

Forum: United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

Issue #2: Measures to find a peaceful resolution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict

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Introduction

The Russo-Ukrainian War is an ongoing international conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It began in February 2014, following Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity, Russia annexed Crimea and backed pro-Russian separatists battling the Ukrainian military in the Donbas conflict. During the first eight years of the battle, there were maritime accidents, cyberwarfare, and increased political tensions.

After the annexation of Crimea, armed confrontation rapidly erupted in the territories between Russian-backed troops and Ukrainian forces. Russia denied military participation, however both Ukraine and NATO reported a deployment of Russian troops and military equipment in Donetsk, as well as Russian cross-border shelling soon following Crimea's annexation. Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia attempted to resolve the issue through negotiations and the Minsk Accords however this was not very successful. Russia started a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Months of information collection and observations of Russian troop movements, force buildup, and military contingency funding culminated in a White House briefing with US intelligence, military, and diplomatic leaders in October 2021 on a near-certain mass-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. The only remaining issues were when the strike would occur and if the US would be able to persuade allies to act in advance. Both questions were addressed on February 24, 2022, when Russian soldiers invaded a completely unprepared Ukraine following Russian President Vladimir Putin's authorization of a "special military operation" against the nation. Putin said in his announcement that the operation's purpose was to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and put a stop to the purported genocide of Russians on Ukrainian territory.

Definition of Key Terms

NATO: NATO is a political and military alliance established in 1949, composed of 30 member countries from North America and Europe. Its primary purpose is to promote mutual defense and security, and serves as a forum for political consultations and cooperation on security issues. Its headquarters are located in Brussels, Belgium.

Crimea: A peninsula located in the Black Sea which was historically part of Ukraine but was annexed by the Russian Federation in 2014. Minsk Accords

Martial Law: Under martial law, the military is granted additional powers, such as the ability to arrest and detain individuals without trial, impose curfews, and restrict civil liberties. Martial law is typically intended to be a temporary measure, and its use is subject to constitutional and legal restrictions to prevent abuses of power and is usually declared during civil unrest, natural disasters, or other crisis that prevent the civilian government from maintaining order.

The Soviet Union: Officially known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was a federal socialist state that existed from 1922 to 1991 in Eurasia. The Soviet Union was founded after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and was led by the Communist Party, which established a single-party government and a planned economy. It was made up of 15 Soviet socialist Republics, which included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (now Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgiziya (now Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (now Moldova), Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS): A mid-range air defense system developed by Raytheon (United States) and Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace (Norway).

The Kerch Strait Bridge

High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS): The M142 HIMARS is a light multiple rocket launcher designed for the American Army in the late 1990s. It is placed on a conventional truck frame from the American Army Family of Medium Tactical Vehicles.

Kinzhal Missiles: The Kh-47M2 Kinzhal (a word which means “dagger” in Russian) is a Russian nuclear-capable hypersonic air-launched ballistic missile. It is claimed to have a range of 3,000 km and Mach 12 speed.

Fourth Geneva Convention: The Fourth Geneva Convention is a set of international humanitarian laws that protect civilians during times of armed

conflict and establishes rules for the treatment of civilians.

General Overview



The Soviet Union

The territory that is now Ukraine was a hotbed of conflict and instability from 1917, when the Russian Empire fell, to 1922. Various communities of ex-tsarist imperial subjects have quite varied ideas about the future. The experiment of constructing a polity that was both Soviet and Ukrainian was overseen by officials in Kharkiv, the capital of the new Soviet Ukraine. Stalin increased the grain quotas for newly collectivized villages in order to enhance grain exports, which financed fast industrialization. As a result, millions of people in Soviet Ukraine starved to death during the Holodomor, a famine of horror that peaked in 1932–1933. Russians are once again turning hunger into a weapon by stealing grain from Ukraine, mining farms, and torching grain silos. In the 1950s and 1960s, Dnipro (formerly Dnipropetrovsk) developed into a rocket manufacturing hub, whereas Mariupol (then Zhdanov) was a steel manufacturing hub. Ukraine

served as the Soviet Union's breadbasket during the Soviet era as funding for industry was taken from the countryside.

World War II

When Hitler and Stalin agreed to a non-aggression pact in 1939 and the Soviet Union violently invaded Eastern Poland, which is now Western Ukraine, the borders of Soviet Ukraine shifted. The Holocaust and the destruction caused by this invasion dramatically altered Soviet Ukraine. Many organizations, including the OUN, Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, and its (later) paramilitary arm, the UPA, Ukrainian Insurgent Army, pursued their various objectives violently. Everyone in Ukraine had to negotiate with numerous partisan organizations, occupying governments, as well as the German and Soviet forces, in order to survive. They served in the Soviet Army, the UPA, as resistance fighters, and were killed in the Holocaust because they were Jewish. Soviet Ukrainians were widespread. Stalin held the eastern Polish regions he had seized in 1939 after the war. The city of Lwow, which the survivors believed would return to Poland, actually became the Ukrainian metropolis of Lviv. The few Jews who remained had to build a new existence after the deportation of the Poles.

The First Signs of Conflict in the 21st Century

The first major conflict between Russia and Ukraine erupted when Russia annexed Crimea in early 2014. This was preceded by violent protests in Kyiv after the Ukrainian capital, as pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich rejected the deal to increase economic integration with the European Union (EU), which were subsequently met by police repression. In the end, the conflict reached such a violent climax that the President was forced to flee the country in February 2014. He was replaced by the more Western-allied government of Oleksandr Turchynov, whose office angered Russian president Vladimir Putin

In March of that same year, President Putin enacted the annexation of the

Ukrainian region of Crimea, with protecting the rights of Russian citizens and Russian speakers in the area being cited as his main reasons for green-lighting the effort. After the Crimeans voted to join the Russian Federation in a local referendum, Russia was able to formally take over the territory. Nevertheless, pro-Russian separatists heightened the ethnic divisions by holding their own independence referendums in the eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Although Russia denied being militarily involved in the conflict, both Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) reported seeing Russian troops and military equipment near Donetsk and supporting the efforts of the pro-Russian factions fighting against the Ukrainian military.

The Minsk Accords of February 2015 were the first efforts to mitigate the violence going on in the region. The kick-starters of this initiative were France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine, and their agreement outlined the implementation of a ceasefire, withdrawal of all heavy weaponry, and that the conflict zone be fully controlled by the Ukrainian government. Nevertheless, the party was unsuccessful at reaching a diplomatic settlement.

To protect Ukraine and other Eastern-European nations from future instances of Russian aggression, NATO launched four battalions of rotating troops through Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. This was followed by two US Army tank brigades in Poland to further establish a Western presence in the region and thus deter Russia from taking future military action.

Russia Invades Ukraine

After months of gathering intelligence and observations by the United States government of Russian troops, their movement, military contingency, and financing, the White House was certain that there would be a mass-scale Russian invasion into Ukraine, but it was not certain whether they could convince their allies to act preemptively. This prediction would be met when Russian troops invaded an unprepared Ukraine on February 24, 2022, with Putin citing

that he only sought to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and end a supposed genocide of Russian people within Ukrainian political borders.

As world leaders condemned the Russian's unprovoked attack and promised to enact economic sanctions against the offending nation, Ukraine declared martial law and called for the mobilization of the nation's military-age population. Meanwhile, Russia launched troops at the Ukrainian border with Belarus and quickly took over Chernobyl in their plans to advance along the Dniiper River. Meanwhile, those in Crimea captured Kherson in March, although general aggression by the Russians had to cease in the face of opposition from Ukrainian forces. In the end, both the efforts to encircle the cities of Kharkiv and Kyiv failed due to the strength of Ukrainian resistance and the lack of logistical capabilities of the Russian military strategists.

The Ukrainian Counterattack

In the western Black Sea's Snake Island, a significant strategic outcropping, Russian forces were expelled on June 30. As a result, the Ukrainians were able to increase their use of Danube ports and somewhat revive their export-based economy. Taking control of the final significant population centers in the Luhansk oblast, Lysychansk and the neighboring city of Severodonetsk, were taken by Russian forces in July. With a series of strikes that severely destroyed the bridges near Russian-occupied Kherson in late August, American-supplied HIMARS made their presence known. On August 9, a huge explosion at a Russian air base in Crimea resulted in the destruction of 9 planes and the evacuation of Russian vacationers.

Up to 100 mercenaries were killed when a HIMARS attack in Lugansk destroyed the Wagner Group's headquarters. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the organization's founder, and Wagner rose to prominence in the Kremlin as Russian regular army officers struggled to achieve the expected objectives. A remarkable offensive by Ukrainian forces in the Kharkiv region on September 6 resulted in the

liberation of more than 3,400 square kilometers of land. An important rail hub on the Seversky Donets River called Lyman was recaptured by Ukrainian forces on October 1. To reinforce his forces, Putin announced a "partial mobilization" of 300,000 men, but several "mobiks" were killed in battle barely 10 days after receiving their conscription notices.

There were an abundance of videos showing the mobilization's disorganized execution on Russian social media. In the seized Ukrainian areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya, and Kherson, Russia held phony referendums to decide whether those territories should join Russia. Russia allegedly had a lopsided advantage in the decision, and Putin's annexation of the regions made no explicit claims. On September 13, a video showing Prigozhin's own recruitment drive for Wagner in Russian prisons appeared online. It was noteworthy since private military firms were prohibited in Russia and the Kremlin had vehemently denied any connections to Wagner. Prigozhin's recruiting activities were less required as Russia's dependence on Wagner mercenaries grew. By the end of 2022, Wagner had amassed an army of 50,000 prisoners.

The Kerch Strait Bridge and the Liberation of Kherson

The Kerch Strait Bridge, a 12-mile (19-km) structure connecting Russia's Krasnodar Krai (territory) with the Russian-occupied Crimea, was the target of a major attack by Ukraine on October 8, 2022. The enormous explosion ignited a fuel tanker train that was moving across the rail bridge and demolished a 900-foot portion of the road bridge. Russia moved fast to resume some bridge traffic, but the Kremlin predicted that it would take about a year to complete all repairs. On October 10, Russia retaliated by executing a significant airstrike against civilian targets in the cities of Ukraine. Numerous cruise missiles and more than a dozen Iranian Shahe-136 "kamikaze" drones targeted both residential structures and vital infrastructure.

Power shortages spread throughout the nation as Ukraine's energy grid was

damaged, but as Russia's attack against its cities intensified, Ukraine's air defenses got stronger. By the end of the month of November, Ukraine had acquired several National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) from the United States, Spain had sent HAWK, and on November 9 the Kremlin announced the withdrawal of Russian troops from Kherson, the only regional capital of Ukraine that Russia had captured during its invasion. Zelensky said a few days later that the Ukrainian victory there marked the "beginning of the end of the war." Ukraine increased its level of audacity with attacks far from the front lines, using modified Soviet-era reconnaissance drones to assault two Russian air sites. Three troops were killed, and six bombers were damaged in the attacks, which had a profound psychological impact. Pantsir air defense systems started to appear on rooftops all across Moscow in January 2023, although a Russian official referred to photographic evidence of the deployments as "fake".

The Refugee Crisis

As Russia randomly targeted civilian populations with rocket and artillery assaults, millions of Ukrainians left their nation. As many as 600 people were murdered on March 16 when a Russian airstrike destroyed the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol, which was under siege. The theater's set designer had painted the phrase "CHILDREN" on the sidewalk outside in enormous Cyrillic letters that were visible even in satellite photography. It was well known that the structure served as the primary bomb shelter for the city. By the end of March, four million Ukrainians had fled the war, making this the biggest refugee catastrophe to affect Europe since World War II. In Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic, the vast majority would feel safe.

It was evident that the drive towards Kyiv had utterly failed as the war entered its second month. The Russian troops holding the Kyiv suburbs of Irpin and Bucha were waging a horrible campaign of terror on the local civilian populations. The Russian paratroopers at Hostomel had been cut off and were being savagely

bombarded by Ukrainian artillery. Ukrainian soldiers found mass graves, tortured victims, and other proof of war crimes after forcing the Russians to leave Irpin and Bucha. In flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions, the Russians also attacked hospitals, water treatment facilities, cultural institutions, and other civilian infrastructure all along the front. In regions under Russian rule, looting of civilian residences and establishments was also common.

The Costs of the Conflict

The conflict in the Donbass claimed 14,000 lives between 2014 and 2021, with 6,884 civilians dying and 10,947 being injured. The American Defense Department, the combat also claimed the lives of almost 40,000 people. Nearly eight million individuals are thought to have left Ukraine and become internally displaced. A blatant war crime under the Fourth Geneva Convention was the forcible transfer of between 900,000 and 1.6 million Ukrainian civilians to Russian territory, carried out by the Russian troops. 5,937 Russian soldiers were reportedly killed in action, according to the government of Russia's sole public declaration on casualties from the "special military operation" in September 2022. It was projected that Russia's conventional military capability had declined by a half after less than a year of hostilities.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Ukraine

Ukraine is one of the two main parties involved in this conflict, with the other one being Russia. Their history goes way back to the existence of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was the second-most populous and powerful of the fifteen Soviet republics, trailing only Russia, and was home to most of the union's agricultural

production, defense industry, and military, including the Black Sea Fleet and portion of the nuclear weapons. Ukraine split off in 1991 which served as a final blow to the Union. In 2014 Russia annexed Crimea which commenced a large scale conflict between them leaving 14,000 dead between 2014 and 2021. There are many reasons why Russia wants Ukraine, including energy sources, trade, the region of Crimea among others. Since the conflict began, Ukraine has been engaged in a military and diplomatic struggle with Russia. Ukrainian forces have been fighting against pro-Russian separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine, and the conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths and the displacement of millions of people. Ukraine has also been seeking diplomatic support from the international community, particularly from the European Union and the United States. Ukraine has accused Russia of aggression and has called for sanctions against Russia. In addition, Ukraine has been seeking to join NATO as a means of strengthening its defense against Russia.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has been involved in the Ukraine-Russia conflict mainly through diplomatic, economic, and military support measures. The UK condemns Russia for the invasion and has sought means to support Ukraine diplomatically through the Minsk agreements, among other measures. Not only this, but they have imposed economic sanctions in Russia, provided financial aid to those affected by the conflict, and they have provided military training to Ukrainian forces. The UK has also increased their military presence in Eastern Europe to reinforce defense capabilities in Russia's neighboring countries.

France and Germany:

France and Germany have provided very similar efforts to the United Kingdom when it comes to this conflict. Their primary focus is on diplomatic efforts,

economic sanctions, and support for Ukraine. Their most notable contribution are their negotiations in the “Normandy format” which is a group of states working together to support Ukraine in this conflict. This group includes Germany, France, Ukraine, and Russia, and although tensions arose because of the invasion by Russia, the rest of the countries continued their peace talks to resolve the issue. France and Germany also imposed economic sanctions on Russia along with other nations and has provided financial assistance to Ukraine, including humanitarian aid for those affected by the conflict, economic stabilization and reform support, and funding for anti-corruption and governance initiatives.

United States

The United States has been actively involved in the Ukraine-Russia conflict in various ways, focusing on diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and military support for Ukraine. The US has advocated for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty in international forums, such as the United Nations, G7 meetings, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). When it comes to financial aid, the US has been one of the largest contributors to the Ukrainian cause with Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announcing that Ukraine had received more than \$12 billion worth of weapons and financial aid from Western countries since the start of Russia's invasion on 24 February 2022. The US has worked with Ukraine to establish Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and enhance the country's capacity to detect and respond to cyberattacks. The US has also supported efforts to strengthen Ukraine's critical infrastructure cybersecurity, such as the energy sector, which has been targeted by Russian-backed cyberattacks.

Russia

Russia is very heavily involved in this conflict as they are the ones who commenced the invasion on Ukraine in 2022. The issue dates back to 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea. Russian President Vladimir Putin cited the need to protect the rights of Russian citizens and Russian speakers in Crimea and southeast Ukraine. This was the first time that a European nation annexed a territory of another since World War II. Russian authorities, including Putin, have accused the US and NATO of repeatedly breaking agreements made in the early 1990s, not to extend the alliance into the former Soviet bloc. They see NATO's expansion during this difficult time for Russia as a humiliating imposition over which they have no control.

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
Nov. 2013	Ukraine's President Yanukovich suspends trade and association talks with the EU, opting to revive economic ties with Russia. Protests begin in Kyiv's Independence Square (Maidan).
Feb. 2014	Ukraine's parliament votes to impeach President Yanukovich, and he flees the country. Dozens of pro-Russia gunmen seize government buildings in the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and raise the Russian flag. The move comes a day after President Putin

put Russia's military on high alert.

March 2014
Russia's parliament approves President Putin's request for Russian forces to be used in Ukraine. President Putin signs a law formalizing Russia's takeover of Crimea from Ukraine.

May 2014
Pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine's easternmost areas, Donetsk and Luhansk, announce landslide victories in referendums on "self-rule". Ukraine and Western countries condemn the vote. Petro Poroshenko is elected president of Ukraine.

June 2014
Pro-Russian separatists shoot down a military transport plane in eastern Ukraine, killing all 49 Ukrainian service personnel on board. The EU signs a landmark partnership agreement with Ukraine.

Sep. 2014
Ukraine's government and pro-Russia rebels sign a truce in Minsk (referred to as the first Minsk Agreement) to end almost five months of fighting.

Feb. 2015
The second Minsk agreement is signed

June 2017
The Ukrainian Parliament votes to restore NATO membership as the country's strategic foreign policy objective.

Feb. 2019
An amendment to Ukraine's constitution, setting NATO membership as a strategic foreign and security policy, enters into force.

- April 2019 Volodymyr Zelenskyy is elected president of Ukraine in a landslide victory.
- Sep. 2019 Russia and Ukraine exchange dozens of prisoners captured in the wake of Moscow's annexation of Crimea and intervention in the Donbas. It is the first prisoner exchange since 2014.
- June 2020 Ukraine is granted NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status.
- April 2021 Russia announces the start of mass military drills, raising tensions with Ukraine amid Western concern over the risk of renewed fighting. Ukraine's defense minister says 110,000 Russian troops are massing on the border in 56 battalion sized tactical groups.
- Nov. 2021 President Zelenskyy says nearly 100,000 Russian troops have massed on the border with Ukraine.
- Dec. 2021 Russia presents a list of security demands in order to defuse the crisis over Ukraine, including a legally binding guarantee that Ukraine will never be accepted as a NATO Member State and that NATO will give up any military activity in eastern Europe and Ukraine.
- Jan. 2022 In a rare reference to intelligence gathering, the Foreign Office exposes evidence of a plot to install a pro-Russian government in Ukraine. The US places 8,500 troops on heightened alert to deploy to Europe as NATO reinforces its eastern borders with warships and

fighter jets.

Feb. 2022

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy introduces martial law and closes Ukraine's airspace. President Zelenskyy decrees a full military mobilization and all men aged 18-60 are forbidden from leaving Ukraine. The UN Security Council rejects a draft resolution intended to end Russia's military action after Russia uses its veto. Russian forces launch rocket attacks that kill "dozens" of civilians in Ukraine's second city, Kharkiv, and begin a renewed assault on the capital Kyiv. President Zelenskyy signs an official request for Ukraine to join the EU immediately under a special procedure.

March 2022

The UN General Assembly votes overwhelmingly for a resolution deploring Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calling for the immediate withdrawal of its forces. The UK and 37 other countries formally refer reports of atrocities committed in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The International Court of Justice orders Russia to stop its invasion, saying it has not seen any evidence to support the Kremlin's justification to attack Ukraine.

April 2022

The UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council.

June 2022

The EU approves the application of Ukraine to become a candidate country.

- Sep. 2022 President Putin signs “accession treaties” formalizing Russia’s illegal annexation of four occupied regions in Ukraine. Russia later vetoes a Western bid at the UN Security Council to condemn its annexations of Ukrainian territory.
- Nov. 2022 The European Parliament votes to designate Russia a “state sponsor of terrorism”.
- Feb. 2023 The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution calling for the ending of the war in Ukraine.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

The most important treaty to come from the first conflict between Ukraine and Russia over Crimea and other territorial disputes were the Minsk Agreements. These were a series of international accords that aimed to solve the Donbas war fought between the Russian separatists, the Ukrainian armed forces, and the Russian government forces. The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, made up of Ukraine, Russia, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), developed the Minsk Protocol in 2014. The agreement was signed on September 5, 2014, by members of the Trilateral Contact Group and the leaders of the self-declared Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR), following lengthy negotiations in Minsk, Belarus. After the first agreement failed to stop fighting, Minsk II, which included a ceasefire, the removal of heavy weapons from the front line, the release of prisoners of war, constitutional reform in Ukraine that granted self-government to some Donbas regions, and the return of control of the state border to the Ukrainian government, was reached. After the agreement was signed, the violence lessened, but it never totally stopped, and its terms were never fully carried out.

The United Nations has also tried to mediate peaceful negotiations between the parties involved in the conflict in question. At the beginning of the conflict in 2014, the General Assembly followed the annexation of Crimea by ratifying a resolution that established that Ukraine had rightful ownership over the territory and called all member states to respect the nation's sovereignty. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) was also created at this time to report on the human rights violations occurring as a result of the conflict, and the Ukraine Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was also initiated to address the damage caused by those violations, as it provides victims with food, shelter, and medical care. Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council imposed several sanctions in an attempt to mitigate the violence going on between Russia and Ukraine. The first were the sanctions on Russia because of its annexation of Crimea in March 2014, which was included along with a call for the immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Crimea and a condemnation of Russia in Resolution 2202.

Finally, the European Union (EU) and other countries like the United States have also imposed their own sanctions on Russia to deteriorate their forces through economic goods. The EU imposed a travel ban and asset freezes on Russian individuals with ties to the conflict or supporting the separatist movement in eastern Ukraine. They also imposed restrictions on imports and exports on the sectors of finance, energy, and arms. Meanwhile, Canada enacted legislation which targeted the Russian economy and raise the prices of the goods traded with the country.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been attempts to resolve the Russia-Ukraine conflict since 2014 however they have been largely unsuccessful as the conflict is still ongoing. The

first attempt to solve this issue was the Minsk protocol in 2014. The Minsk Protocol was drawn up by the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, which consisted of representatives from Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE. This agreement sought to implement a ceasefire to both sides to reduce the violence, however it did not work out which led to the implementation of the Minsk II agreement which was a revised version of the first one. This version in addition to the ceasefire demand it also requested the withdrawal of heavy weapons, decentralization of power, and prisoner exchanges. Although both of these agreements lessened the violence, it was still present, and later on when Russia officially commenced its invasion of Ukraine the agreements were completely disregarded. Both sides were constantly blaming each other for the infringement of these agreements, which only led to more violence. These agreements were certainly an attempt at solving the issue at hand, however they were not effective because they were never fully implemented, the authority they had was not enough to disincentivize Russia from continuing their assault. The other main attempt by the international community to solve this issue is the numerous sanctions imposed on Russia for their invasion, this measure did affect Russia significantly, but it was not enough to stop the conflict. The United States, European Union, and other countries imposed a series of economic sanctions on Russia. These sanctions targeted individuals, businesses, and sectors of the Russian economy, including finance, energy, and defense. Both of these attempts were not successful, in part because of Russia's status as a world superpower, which made the international community reluctant to fully commit to resolving this issue.

Possible Solutions

There are several solutions that could be instituted in order to solve the territorial disputes between Russia and Ukraine. Diplomatic negotiations are the most common, but also tend to be the most effective. The United Nations, the European Union, or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) could mediate efforts for world leaders to peacefully express their

grievances and find a compromise so that all parties involved can be satisfied or sanctioned accordingly. This could include a territorial accord to either create a shared government system over territories like Crimea or an agreement to retreat from the territory in a set number of years.

Ceasefire agreements could also be instituted to prevent any more violence from taking place in the Ukrainian territory and perhaps pave the way for future negotiations. Although they have already been implemented, reevaluating and reestablishing international and diplomatic sanctions on Russia to pressure them into de-escalating the conflict and reaching a peaceful settlement. In order to save the civilians caught in the middle, peacekeeping missions could be deployed by the United Nations to monitor the situation, deescalate local conflict, and provide medical and psychological aid to these victims.

Lastly, to help build trust between the countries, confidence-building measures could be established to reduce tensions through the exchange of war prisoners, reopening border crossings, and increasing communications between their respective world leaders, and subsequently, increase cooperation to promote the joining of international organizations without the need for conflict.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

The Russia-Ukraine conflict directly intersects with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16 which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. The ongoing conflict between these two nations completely disrupts the peace and inclusivity of their respective societies while harming the stability in the region. It has raised concern over human rights, specifically those regarding civilians, and

it places strain on the justice systems because of the topic of accountability in this issue. All of these conflicts are a threat to SDG 16 because this goal emphasizes that peace is a requirement for prosperity, so a resolution to this dispute is imperative to maintain a sustainable development of the world.

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Appendix

- I. Minsk Protocol
 - A. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/UA_1409_05_MinskCeasfire_en.pdf
- II. Translation of Minsk II Agreement
 - A. <https://horlogedelinconscient.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Minsk-2-Full-text-UNIAN.pdf>

