

The Russian invasion

Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, marking an abrupt escalation of the dispute between the two countries, which has been underway since 2014. The war caused the greatest refugee reception crisis in Europe since the end of World War II: the armed intervention was preceded by a protracted Russian military buildup that began in spring 2021, motivated by Russian President Vladimir Putin on the basis of fears of Ukraine joining NATO and followed by military exercises. A few days before the invasion, Russia recognized the independence of two self-proclaimed states in the Donbass region, within the borders of Ukraine, the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic, and on February 21, in violation of the Budapest Memorandum on Ukraine's security guarantees, it sent its armed forces there to garrison its territory. The next day, the Federation Council unanimously authorized President Vladimir Putin to use military force outside the border. Numerous warnings of an impending invasion had already been issued in the media as of October 2021, but senior Russian officials had constantly denied planning an invasion. The war that broke out between Russia and Ukraine has its roots in a protracted diplomatic and military crisis between the two countries. According to Kissinger, the geographical situation of Russia (without natural borders except for the Arctic and the Pacific Ocean) has allowed it to develop for many centuries a foreign policy consisting in expanding the state in every direction, as described by Afanasy Ordin-Nashchokin, minister of Alexei I; over the years, this has fueled the desire to regain the sphere of influence lost with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and to secure strategic positions such as Crimea, which overlooks the Black Sea.

The Ukrainian revolution of 2014, which ended on February 23 with the flight to Sevastopol of Viktor Yanukovych and his dismissal, and the consequent passage from a pro-Russian executive to a pro-Western one, had determined two fundamental facts: the approach of Ukraine to the Western countries (EU, NATO), through ever closer military cooperation, such as joining the EOP program in 2020, which exacerbated Russia's "encirclement syndrome"; the military occupation of Crimea on February 28, initially started with unidentified forces, and the rapid annexation of the peninsula to Russia, which was followed on April 6 by the armed secession of the Donbass region and numerous clashes in eastern Ukraine between the Russian and Ukrainian communities. The most serious conflicts took place on May 2 in the city of Odessa, between pro-Russians and Ukrainian nationalist groups belonging to the Pravyj Sektor party and neo-nazis linked to the Metalist ultras groups, which eventually culminated in the arson set at the house of the unions, with the death of at least 42 pro-Russian militants.

Historical data source: "Wikipedia".