetsk be acknowledged as Russian regions and, possibly, that he be acknowledged as the defender of the Russian minority who is persecuted on

Ukrainian soil. Putin wants to keep both his personal position as the country's supreme leader and that of Russia as a major player in the international arena. This is demonstrated by recent suggested constitutional modifications that would permit Putin to run for president a fourth time as well as by the 2008 constitutional amendments that established a six-year presidential term. Additionally, the date of the 2018 presidential elections, which were originally scheduled for March 11, was changed to March 18 to honor the annexation of Crimea. "At the heart of Putin's macho aura is his image as a tough guy who will not permit Western nations to weaken Russia by prescribing what its domestic and foreign policies should be," wrote Sperling (2015)." Such a portrayal of Putin reflects the conflicted views on the conflict and whether it should be seen as the West's fault, as Mearsheimer (2014) claimed, or as Russian aggression and disregard for international law. Putin stated that "there are no common democratic standards" in an interview in 2019 (Barber & Foy, 2019). This highlights how challenging it is to impose a democratic ideology that is mostly Western European on a region that has such divergent views on that ideology.

In order to depict the Ukraine issue as a component of a cultural conflict with an immoral and unreliable West, Putin, according to Sperling (2021), "has fused a patriotic nationalism with sexual politics." Putin explicitly attributed the situation to NATO and the EU's efforts to restrain Russia in order to forward his objectives. Additionally, propaganda was used to influence how the Russian people saw their leader: "The Kremlin's message is that Putin will protect Russia's national interests and the interests of Russians abroad, as in Crimea- and will do so unapologetically" (Sperling, 2015). The aforementioned figures show that Putin has been effective in preserving Russian society's fondness for the Soviet past.

The percentage of Russians who expressed sorrow over the fall of the USSR decreased from 66% in 1992 to 58% in 2017 (Levada Center, 2017). The problem cannot be resolved because of Putin's steadfast stance on the issue, his diplomatic experience from his two decades in office, and his desire to bring the Russian people together.

Such a resolution could require a fundamental shift in the perspectives of the parties concerned, but Putin appears unmoved, especially in light of recent constitutional amendment proposals. Putin's longtime high political position makes it much simpler to identify a single leader in Russia, while the picture is less clear in Ukraine. The failure of their presidents to keep the election promises has angered the Ukrainian people. Viktor Yushchenko vowed to de-Sovietize the government following the Orange Revolution, but this promise was broken and the changes were never put into effect, much to the chagrin of the majority of Ukrainians (Barrett, 2018). Victor Yanukovych was the next leader, who according to Putin was "a pliable agent in Kyiv and helped the Party of Regions persuade Ukrainians that Yushchenko and his policies were a tool of Western Meddling" (Barrett, 2018, 89). As a result, the biggest foe of the Western Ukrainians was elected in 2004. Yanukovych's leadership was seen favorably by the Ukrainian people, with a GALLUP poll (Ray, 2015) estimating a 46% approval rating. However, this clearance percentage subsequently decreased to 29% in 2011, where it stayed until 2013.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Conflict Theory**

Perspectives in sociology and social psychology known as conflict theories place an emphasis on a materialist reading of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical attitude toward current social structures, and a political program of revolution or, at the very

least, reform. Conflict theories often contrast historically predominate ideologies and draw attention to power disparities, such as class conflict. Consequently, it is a macro-level examination of society. Social conflict theory, one of the four main paradigms of sociology, is credited to Karl Marx as its founder. Some conflict theories aim to draw attention to the ideological components of conventional thought. Conflict theory does not relate to a single school of thought, despite the similarities between many of these perspectives. It is not to be confused with, for example, peace and conflict studies or any other particular theory of social conflict.

Conflict theory is most frequently linked to Karl Marx (1818–1833) among the traditional founders of social science. Marxism proposed that capitalism, like earlier socioeconomic systems, will ultimately develop internal conflicts leading to its own demise based on a dialectical materialist view of history. By promoting a proletarian revolution, independence from the privileged classes, and a criticism of political economics, Marx brought about profound change. Karl Marx was also aware that most citizens of capitalist societies did not understand how the system influenced how society as a whole functioned. Many people in capitalistic societies view the rich as having acquired their riches via hard effort and education, while viewing the poor as lacking in skill and initiative. This view is similar to how modern people view private property (and the right to pass that property on to their children) as being natural. This line of thinking was rejected by Marx, who saw it as an example of what Friedrich Engels called false consciousness the ruling class's use of deception to hide the exploitation that is inherent to their relationship with the proletariat. Marx aimed to replace this false awareness with what Friedrich Engels called class consciousness, which is the workers' understanding of themselves as a class

united against capitalists and ultimately the capitalist system itself. Marx envisioned a widespread uprising of the proletariat against the capitalists and the destruction of the capitalist system.

Class conflicts have shaped every society that has existed thus far. In other words, oppressor and oppressed, freeman and slave, patrician and plebe, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, stood in perpetual conflict to one another.

### **The Relevance of the Theory to the Study**

When one identifiable group of people whether primal, ethnic, religious, socioeconomic, political, or ideological engages in conscious antagonism to one or more other groups of people because those groups are pursuing what are or appear to be incompatible goals, conflict results. This frequently occurs in the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. The Eastern Ukraine is pro-Russian in terms of political ideology, as well as in terms of religion and racial affiliations, whereas the Western Ukraine is pro-Western in terms of ideological belief and sees itself as a potential member of the European Union and NATO. One of the main causes of the conflict in Ukraine is this. Another significant source of conflict was Russia's domineering meddling in the domestic affairs of Ukraine. Similar to how Russia's clashing ideologies with the democratic, capitalist West and the USSR's extension, Russia, make the conflict theory relevant for this subject.

### **METHODS**

This study adopted the historical research design. To investigate, explorative, and critical assessment of the United Nations and the Russia-Ukraine conflict with a special focus on the underlying factors and the mediation role of the United Nations and other international actors. Since the study is



qualitative and not intended to draw any conclusions from statistics, the data analysis used qualitative analysis of secondary data. The theoretical claims about the Russo-Ukrainian conflict were either supported or refuted using the historically investigated secondary facts. The quantitative information studied is taken from historical collections (secondary sources) to reveal conflict-related development indices. However, there are some limitations to this approach because it does not allow for the application of rigorous statistical inferences that would have allowed for inter-subjectivity, generalization, and prediction. To draw conclusions about the study area, inferences from earlier research were applied.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **What are the root causes of the Russia-Ukraine conflict?**

The root causes of Russia-Ukraine conflict can be better analyzed under the following levels of analysis:

#### **State context of analysis**

The fragmentation of Ukrainian nationals along lines of political ideology and national identity is a major problem at the state level. In addition, there are challenges brought on by economic disparities and ineffective governmental structures in Russia and Ukraine. However, there are signs of a developing civil society and powerful nongovernmental organizations in Ukraine. Domestically, the Eastern portion of Ukraine, which considers itself to be a part of Russia due to its history, language, and religion, is in continual conflict with the Western region, which sees itself as a potential member of the European Union. However, the bulk of people living in the war-affected area are more closely connected to Russian tradition, culture, and language. The feeling of Ukrainian national identity is still weak as a result of social differences. Olzacka (2017: 32) noted that the opposing groups' ideologies can be categorized as neo-Soviet separatists

(expanding the aim of the "Russian World (Russkiy Mir), a government-funded organization aimed at promoting the Russian culture and language, as well as values that challenge the Western cultural tradition) and anti-Soviet nationalists. Thus, the identification of Ukrainians who do not appear to consider one another to be fellow Ukrainians is also developed.

The number of individuals affected in the Donbas region makes the situation seem much more urgent. The Luhansk province has 280,437 registered internally displaced individuals (IDPs), whereas the Donetsk province has 510,764 registered IDPs, according to the most recent report from the Ukrainian Ministry of Social Policy (2020). The economies of both regions are affected by this problem. The Luhansk and Donetsk provinces contributed negatively to the national growth of Ukraine with -18.1% and -45.5%, respectively, according to the OECD (2018, 63). Institutions that could act as legitimate conduits for handling the situation are absent in both Russia and Ukraine. The largest challenge to be overcome appears to be corruption. On a scale of 0–100, where 0–100 indicates severely corrupt and 100–100 indicates very clean, Ukraine only received a score of 30 in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International, 2019). Furthermore, the effects of a corruptible administration are not lessened by the unequal distribution of wealth. Wealth is unequally distributed, with the top 10% in both Russia and Ukraine controlling the economy. It's interesting to note that in Ukraine, after the Euromaidan, the percentage of income owned by the top 10% climbed, whilst in Russia, it declined. While that component has steadily increased in Ukraine since 2014, it started to increase in Russia in 2016. It not only exacerbates ideological divisions within Ukraine, but it also leads to the oligarchs' propensity for Russian

backing, particularly those who exercise control over the region and rely on its economic output. 21 Ukraine: The top 10% of income earners World Bank, undated Russia: The top 10% of income holders. World Bank, undated Despite all of these conflict-related problems, several encouraging tendencies in Ukraine's awaking and increasing sense of civil society have been noted.

One of the major challenges to establishing a democratic system in Ukraine, according to Barrett (2018: 98), is oligarchical influence; nonetheless, "[t]he Euromaidan revolution breathed new life into democratic reforms stalled in Ukraine, buttressed by a robust civil society and Western support." Tregub (2019) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2019) both acknowledged this shift toward more democratic reforms and increased civic engagement. They all concur that the civil society still has a number of challenges to overcome before it can completely grow, notwithstanding some improvement brought about by the introduction of anti-corruption legislation or a reduction in hostilities between political parties and their supporters. In addition to being unequally distributed across the various regions of Ukraine, some repressive policies and corruption also hinder civic engagement: "OHCHR documented 16 new attacks in the civic space during the reporting period, against 18 individuals, namely journalists, human rights defenders, activists, and members of the LGBTI community" (OHCHR 2019: 18). Due to the civil society groups' active involvement in the conflict, it will be required to take into account the challenges they encounter and their root causes, such as corruption, oligarchy influence, and ideological differences, in order to provide a solution.

### **Regional context of analysis**

Russia views Ukraine as a buffer state that separates it from Western European

nations and, more crucially, NATO, whose development is seen as a threat by the Russians, much like the European Union does. After the invasion of Crimea, Russia is also in a better geographical position because it effectively controls the territory and owns the naval base that is so important to the Russian military. Close EU nations provide financial and technological support to the people of Western Ukraine. On a broader scale, the weight of the economic sanctions imposed while the conflict is ongoing unites Russia and Ukraine. As was already established, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine have strong ideological ties to the post-Soviet heritage, but Western Ukraine is more ideologically linked to the EU and democratic norms. The 'Western world' views Ukraine as a state acting as a buffer between it and Russia, which holds opposing ideologies and appreciates having a country separating it from the EU. These divisions are significant for the area, particularly given that, according to Maria Zolkina's report from June 2019, the majority of Ukrainians believed it was unacceptable to grant full amnesty to those who were fighting the Ukrainian army, hold local elections in occupied areas on the terms of militants, or form local police, courts, and prosecutors' offices in occupied territories exclusively by local authorities. While the Donbas region found these options also unacceptable, over 30% thought that local elections on militants' conditions as acceptable (Zolkina, 2019).

Due to Ukraine's proximity to EU members, the Ukrainians can receive arms, funding, and technological support. The Russian Kremlin, which views any approach to its western neighbor as potentially dangerous, undoubtedly sees this as a threat. Russia used to provide gas to Ukraine prior to the start of the conflict; however, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) observed that "beginning in 2015, Ukraine has significantly reduced its

direct import of Russian natural gas and instead has received natural gas shipments from Europe" (2017). Putin has good reason to feel threatened by Ukraine's progressive integration into the EU given the EU's blatant support for Ukraine. The European effort to assist Ukraine, however, appears to be ineffective because "[m]uch of the gas imported from Europe, however, originates in Russia and is brought into Ukraine via reverse flows from central and eastern European countries" (United States Energy Information Administration, 2017). Ukraine is crucial to the area since its pipeline 24 system serves as the primary conduit for gas imports into central Europe. As a result, the European leaders were relieved when "Russia and Ukraine have struck a deal that guarantees the flow of gas to Europe for a further five years, a day before the expiry of the previous 10-year contract between their national governments" (Astrasheuskaya, Chazan, and Olearchyk, 2019). The agreement does not, however, provide assurance that Russia won't again cut off the gas, forcing the countries of Western and Central Europe to use an ineffective technique to reverse the gas flow. This circumstance appears to strengthen Ukraine's position as a buffer state responsible for the foreign relations of its neighbors.

The Russian economy was originally impacted by the economic sanctions that were placed on it by a number of parties, including the United States and the European Union. From 2060 billion US dollars (USD) in 2014 to 1282.7 USD in 2016, it saw a decline in GDP. To reported 1750 billion USD in 2019 (Trading Economics, 2020), it has climbed since then. This shows that the sanctions put on Russia in retaliation for annexing the Crimean Peninsula and arming militant pro-Russian organizations in the Donbass are ineffective. It must be emphasized that Russia has continued to spend roughly \$4

billion USD on sustaining Crimea and the Donbas region since 2014 (UNIAN, 2019). Given the economic importance of Eastern Ukraine and the strategic military value of the Crimea to Russia, Putin is aware of the necessity of maintaining these areas. The sanctions placed on Russia had little impact, but they did restrict its economic independence and showed that the US and the EU are prepared to take action.

### **Global context of Analysis**

On a worldwide scale, the struggle can be seen as a continuation of the conflict between the democratic, capitalist Western ideology and Russia, which served as an extension of the USSR. Additionally, Russia has an advantage over Ukraine because of its permanent membership in the UN Security Council, veto power, and status as a nuclear power. Ukraine is not supported militarily and does not have a status on the international stage that is even remotely comparable to that of Russia. The ideological splits within Ukraine resemble those between Russia and Western nations, particularly those who are EU and US citizens. Since Putin might be seen as carrying on the Soviet tradition, as was already mentioned, Russian policies can be seen as somewhat neo-Soviet. An important geopolitical peninsula, Crimea's takeover signaled Russian encroachment into Ukraine's east.

According to William B. Taylor, a former US ambassador to Ukraine, Putin appears to pursue an international strategy "where powerful nations dominated and invaded less powerful nations, where nations established spheres of influence that oppressed neighbors, leading to war and suffering" (Taylor, 2020). The expansion of Soviet programs and autocratic rule are in opposition to the democratic and capitalist Western vision of a peaceful world. As a result, the conflict has global repercussions, particularly given that "Ukraine is on the

front line in the contest between democracies and autocracies, the contest between freedom and unfreedom" (Taylor, 2020). While the United States and the European Union may be regarded as approving of Russia by expanding their spheres of influence in Ukraine, the expansion of Russia is seen as a challenge to the post-World War II balance of power. Mearsheimer (2014) said that when Russian authorities see Western social engineering in Ukraine, they fear that their nation could be the next." As a result, Ukraine is unquestionably in the center of a number of contending problems, such as areas of influence, ideologies, and territorial disputes. Due to Ukraine's crucial role in the conflict's global perspective, it is important to examine how the West and Russia have approached Ukraine in various ways. Barrett (2018: 82) outlined ways for both the West and Russia to use both soft and hard power. He claimed that Russia used military involvement, electoral meddling, and energy contract manipulation as its primary methods of hard power (Barrett 2018: 82). The most overt method of applying soft power to Ukraine is Russian propaganda that highlights the significance of the two countries' shared history. On the other hand, according to Barrett (2018: 82), "the West has relied on financial aid to support civil society groups." Both hard and soft power are being used in the form of this support. Although the financial assistance may be seen as a component of hard power politics, the terms under which it is given define the West's soft power. The EU and the US demand that Ukraine create an atmosphere that is more friendly for a variety of pro-democracy nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) so that civil society organizations can operate more effectively and safely.

Accordingly, as Barrett (2018: 98) pointed out, it also causes the 27 NGOs to be submerged in the soft power of the West as "NGOs are pushing the Rada

[Ukrainian parliament] to support liberal ideals that lead to more transparency, less corruption, and more legal rights for citizens. "However, there is no military assistance in Ukraine, and no troops have been dispatched to the front lines of the fight. Some may contend that for the issue to be resolved, the international community needs to act with greater vigor. It is important for supporters of further US, EU, and NATO involvement in the crisis to remember that Russia is a nuclear power. Both parties are attempting to avert a scenario in which a military operation against Russia may result in a nuclear retaliation. Additionally, Russia holds a veto-wielding permanent seat on the UN Security Council membership. Consequently, it appears to be very difficult to put into effect any Security Council resolution pertaining to the war without Russia's consent. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine is an example of the global tensions that have shaped international relations since World War II. The ideological opposition between the democratic West and neo-Soviet Russia penetrates the ongoing conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine and presents a significant barrier to peace.

### **What Role Is The United Nations Playing In The Face Of The War?**

This research question can be better answered by considering the activities of the United Nations as a whole, in particular the ceasefire and mediation roles of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), whose main duty is maintaining international peace and security, the General Assembly, and other special agents of the United Nations (UN), such as the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of The Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Office of The Coordination.

It is also useful to note that numerous UN organizations, as well as more than 1,200 national and international UN workers, are present in Ukraine. Officials from the UN have made it plain that they intend to remain, do their part to end the terrible suffering, step up the humanitarian effort, and continue to fight for the safety of civilians. Below are some very important actions performed by UN organizations to lessen the conflict in Ukraine against this background.

**The World Food Programme:** the world's largest humanitarian agency, has reached over 9.6 million people inside Ukraine since the war began in March. The World Food Programme assisted with ready-to-eat rations, canned goods, bread, wheat, flour, and oil – with part of that aid coming via the support of the U.S.

**The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF):** which is staffing and operating warehouses in Ukraine, since February 24, 3,890,177 people in Ukraine have been able to access health care as a result of supplies distributed, either directly by UNICEF or in partnership with implementing organizations – including first aid kits, midwifery kits, and early childhood and recreational kits.

**The UN Population Fund (UNFPA):** has created mobile teams offering medical personnel in maternal and sexual reproductive health, as it expected that 80,000 children would be born in Ukraine from March – May. Separately, UNFPA is using its existing network of shelters and crisis rooms – established decades before the start of the military offensive – to respond to the needs of women fleeing their homes from gender-based violence (GBV). UNFPA and the **International Organization for Migration (IOM):** also offer GBV hotline services and have provided more than 15,000 consultations between February 24 and March 24.

**The World Health Organization (WHO):** has delivered nearly 543 metric

tons of trauma and emergency medical supplies, as well as oxygen generators and generators to maintain electrical supply. WHO is also working with neighboring countries to prevent, identify and rapidly respond to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, including measles, rubella and polio.

**The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR):** operating in Ukraine since 1994, has been delivering core relief items such as blankets, sleeping mats and emergency shelters and identifying people in need of particular assistance, such as children travelling alone and people with disabilities. Working with Ukrainian authorities, UNHCR is helping run over 70 reception centers across the country for internally displaced people, where individuals receive cash assistance to cover the costs of basic needs like accommodation, food, clothes and hygiene items.

In recent weeks, the above-named UN agencies have partnered together for multiple humanitarian aid convoys to cities under siege. The humanitarian notification system with Ukraine and the Russian Federation is facilitated by the **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**. For these convoys to be successful, OCHA requires all parties to agree to the exact terms of humanitarian pauses — including the route, the start time, and the duration — for the safe delivery of assistance and the evacuation of civilians.

### **What the UN is doing to militate against a nuclear or biological weapons disaster**

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is keeping a careful eye on events with a particular focus on the security and safety of the nuclear power reactors in Ukraine. IAEA Director General Grossi recently visited the plant and had inspectors set up new radiation monitoring apparatus in light of Russian forces leaving the Chernobyl

Nuclear Power Plant. This was the first of several expeditions he hopes to send to the nation, which in addition to the Chernobyl facility also has 15 functioning nuclear energy reactors spread across four sites. The agency receives remote data transfer from the monitoring devices they installed at four of Ukraine's nuclear power facilities as part of the existing safeguards.

Regarding the threat posed by biological weapons, Member States are not aware of any biological weapons programs in Ukraine thanks to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which was backed by the UN and to which both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are States Parties.

#### **What has the UN done to isolate Russia?**

The General Assembly has recently made progress. In the beginning, Liechtenstein just passed a resolution that increases the expense of using a veto by asking a permanent five-member to defend their vote. It was a "significant step toward the accountability, transparency, and responsibility" of veto-wielding nations, according to U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

Second, earlier in April, and for the first time, U.N. Member States expelled Russia from the Human Rights Council, a U.N. body. Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council. That initiative was led by U.S. Ambassador to the UN Thomas-Greenfield and was supported by a bipartisan group of senators. Russia "blatantly" threatened nations who could vote to have them removed, but the resolution had the support of 93 nations.

Third, 141 nations voted in favor of Russia's complete withdrawal of forces in March, with the majority citing the country's violations of the U.N. Charter as providing a "irrefutable legal standard of aggression around which to rally international support." In praising the

conclusion, President Zelensky said, "The world is with us."

Similar to that, on March 4, the Human Rights Council approved a resolution submitted by Ukraine that calls for the creation of a Commission of Inquiry (COI) to look into war crimes and abuses of human rights. The result was 32-2. The U.N. ambassador for Ukraine issued a warning to Russia, saying, "The evidence will be gathered; you will be identified, and you will be held accountable."

#### **What has the Security Council done to thwart Russia and end the War**

The harsh reality is that the Security Council is unlikely to end the war despite the UN Secretary-General's repeated calls for it to do so and his recent visit to Russia and Ukraine. This is because the five permanent members of the Council—the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom—have a longstanding veto power. This clause, proposed by the United States and the Soviet Union after World War II, makes it extremely challenging to stop strong states from employing force when they see fit. For instance, the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, which was largely regarded as a violation of U.N. resolutions, was unabated by the Security Council. Furthermore, the Russian veto prevented the Security Council from taking real action against Syria. This situation is still occurring, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky rightfully lambasted it in his speech to the council on April 5. President Zelensky urged the organization to expel Russia during his address, although the UN Charter makes no mention of any clause or procedure for doing so.

#### **What are the roles of critical actors in ending the war in Ukraine?**

Both Turkiye's role and China's peace plan to end the conflict in Ukraine became practical. China made its 12-

point peace proposal to resolve the conflict in Ukraine on February 24, 2023, exactly one year after Russia's invasion of the country. The proposal document, despite China's prior action in supporting Russia at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) voting in which she abstained, reiterates China's neutrality in the conflict. China criticizes the sanctions imposed on Russia, agrees with Russia's concerns that western governments are to responsible for the invasion of 24 February 2022, and urges for a cease-fire and peace negotiations. It further sued that relevant countries should stop abusing unilateral sanctions and do their share in de-escalating the Ukraine Crisis. The China's 12- point peace proposal on the Political Settlement of the Russia-Ukraine Crisis offered on the 24 February, 2023 are as follows:

1. **Respecting the sovereignty of all countries:** This is one of the Universally recognized international laws and one of the core principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. The sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all countries must be effectively upheld. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor are equal members of the international community. All parties should jointly uphold the basic norms governing international relations and defend international fairness and justice. Equal and uniform application of international law should be promoted, while double standards must be rejected.
2. **Abandoning the Cold War mentality:** This is one of the most important proposals made by China. The security of a country should not be pursued at the expense of others. The security of a region should not be achieved by strengthening or expanding military blocs. The legitimate security interests and

concerns of all countries must be taken seriously and addressed properly. There is no simple solution to a complex issue. All parties should, following the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and bearing in mind the long-term peace and stability of the world, help forge a balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture. All parties should oppose the pursuit of one's own security at the cost of others' security, prevent bloc confrontation, and work together for peace and stability on the Eurasian Continent.

3. **Ceasing hostilities:** Conflict and war benefit no one. All parties must stay rational and exercise restraint, avoid fanning the flames and aggravating tensions, and prevent the crisis from deteriorating further or even spiraling out of control. All parties should support Russia and Ukraine in working in the same direction and resuming direct dialogue as quickly as possible, so as to gradually deescalate the situation and ultimately reach a comprehensive ceasefire.
4. **Resuming peace talks:** Dialogue and negotiation are the only viable solution to the Ukraine crisis. All efforts conducive to the peaceful settlement of the crisis must be encouraged and supported. The international community should stay committed to the right approach of promoting talks for peace, help parties to the conflict open the door to a political settlement as soon as possible, and create conditions and platforms for the resumption of negotiation. China will continue to play a constructive role in this regard.
5. **Resolving the humanitarian crisis:** All measures conducive to easing the humanitarian crisis must be encouraged and supported. Humanitarian operations should

follow the principles of neutrality and impartiality, and humanitarian issues should not be politicized. The safety of civilians must be effectively protected, and humanitarian corridors should be set up for the evacuation of civilians from conflict zones. Efforts are needed to increase humanitarian assistance to relevant areas, improve humanitarian conditions, and provide rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access, with a view to preventing a humanitarian crisis on a larger scale. The UN should be supported in playing a coordinating role in channeling humanitarian aid to conflict zones.

**6. Protecting civilians and prisoners of war (POWs):** Parties to the conflict should strictly abide by international humanitarian law, avoid attacking civilians or civilian facilities, protect women, children and other victims of the conflict, and respect the basic rights of POWs. China supports the exchange of POWs between Russia and Ukraine, and calls on all parties to create more favorable conditions for this purpose.

**7. Keeping nuclear power plants safe:** China opposes armed attacks against nuclear power plants or other peaceful nuclear facilities, and calls on all parties to comply with international law including the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and resolutely avoid man-made nuclear accidents. China supports the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in playing a constructive role in promoting the safety and security of peaceful nuclear facilities.

**8. Reducing strategic risks:** Nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought. The threat or use of nuclear weapons should be opposed. Nuclear proliferation must be prevented and nuclear crisis avoided. China opposes

the research, development and use of chemical and biological weapons by any country under any circumstances.

**9. Facilitating grain exports:** All parties need to implement the Black Sea Grain Initiative signed by Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine and the UN fully and effectively in a balanced manner, and support the UN in playing an important role in this regard. The cooperation initiative on global food security proposed by China provides a feasible solution to the global food crisis.

**10. Stopping unilateral sanctions:** Unilateral sanctions and maximum pressure cannot solve the issue; they only create new problems. China opposes unilateral sanctions unauthorized by the UN Security Council. Relevant countries should stop abusing unilateral sanctions and “long-arm jurisdiction” against other countries, so as to do their share in deescalating the Ukraine crisis and create conditions for developing countries to grow their economies and better the lives of their people.

**11. Keeping industrial and supply chains stable:** All parties should earnestly maintain the existing world economic system and oppose using the world economy as a tool or weapon for political purposes. Joint efforts are needed to mitigate the spillovers of the crisis and prevent it from disrupting international cooperation in energy, finance, food trade and transportation and undermining the global economic recovery.

**12. Promoting post-conflict reconstruction:** The international community needs to take measures to support post-conflict reconstruction in conflict zones. China stands ready to provide assistance and play a constructive role in this endeavor.



Turkiye on the other hand has equally played a very crucial role of mediation to broker a permanent ceasefire and eventual peace between Russia and Ukraine, following a successful grain and prisoner swap deals. Turkiye has remained quite neutral in Russia-Ukraine conflict despite pressure from the United States and Europe, Turkiye has not joined western sanctions on Russia, believing that talking with Moscow is better than isolating it.

### **CONCLUSION**

The confrontation between Russia and Ukraine is no longer between two countries. Without a doubt, the conflict has altered dramatically, with Russia and NATO becoming the main adversaries. In reality, it would be convenient to claim that the US, NATO, and EU are exploiting Ukraine as a front in their proxy conflict with Russia. Almost all European countries, including the US, back Ukraine by providing billions of dollars' worth of military equipment and humanitarian relief. As a result, the United States and Europe are unable to promote peace. Given the current state of the world, China, Turkey, and India are the best potential peacemakers (mediators). The 12-point peace plan from China is very comprehensive and will help end the war if it is carried out to its logical conclusion. The grain and prisoner swap accords are excellent examples of how Turkiye's neutrality and mediation duties helped to start a peaceful resolution between the two warring states. Thankfully, the USA and European countries have stated they will not be giving Ukraine the fighter aircraft it has requested.

Russia looked to be receiving economic aid from India, which bought Russian crude at prices significantly lower than those found on the world market. In doing so, India has made it clear to western countries, led by the USA, that it

would make decisions that are best for the country and will continue to buy Russian crude to meet its energy needs despite the sanctions imposed on Russia by the West. It is believed that India may have saved around INR 30,000 crore so far. China, on the other hand, has opted to remain neutral. In light of this, it is essential to note that what at first appeared to be a creative array of tools and processes for conflict resolution were soon to be challenged by the institutional constraints and the egocentric imperatives of the superpowers that dominated the Cold War era. Within the framework of the UN, the superpowers (the USA and USSR) and their client states established de facto coalitions along ideological lines and formalized an oligarchy of power. The Security Council's domination in all important decisions as a result of this grab of global power meant that the UN's capacity to settle disputes and promote peace was structurally hamstrung. The interests of the USA and the USSR rarely, if ever, coincided. Therefore, the confrontation between the most powerful members of the UN Security Council posed the biggest threat to global peace and security. Over 150 wars have place during the Cold War, with between 25 and 30 million people dying. The processes and strategies to manage and resolve issues in this East-West competitive environment rely on coercive political talks in the framework of the prevailing superpower rivalry. As a result, participation by other collective security organizations and outside parties was limited and only made sense in wars where the great powers did not directly participate or shared interests. So even though the UN established what could have served as institutions capable of creating the framework conditions for peace-making, it was severely undermined by the exigencies of Machiavellian superpower politics during the Cold War.

In order to avoid the development of nuclear weapons and the fighting of nuclear conflicts, it is important that intentional effort be made, especially by all critical actors with a neutral posture. Nuclear weapons should not be threatened or used. Nuclear crises must be averted and nuclear proliferation must be stopped. China is opposed to the creation, production, and use of chemical and biological weapons by any nation at any time. It is also interesting to note that the UN, which at first appeared to be a productive collection of institutions and processes to resolve conflict, has run afoul of the institutional constraints and egocentric demands of the superpowers that dominated the Cold War era. Within the framework of the UN, the superpowers (the USA and USSR) and their client states established de facto coalitions along ideological lines and formalized an oligarchy of power. As a result, the present events in the UN regarding Russia and Ukraine are a blatant sign that the Cold War is still raging in the post-Cold War age. In line with the conclusion, the study recommended as follows:

1. The abandonment of the cold war mentality between the super powers and their clients States in such a way that the security of a country should not be pursued at the expense of others. This will deescalate the conflict and makes it resolvable.
2. The United States, NATO and European Union should stop fighting a proxy war in using Ukraine against Russia and Russia on the other hand should respect the Ukraine's Sovereignty and in territorial integrity by not meddling into the internal affairs of Ukraine.
3. Unilateral sanctions on Russia be put on hold and other critical state actors with neutral posture such as China, Turkiye, India, South Africa and others should be given the leverage to mediate with a view to ending the conflict.

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