



SECURITY COUNCIL Background Guide

Introduction

The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States are obligated to comply with Security Council decisions.

Under the United Nations Charter, the functions and powers of the Security Council are: to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations; to investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction; to recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement; to formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments; to determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken; to call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression; to take military action against an aggressor; to recommend the admission of new Members; to exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas"; to recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

Important Links:

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>

CRISIS IN UKRAINE

2014 Ukraine Crisis

Armed conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in early 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. The previous year, protests in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, against Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to reject a deal for greater economic integration with the European Union (EU) were met with a violent crackdown by state security forces. On February 22 and 23, Russian troops and special forces began moving into Crimea through Novorossiysk. On February 27, Russian forces without insignias began their advance into the Crimean Peninsula. Masked gunmen occupied the Crimean parliament building and raised a Russian flag, as pro-Russian lawmakers dismissed the sitting government and installed a leader of the Russian Unity Party as Crimea's prime minister. Russian authorities acknowledged that they had moved troops into the region.

The former acting president of Ukraine declared the action to be a violation of Ukrainian sovereignty while Russia's president characterized it as an effort to protect Russian citizens and military assets in Crimea.

In March of 2014, the Russian President proclaimed that Crimea had always been a territory that belonged to Russia, and the Crimean parliament voted to secede from Ukraine to join the Russian Federation, declaring that a public referendum would follow. With this proclamation, the Russian President openly backed Ukrainian separatist movements led by Ukrainians who wished to be Russian citizens.

On March 16, 2014, the public referendum was held, observers noted numerous irregularities in the voting process, including the presence of armed men at polling stations, and the result was an overwhelming 97 percent in favor of joining Russia. Days later, the Russian President signed a treaty that annexed Crimea as part of the Russian Federation and later, both houses of the Russian Parliament ratified this treaty. The Russian Kremlin advisory body later released a cautionary report about Crimea that contradicted the officially published results of the independence referendum, revealing actual voter turnout was estimated to have been between 30 and 50 percent, with just over half of those ballots choosing annexation by Russia.

The Ukrainian government in Kyiv rejected the results of the referendum and most Western governments protested the move, with the U.S. and U.K. governments imposing asset freezes and numerous travel bans on Russian officials.

Russia continued to exert economic pressure on the government in Kyiv. Russian officials publicly stated that they had no additional designs on Ukrainian territory, but a NATO press briefing revealed the presence of an estimated 40,000 Russian troops, massed in a state of high readiness, just across Ukraine's border.

The Ukrainian Government called on the United Nations to dispatch peacekeeping forces to eastern Ukraine to restore order. All parties at Geneva agreed to work to defuse the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Russia commenced military maneuvers on its side of the border, and pro-Russian militants expanded their zone of control, seizing additional government buildings and establishing armed checkpoints.

In June of 2014, skirmishes between separatist militias and government forces continued in the east. As fighting continued, however, Russia was again accused of directly supporting the rebels when a trio of unidentified Soviet-era tanks appeared in Ukrainian towns near the Russian border. Russia continued to deny involvement in the conflict.

Russian forces had entered Ukraine, and NATO analysts estimated that more than 1,000 Russian troops were actively participating in the conflict.

Civilian death tolls continued to rise. On July 17, a Malaysia Airlines plane carrying 298 people crashed in the Donetsk region. Both Ukrainian and pro-Russian forces denied responsibility for any role in the downing of the jet, which intelligence analysts confirmed was brought down by a surface-to-air missile.

Ukraine and Russia met with separatist leaders in Minsk, Belarus, and agreed to a cease-fire that temporarily slowed the violence. With an eye on the future, the Ukrainian president proposed a series of political and economic reforms that were designed to prepare Ukraine to apply for EU membership in 2020.

In January 2015, the United Nations estimated that more than 5,000 people had been killed since the beginning of hostilities. February 12, 2015, the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France, and Germany agreed on "Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements" adopted and signed in Minsk on February 12, 2015 by the UN Security Council. The tenuous peace held, and heavy weapons were pulled back by both sides.

2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine

In the Spring of 2021, Russia began conducting military exercises along the border of the Ukraine causing tension between the nations to rise. In December of 2021, intelligence

discovered that Russian troops were amassing along the Ukrainian border in preparation of the invasion of Ukraine. As Russian troops continued to amass, they began conducting live fire defensive military drills with the neighboring nation of Belarus. These exercises were conducted using tanks, war planes, and missile launchers. In the contemporary global political stage, these drills are considered an act of intimidation. At this time, global leaders believed that Russia was going to engage in war against the nation of Ukraine and attempt to invade major cities of Ukraine through land and air assault.

The security situation in Ukraine deteriorated rapidly following the launch of a Russian Federation military offensive labeled as “peacekeepers” into Ukrainian territory on February 24, 2022. Armed violence escalated in at least eight oblasts (regions), including Kyivska oblast and the capital city of Kyiv, as well as in the eastern oblasts Donetsk and Luhansk which were already affected by conflict since 2014 but had been consistently disavowed by the Kremlin. The Russian President took to the airwaves to announce the beginning of a “special military operation” for the “demilitarization and ‘denazification’ of Ukraine.” Within minutes, explosions were heard in major cities across Ukraine and air raid sirens began to sound in Kyiv. Ukrainian leaders declared martial law, calling for a general mobilization of Ukraine’s military-age population.

Around the world, leaders condemned the unprovoked attack and promised swift and severe sanctions against Russia. Western leaders, pledging solidarity with Ukraine, responded by levying the promised raft of sanctions against Russian financial institutions. The United States and many NATO allies, such as Germany and Sweden, have reversed past policies against providing offensive military aid in order to support Ukraine with military aid.

The escalation of conflict has triggered an immediate and steep rise in humanitarian needs as essential supplies and services are disrupted and civilians flee the fighting. Amin Awad, the UN Crisis Coordinator for Ukraine called for an “immediate humanitarian pause,” on March 5, in the fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces, as UN aid supplies continue to arrive in the country.

Millions of Ukrainians fled the country as Russia indiscriminately targeted civilian populations with rockets and artillery strikes. On March 16, as many as 600 people were killed in the besieged city of Mariupol when a Russian air strike leveled the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre.

As the war entered its second month, it was clear that the offensive against Kyiv had grossly miscarried. As Russian forces were forced to withdraw by Ukrainian troops, it was discovered that Russian troops occupying the Kyiv suburbs of Irpin and Bucha were conducting a horrifying campaign of violence against the civilian populations. Ukrainian forces uncovered mass graves,

bodies that showed clear signs of torture, and other evidence of war crimes. Elsewhere along the front, the Russians targeted cultural sites, hospitals, water treatment plants, and other civilian infrastructure in a violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Findings from the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine documented unlawful killings - including summary executions of civilians - in more than 30 settlements in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy regions, by Russian armed forces while they controlled these areas in late February and March. A large number of executions and other violations by Russian forces, and the Commission received consistent accounts of torture and ill-treatment.” Allegations of sexual violence against Ukrainian communities - including children - were also found to be based in fact.

Current State of Affairs

The Crisis in the Ukraine remains.

The US announced an additional \$800 million in military assistance to Ukraine. Since Russia’s invasion, the United States has committed about \$4.6 billion in security assistance, including heavy weapons and artillery, to the country. The United States has also dramatically increased U.S. troop presence in Europe, bringing the total to more than one hundred thousand.

The United States’ most recent installment of aid was announced in early October and included \$625 million worth of arms. While the United Nations, Group of Seven member states, EU, and others continue to condemn Russia’s actions and support Ukrainian forces, Russia has turned to countries like Democratic Republic of North Korea (DPRK) and Iran for intelligence and military equipment.

Beginning in October 2022, Russia launched its most extensive attacks on Ukraine in months, striking military and energy facilities, as well as several civilian areas during rush hour. The attacks spanned fourteen regions and included assaults on the capital. This renewed Russian offensive comes after Ukrainian forces destroyed part of the only bridge connecting the occupied Crimean Peninsula to Russia.

The United Nations said it was concerned about reports that DPRK is preparing to transfer weapons to Russia for its war in Ukraine. All arms trading with DPRK is banned under the UNSC resolutions no.1718.

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has continued to escalate for decades and is about to reach a tipping point. The UNSC must act swiftly and urgently to resolve this crisis for the sovereignty of Ukraine and Crimea.

Questions to Consider:

1. What actions should the Security Council take against the Russian military?
2. Would it be necessary and ethical for the UNSC peacekeepers to step in or impose sanctions?
3. How can other nations help the affected countries in this crisis?
4. Why does this crisis affect the peace and security of the UN and countries around the world?
5. What types of resources or support can other nations give to Crimea?

Important Links:

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2202.pdf

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/a_hrc_28_64_add_1.pdf

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11869>