

Forum: Security Council

Issue: The Question of the Situation in Ukraine

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Introduction

The situation in Ukraine is one of the most prominent issues on the agenda of the Security Council at the moment. The roots of the current conflict can be traced back to the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014¹. Since then, Russia has maintained control of the peninsula amid ever-rising tensions in the east of Ukraine. At the time of the annexation, the international community called repeatedly on Russia to de-escalate the situation and cease control of the region, but it did not do so. Instead, President Putin and the Russian-backed Crimean government have continued to absorb the peninsula into Russia and increase Russian military presence in the region.

The invasion began on 24 February 2022, with Russian forces attacking Kyiv, Kharkiv, Mariupol and other cities from multiple directions while Ukraine mobilised its military and sought emergency international support. Russia stated that its goal in the invasion was to “demilitarise and denazify” Ukraine. Intense urban fighting and sieges caused widespread destruction, including damage to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. Throughout 2022, Russia consolidated control over occupied areas and formally annexed four Ukrainian regions, while the EU and other Western states provided substantial military aid and imposed escalating sanctions. In 2023, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for President Putin, and Russia reportedly moved tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, reflecting heightened security concerns. Fighting continued along extended front lines, with both sides strengthening their defensive and offensive positions.⁴⁵

Into 2024 and 2025, the conflict became a protracted war of attrition: Russia held elections in occupied regions and Ukraine deepened international partnerships. Sustained military and diplomatic support from the West maintained Ukraine’s resilience while sanctions and strikes continued to pressure Russia. In 2025, American involvement has seen several versions of a peace plan take shape. Although a resolution is certainly some distance away, a peace agreement seems closer than ever, with President Zelenskyy willing to make concessions in order to achieve it and Russia also seeing progress in talks.^{46 47}



Military control of Ukraine, 21 December 2025⁴⁷

Definition of Key Terms

International Armed Conflict

A situation of sustained hostilities between the armed forces of two or more states. The ongoing hostilities between Ukraine and the Russian Federation since February 2022 are widely categorised as an international armed conflict, with both parties bound by international humanitarian law applicable to such conflicts, including the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols.³

Territorial Integrity

The principle under international law that a state's internationally recognised borders should not be altered by force. In the context of the situation in Ukraine, this term is referenced in multiple UN resolutions affirming that Ukraine's territorial integrity within its recognised borders should be respected.⁴

Internally Displaced Person (IDP)

An individual who has been forced to flee their home due to armed conflict or violence but remains within their country's borders. Large numbers of internally displaced persons have resulted from the hostilities in Ukraine since 2014 and especially after February 2022.⁵

Refugee

A person who has crossed an international border due to well-founded fear of persecution, conflict, or violence. The conflict in Ukraine has produced one of the largest refugee movements in recent history, with millions of Ukrainians seeking refuge abroad.⁶

Military Occupation

The effective control by the armed forces of a foreign power over territory that is not under that power's sovereign authority. Certain regions of Ukraine have been subject to military occupation as defined under international law during the course of the conflict.

Explanation of the Question

Background

The Ukraine crisis began in early 2014, following politically turbulent events in Kyiv that replaced the pro-Russian president and shifted Ukraine's foreign policy. In February–March 2014, Russian forces took control of Crimea and annexed it illegally, followed by the declaration of independence by armed separatists in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This sparked a war in the Donbas region, where by early 2022, some 15,000 people were estimated to have been lost to the fighting since the outbreak of the war in 2014. Many ceasefires and attempts at a political solution (for example, the Minsk accords of 2014-15) were unsuccessful, and skirmishes at the contact line continued into 2021. Toward the end of 2021, a build-up of Russian military forces close to the borders began. On 21 February 2022, President Putin recognized the two breakaway "People's Republics" and sent Russian troops into those areas; three days later, on 24 February 2022, he ordered a "special military operation" against Ukraine. Russian forces have attacked Ukraine from several sides with missiles to cities including Kyiv.⁷

Since 24 February 2022, the conflict has escalated dramatically. Ukrainian forces defended Kyiv through March 2022 and forced a major Russian withdrawal from northern Ukraine. Heavy fighting has occurred across the country. In spring 2022, Russia besieged key cities (notably Mariupol), and moved forces into eastern and southern regions. Throughout 2022, Ukraine launched counter-attacks – for example retaking territory around Kharkiv in September and liberating the city of Kherson by November. In September 2022 Russia staged referendums and declared the annexation of parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia. These acts were widely condemned: the UN General Assembly in October 2022 overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning Russia's attempted annexations.⁸ Large-scale hostilities have continued in 2023–2024, with gains and losses on both sides but with front lines remaining

contested. Across the war, Ukrainian and Russian forces have exchanged hundreds of drone and missile strikes, and many towns and industrial areas have been destroyed.

International Response

The invasion drew immediate international condemnation. On 2–3 March 2022 the UN General Assembly met in an emergency special session (called under the “Uniting for Peace” mechanism when the Security Council is deadlocked) and adopted a resolution deplored Russia’s invasion and demanding withdrawal of its forces.⁹¹⁰ Many subsequent UN resolutions have reiterated Ukraine’s sovereignty and called for peace: for example, in November 2022 the General Assembly voted to affirm that Russia “must bear the legal consequences” for damage caused in Ukraine. In February 2023, on the one-year anniversary of the invasion, another UN resolution again demanded Russia’s withdrawal; 141 countries voted in favour, while only six (Belarus, North Korea, Eritrea, Mali, Nicaragua and Syria) voted against it and 32 abstained.¹¹

Beyond the UN, Ukraine’s governments have secured major support from Western states. The EU, UK, United States and other allies have imposed successive sanctions on Russia and on Belarus (which allowed its territory to be used by Russia for military purposes). By the end of 2025, Western sanctions had immobilised around €290 billion of Russian state assets and finances.¹² Many Russian banks were cut off from the SWIFT system (which is used to transfer money internationally) and export controls have targeted key Russian industries, especially defence, energy and finance. At the same time, Western countries provided Ukraine with military aid on an unprecedented scale. Since the start of the war, NATO and its allies have delivered billions of euros worth of equipment, ammunition and training.¹³ In December 2025, the EU approved a €90 billion loan to help Ukraine continue its military defence. Diplomatically, Western leaders have continually voiced strong support: EU leaders granted Ukraine candidate status in June 2022 and the Kremlin’s actions have also prompted Finland and Sweden to apply for NATO membership.¹⁴

Humanitarian consequences

The war has caused a massive humanitarian crisis. Millions of civilians have been displaced. UNHCR and other agencies report that as of early 2025 about 3.7 million Ukrainians are internally displaced within Ukraine, and roughly 6.9 million have fled abroad as refugees. According to UN estimates, over 12 million people in Ukraine – roughly one in three of the remaining population – are in need of humanitarian assistance.¹⁵ Active combat and bombardment have produced large numbers of casualties. UN monitors and NGOs have verified tens of thousands of civilian deaths and injuries. According to UNICEF, more than 2,520 Ukrainian children had been killed or injured in the first three years of the war. Attacks on civilian infrastructure have been extensive: By early 2025 around 780 health facilities and 1,600 schools had been damaged or destroyed.¹⁶ Millions of homes have also been ruined; about 2.5 million residences (13 percent of all housing) are estimated damaged or destroyed. Humanitarian agencies have described large-scale shortages of safe drinking water, electricity and medical care. In 2023 alone, the Red

Cross spent €264 million on aid for Ukraine, making it by far their largest single expenditure that year, reflecting the scale of the humanitarian emergency.¹⁷

Geopolitical implications

The war has profoundly affected international security and alliances. Most Western countries characterize Russia's action as a violation of the UN Charter and have strengthened their own defences. NATO has reinforced its eastern flank, and military cooperation with Ukraine has increased. EU leaders have emphasised unity and also moved to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian energy – for example by cutting purchases of Russian gas and oil.¹⁸ Global food and energy markets have also been disrupted because Ukraine and Russia were major grain exporters, and the conflict contributed to wider food price spikes. In contrast to the Western bloc, some countries outside Europe have pursued more neutral stances. Russia's traditional allies (Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Syria) have expressed support for Russia. Major powers like China have abstained or taken measured positions, reiterating principles of sovereignty while calling for negotiations. Other states in Asia, Africa and Latin America have varied responses, with many abstaining on UN votes.¹⁹

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

Russian Federation

Russia is the aggressor in the conflict and wields vast military might – it has by far the world's largest nuclear arsenal (about 5,580 warheads, ~47% of global total).²⁰ The Russian government steadfastly denies allegations of war crimes and portrays itself as countering hostile Western actions. Russia blames NATO expansion and Western interference for the fighting. Russian officials deflect criticism by citing past US military interventions, and by warning that anyone supporting Ukraine (even indirectly) risks retaliation, including with nuclear weapons.

United States of America (USA)

The USA is Ukraine's largest external supporter. US leaders have strongly condemned Russia's invasion, calling it a violation of international law, and have mobilized massive aid for Ukraine's defence. Since 2014, and especially after 2022, Congress has approved tens of billions of dollars in military, economic and humanitarian assistance to Kyiv. The Biden (and later Trump) administration repeatedly announced new aid packages (weapons, training, financial loans) and sanctions. For example, in late 2025 the US reportedly prepared further sanctions targeting key sectors of the Russian economy, if Moscow refused to end the war.²² US officials are also coordinating with allies to use frozen Russian assets to buy weapons for Ukraine. The US is also a very active player in the peace process, something that has accelerated under the leadership of President Trump.

China

China's official stance is complex. Beijing has not condemned Russia's actions; instead it calls for restraint by all sides and for peace talks. Chinese leaders have abstained from UN resolutions criticizing Russia, and refused to join Western sanctions. China frames the war as a diplomatic issue: President Xi and Foreign Minister Wang speak of playing a "constructive role" and of continuing "strategic communications" with Moscow. In late 2025 China hosted talks with Russia on Ukraine, emphasizing that "Beijing will continue to play a constructive role in resolving the Ukraine crisis", while deliberately avoiding language that would directly criticize Putin.²³ Economically, China remains one of Russia's few major buyers (especially of oil), although it has reportedly begun to modestly cut back purchases under pressure. Chinese officials stress the need for a negotiated, binding peace. In practice, China has so far sided with Russia's demand for diplomacy, and has not provided lethal aid to Ukraine. Many analysts note China is "torn" – formally allied with Russia, but also interested in stability – and is carefully balancing by calling for peace without challenging Moscow's leadership.

United Kingdom (UK)

The UK government vehemently condemns Russia's invasion. The UK's official policy statement says Britain "condemns the Russian government's unprovoked and premeditated invasion of Ukraine". The UK was among the first to join sanctions; indeed, it has sanctioned over 1,600 individuals and entities (including dozens of oligarchs) to cut off funds for what it terms "Russia's war machine", and has coordinated G7 measures like banning Russian banks from SWIFT. Britain is also a major military backer: it has delivered billions of pounds in aid to Ukraine (over £9.3 billion of economic, humanitarian and defence support by late 2025), including tanks, missiles, air defence systems, and training to tens of thousands of Ukrainian troops. The UK works closely with NATO and EU allies to keep up support for Kyiv. In addition, the UK opened visa and sponsorship routes for Ukrainians, and provides humanitarian assistance. In short, UK leaders view Russia's actions as unacceptable aggression and have mobilized broad measures (sanctions, arms supplies, refugee programs) to support Ukraine and punish Russia.²⁴

France

France, a permanent UN Security Council member with Europe's largest army, strongly backs Ukraine. French President Emmanuel Macron has consistently condemned Russia's breach of international law and has said he is prepared to bolster NATO's eastern flank, even hinting at stationing troops in nearby NATO countries. In October 2025 France co-authored a high-profile statement with EU and NATO allies calling to ramp up the pressure on Russia's economy and use frozen Russian state assets to help Ukraine.²⁵ The statement declared that Putin "continues to choose violence and destruction" and that Ukraine must be in a position of strength to negotiate. France contributes direct aid: it has sent military equipment (e.g. Caesar howitzers, anti-air missiles) to Ukraine and participates in training Ukrainian forces.

French diplomacy also works to keep the EU and NATO united against Russia. Thus France's view is that Russia's war must be resisted by combined Western pressure and that Ukraine's sovereignty be fully restored, even as Europe seeks to engage diplomatically with Moscow where possible.

Poland

Poland has taken a staunchly pro-Ukraine stance. As Ukraine's neighbor and first asylum country, Poland has already welcomed over 2 million Ukrainian refugees, providing them with housing, access to work, healthcare and education.²⁶ Polish officials repeatedly condemn Russian attacks on civilians: at a 2025 UN Security Council session, Poland's UN ambassador decried the latest missile assaults on Ukrainian cities and called for Russia to be fully accountable for violations of international law and human rights. Domestically, Poland passed special laws giving Ukrainians rights similar to citizens and mobilized large-scale humanitarian aid. Poland has also been a vocal advocate for continued Western support; it has pledged multi-faceted support for Ukraine "for as long as it takes". In summary, Poland views the war as a direct threat to its own security and champions a tough line: it calls for punishing Russia (including war crimes trials) and for strong NATO/EU assistance to ensure Ukraine's defence and eventual recovery.²⁷

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

NATO, the Western defence alliance, has unequivocally sided with Ukraine. NATO has declared Russia's assault "the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security in decades" and branded it a "war of aggression" that violates the UN Charter. The North Atlantic Council has reaffirmed unwavering solidarity with Ukraine's government and people, paying tribute to lives lost and deplored the destruction caused by Russia. Crucially, NATO has placed full responsibility on Russia for this conflict, stating that Moscow "bears full responsibility" for violating international law. While NATO countries are not engaged in combat themselves, the alliance has massively increased military readiness and funneled aid through member states (e.g. coordinating arms shipments). NATO also expanded its troop deployments in eastern Europe as deterrence, and launched the "Coalition of the Willing" for Ukraine.²⁸

UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees)

UNHCR has been deeply involved in the Ukraine crisis. It coordinates the international refugee response to what the agency calls "the fastest growing and largest displacement crisis in Europe since World War II".²⁹ UNHCR works with governments (especially in Poland, Romania, etc.) and NGOs to provide shelter, legal status, and services for fleeing Ukrainians. UNHCR's view is that refugees must be protected (with humanitarian aid and access to work/schools) and eventually be able to return home safely. It calls on donors to fund regional support plans (UN appeals billions yearly) and on states to keep borders open. Overall, UNHCR emphasizes sustaining hope and assistance for refugees, insisting that the international community "stay the course" in helping Ukrainians uprooted by the war.³⁰

Amnesty International

Amnesty International (NGO) and similar human rights groups document the war's human toll and demand accountability. Amnesty has issued repeated reports accusing Russian forces of deliberately attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure. For instance, in late 2024 it verified numerous Russian airstrikes on hospitals, schools and residential buildings that killed children, calling these attacks "war crimes".³¹ Amnesty urges that those responsible for unlawful strikes be brought to justice and that victims receive redress. Human Rights Watch (HRW) similarly found that in 2025 Russian missile and drone strikes on cities were indiscriminate and disproportionate, violating international humanitarian law. These NGOs are critical of any international talks that ignore such crimes.

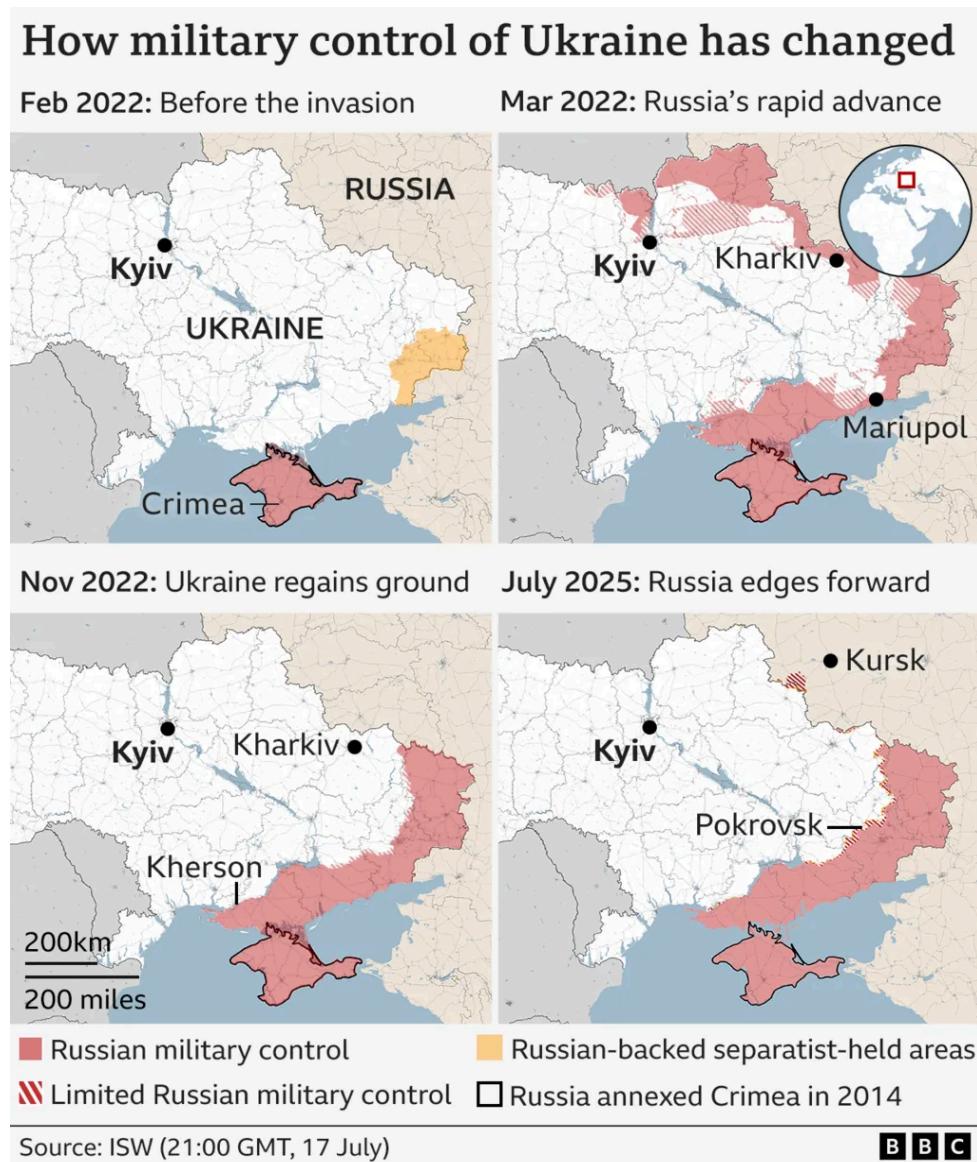
Timeline of Events¹

Date	Description
24 February 2022	Russia announces it will carry out "a special military operation" in Ukraine.
16 March 2022	The International Court of Justice orders Russia to halt its invasion, calling it unjustified.
7 April 2022	The UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.
7 June 2022	The Russian parliament ends the European Court of Human Rights' jurisdiction in Russia.
12 October 2022	The UN General Assembly passes a resolution to not recognise the Ukrainian regions claimed by Russia.
14 November 2022	The UN General Assembly calls for Russia to be held accountable for the invasion and to pay reparations to Ukraine.
26 December 2022	Ukraine calls for Russia to be removed as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, which would also remove its veto power.
17 March 2023	The International Criminal Court issues an arrest warrant for President Putin.
12 September 2023	North Korean leader Kim Jong-un discusses a possible arms deal with Russia for the war in Ukraine.
17 March 2024	President Putin wins a presidential election, giving him a fifth term in office. Voting also took place in the four annexed regions of Ukraine.
20 January 2025	Donald Trump becomes US president.
2 March 2025	British Prime Minister Keir Starmer announces a "coalition of the willing", 18 countries that are willing to provide peacekeeping forces once a peace deal is agreed.
16 May + 2 June 2025	Russian and Ukrainian delegations meet in Istanbul for the first direct talks between the two sides since March 2022.
15 August 2025	President Trump meets President Putin to discuss a resolution of the conflict in

Ukraine.

19 November 2025 A peace plan to end the war in Ukraine is revealed by the US and Russia.

27 November 2025 President Putin renews threats to seize more Ukrainian territory by force.



UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- **UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262**, 27 March 2014, *Territorial integrity of Ukraine* (A/RES/68/262)³²
- **UN Security Council Resolution 2166**, 21 July 2014, *Threats to international peace and security* (S/RES/2166)³³

- **UN General Assembly Resolution 73/194**, 17 December 2018, *Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine* (A/RES/73/194)³⁴
- **UN Security Council Resolution 2623**, 27 February 2022, (S/RES/2623)
(Calling an Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly)³⁵
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1**, 2 March 2022, *Aggression against Ukraine* (A/RES/ES-11/1)³⁶
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/2**, 24 March 2022, *Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine* (A/RES/ES-11/2)³⁷
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/3**, 7 April 2022, *Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council* (A/RES/ES-11/3)³⁸
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/4**, 12 October 2022, *Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations* (A/RES/ES-11/4)³⁹
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/5**, 14 November 2022, *Furtherance of remedy and reparation for aggression against Ukraine* (A/RES/ES-11/5)⁴⁰
- **UN General Assembly Resolution ES-11/6**, 23 February 2023, *Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine* (A/RES/ES-11/6)⁴¹
- **UN Security Council Resolution 2774**, 24 February 2025, (S/RES/2774)⁴²

Possible Solutions

Ending the war in Ukraine is unlikely to come from a single dramatic breakthrough. More realistically, it would require a coordinated mix of political, military, and economic measures that slowly change the incentives on all sides. A logical starting point would be a credible and enforceable ceasefire along the current line of contact. While this would not settle territorial disputes, it could significantly reduce civilian suffering and create space for structured negotiations without forcing immediate political recognition of occupied areas.

Security guarantees are central to any lasting settlement. Ukraine has repeatedly reiterated its desire to join NATO, saying that security guarantees from western military powers would be “an opportunity to prevent another wave of Russian aggression”.⁴³ However, President Putin continues to say that Ukraine’s aim of joining NATO is a threat to Russia’s national security.

Although an all-out military victory by one side or the other is very unlikely to be swift or without great bloodshed, a diplomatic route out is still viable. However, negotiations are complicated by the fact that

Russia and Ukraine have very different ideas of what “peace” actually means, and therefore any peace deal will naturally have to include major compromises. Ukraine, along with a lot of the west, has said that the US, especially President Trump, play a crucial role in achieving any sort of diplomatic deal.⁴⁴

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