



**EAST WEST UNIVERSITY**

**The Ukraine Crisis and Bangladesh's Response**

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# **The Ukraine Crisis and Bangladesh's Response**

## **Abstract:**

In the term paper, we have shown the background of the tension and war between Russia and Ukraine, which was a part of the former Soviet Union. We explained how Russia and Ukraine, two brotherly nations have descended into an inevitably recurring conflict threatening global peace and security. We also discussed the viewpoints of all the other nations of the world and their role in this crisis.

## **Introduction:**

Two neighbors, who share the same ancestry, a common history, speak nearly the same language, follow the same church yet often seem to find themselves at odds with each other. On 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Kyiv to overrun Ukraine and depose its government. [1]President Putin has spoken of Russia's invasion as a "noble" cause. Most of the nations around the world took their stand, while some the countries decided to stay back.

## A Brief History:

Both Russian and Ukrainian share the same ancestry dating back over a millennium specifically Kyiv the current capital of Ukraine is the historic home to the first Eastern Slavic state in history.

In the 18th Century, the Moscow-based Tsars included Ukraine as part of their empire. Wary of the rise of Ukrainian nationalism by the 1840s the tsars prohibited the practice of the Ukrainian language to ensure political control and unity. Ukraine is the breadbasket for Europe which made it very important for Russia.

After the tsars were dethroned in 1922, Russia became what is known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had plans for mass agricultural and industrial plans. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin decided to collectivize agriculture in 1929. Ukrainian peasants were against this decision and they revolted. The 2nd World war deepened the schism between Russia and Ukraine. During World War 2, many Ukrainians fought alongside Nazis against their common enemy Russia. In 1945 at the end of the world war, Russia emerged victoriously and Ukrainians found themselves at the bitter end of Joseph Stalin's iron fist. Stalin carried out mass deportation of Ukrainians to Siberian work camps known as 'gulag'. [2] Stalin responsible for the death of millions carried out what is known as 'Holodomor', a man-made famine that caused the death of almost 3.9 million.

[3]Raphael Lemkin, an expert in international criminal law identified the Holodomor as "the classic example of Soviet genocide." At the time of the Holodomor, the Soviet government and the Communist Party denied that a famine was taking place and refused any outside relief efforts. it was impossible to speak publicly, discuss openly, or teach about the Holodomor as if it never happened until the late 1980s.

### **America-Russia cold war and independence of Ukraine:**

Although America and the Soviet Union were allies in the 2nd world war, as soon as the war ended and the allies won, America and the Soviet Union started fighting each other to become the next superpower in the world. This clash resulted in the cold war between these two nations. In 1991 Communist Russia crumbled when the west emerged victorious in the cold war. Ukraine took the golden opportunity and declared its independence alongside numerous newly founded republics, breaking away from their communist nightmare.

### **Post independent Ukraine:**

[4]In December 1991 Russian president Boris Yeltsin recognized Ukraine right after it declared its independence from USSR. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev who was a Ukrainian decedent gifted Crimea, the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual black sea peninsula to Ukraine in 1954.

Crucially Moscow recognized Ukraine's border including Crimea. Russia and Ukraine were still at odds. But an argument started almost immediately over the control of the Black Sea.

In 2004 half a million Ukrainian staged the protest to oppose an election result many believed had been rigged in favor of a pro-western candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. In 2008, as Ukraine's new leaders worked on turning the country to face the west, Yushchenko sought a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) for Ukraine, a major step toward joining the alliance. The US supported the idea. But Russian President Putin saw this as a western attempt to contain Russia and he immediately threatened Ukraine with a nuclear weapon. In 2010 Victor Yanukovych was elected to power, a pro-Russian candidate, in the same year the Ukrainian parliament withdrew its Candidacy from NATO, and by 2013 it's an association agreement with European Union. Ukrainian people didn't like this decision and the "Maiden Revolution" or "Revolution of Dignity" took place in which 77 people died. A month after this clash Russian paramilitary group took over the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas.



The Maidens' last stand

A ceasefire took place in presence of other European countries. Back in Ukraine, a pro-western businessman Petro Poroshenko won another set of an election. With a parliamentary majority established Ukraine resigned an association with the EU in 2017 which deepened the schism between these two nations.

## Why Russia Invaded Ukraine in 2022:

Vladimir Putin unleashed the biggest war in Europe since World War Two with the justification that modern, Western-leaning Ukraine was a constant threat and Russia could not feel "safe, develop and exist". Some analyst believes the reason behind this invasion was post world war expansion of NATO, while others believe that Putin's ambition to restore former Russia led to this war.

NATO was formed to contain the communist Soviet Union after the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war. For Russia's leader, the West's 30-member defensive military alliance has one aim - to split society in Russia and ultimately destroy it.

Ahead of the war, he demanded that NATO turn the clock back to 1997 and reverse its eastward expansion, removing its forces and military infrastructure from member states that joined the alliance in 1997 and not deploying "strike weapons near Russia's borders". That means Central Europe, Eastern Europe ,and the Baltics.

The Russian leader's initial aim was to overrun Ukraine and depose its government, ending for good its desire to join the Western defensive alliance NATO. He failed to capture the capital Kyiv and after a month of setbacks turned his ambitions to Ukraine's east and south. Launching



the invasion on 24 February he told the Russian people his goal was to "demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine", to protect people subjected to what he called eight years of bullying and genocide by Ukraine's government. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke of freeing Ukraine from oppression. Ukraine's democratically elected president, Volodymyr Zelensky, said "the enemy has designated me as target number one; my family is target number two".

Russia's leader refused to call it an invasion or a war and made doing so a criminal offense. Instead, it can only be termed a "special military operation".

### Civilian Crisis:

In the Ukraine conflict, reports of civilian casualties have dominated the headlines as Russian troops siege cities around the country. Civilian buildings have been hit by Russian forces, with hospitals and residential buildings shelled, causing thousands of civilian casualties and massive human suffering. Russia has denied they are deliberately targeting civilians and insisted in some cases that enemy fighters were hiding within the buildings. Russia is also reported to have used unguided "dumb" bombs in Ukraine, which greatly increase the risk of missing targets and hitting civilian infrastructure.

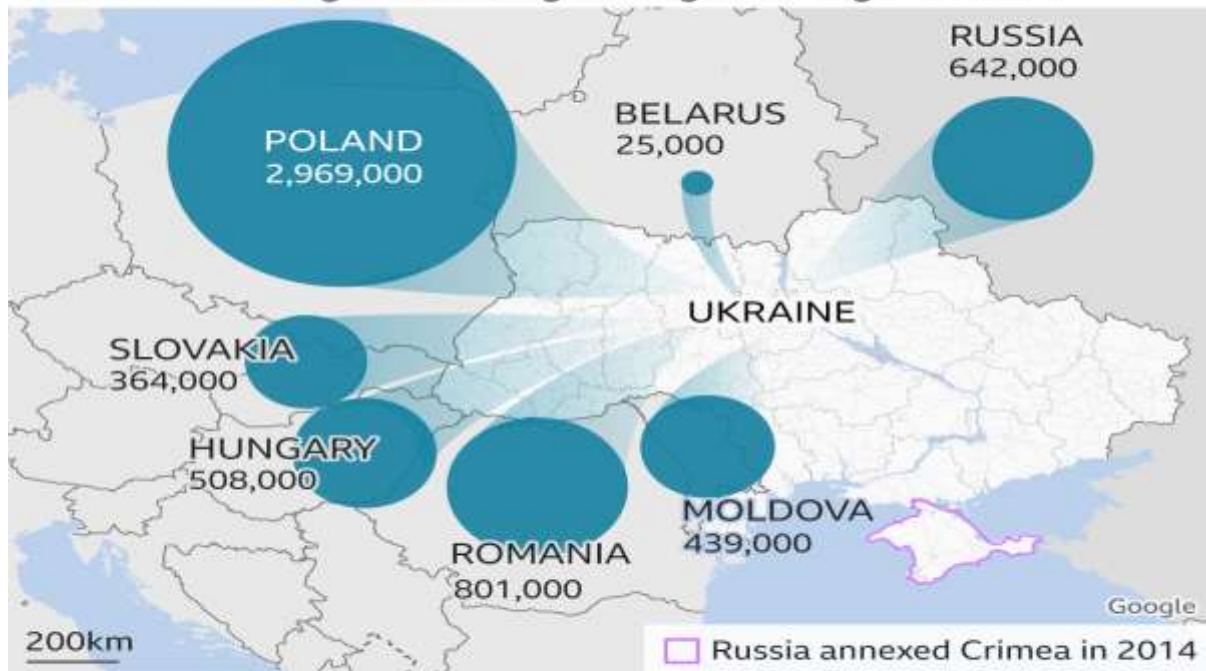
Fighting a war in 2022 means that evidence of what is happening, where, and by whom is readily available to a global audience. Everything from advanced satellite imagery to mobile phone videos from regular civilians captures troop movements, airstrikes, or the positioning of landmines, making it nearly impossible for Russian troops to obscure the harm they cause to civilians.

There are consequences for breaking the rules of war. War crimes are documented and investigated by governments and international courts, such as the International Criminal Court. Individuals can also be prosecuted for war crimes, according to the ICRC.

It is believed that almost a million people fled from their homeland and took refuge in neighboring countries. Women, children, and old people were evacuated from the border areas. Most of the young civilians took over the weapon in their hands to protect their motherland from the invaders. The UN, which is working alongside other organizations to provide help to people in Ukraine, says it is offering humanitarian assistance "wherever necessary and possible". This includes giving cash to people for basics like food and rent, delivering supplies from west to east, including food and tarpaulins for homes damaged by shelling, providing folding beds to people in bomb shelters, setting up reception and transit points for internally-displaced people.

## More than 5.3m people have fled Ukraine

Number of refugees arriving in neighbouring countries



Note: The sum of country data is higher than the total number of refugees fleeing Ukraine as it includes people crossing the Romania-Moldova border

Source: UNHCR, 27 April

BBC

About 12 million people are also thought to be stranded or unable to leave areas affected by the fighting.

### World's view of Russia-Ukraine conflict:

This war already divided the world into 2 major sides, one that supports the invasion of Russia and the other one which opposes this invasion and puts heavy sanctions on Russia.

There is another team that is refraining themselves from taking any side and playing a neutral role in this conflict and want this war to end as soon as possible.

The Chinese government used this conflict for their benefit and to criticize the west. "The only thing more dangerous is the pursuit of hegemony and the oppression of others who resist the course of history," Xi said. Although he did not name the United States, it was clear that this message was directed at Washington. In the view of the Chinese leadership, the United States and NATO have not overcome a Cold War mindset. In this context, Russia is permanently threatened by NATO.

In this conflict, countries that were once part of the Soviet Union, including Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kyrgyzstan, are standing by Russia.

### UN General Assembly:

On 7th April 2021 UN held a general assembly to suspend Russia from the human rights council. The vote took place on the anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and the Ukrainian ambassador drew parallels

with this dark page in recent history. The resolution received a two-thirds majority of those voting, minus abstentions, in the 193-member Assembly, with 93 nations voting in favor and 24 against. Fifty-eight abstained from the process including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many middle eastern countries. Russia, China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Vietnam, were among those who voted against it.

Russia quitted the council before it ended. The United States was the last to speak in this day-long assembly.

### **Role of Bangladesh:**

For Bangladesh, its foreign policy is telling from its abstention in the first UN General Assembly vote for the Ukrainian resolution to its voting in favor of the second UNGA resolution. And whether Bangladesh will consider seeking alternative payment methods to sustain its trade with Russia remains a pressing issue.

Since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, two UN General Assembly votes – consisting of 193 members – took place on 2 March and then again on 25 March. While Bangladesh, including India and China, and some others, abstained on 2 March, Bangladesh voted in favor of the Ukrainian resolution 23 days later.

"There hasn't been any change in [Bangladesh's] policy really," said Shahab Enam Khan, a professor of International Relations at Jahangirnagar University, "these two resolutions are basically different things."

One of the main, if not the most vital, points of concern for Bangladesh in relation to Russia is the country's Rooppur Power Plant. Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh, Alexander Mantytskiy, recently assured that operations would continue unaffected.

### Endgame:

Ukraine said Russia was pounding the entire front line in the eastern Donetsk region with rockets, artillery, mortar bombs and aircraft.

Though Ukraine is not a member country of NATO, Ukraine is getting support from US and western European Countries. The reason behind this support is the interest Ukrainian interest to join the NATO.

NATO and US already sent out artillery, anti-aircraft missiles etc.

Russia has said the arrival of Western arms into Ukraine means it is now fighting a "proxy war" against NATO. According to western leaders Russia already lost the war, because Russia failed to gain its goal which is topple down Zelensky Government and make a Russian supportive government in Ukraine.

## **Discussion:**

The Russia-Ukraine war is the largest scale war after the 2nd world war and its consequences will be more devastating if not resolved with the highest priority. Many soldiers are dying on both sides of the border. Most importantly innocent people who have no connection with this conflict are suffering. The experience has left them traumatized. Many people in the Donbas region have lost their loved ones, while others have been injured. The world economy is getting worse and worse. Many countries indeed depend on Russia for oil and many other natural resources. Putting sanctions on Russia may result in making them fall back of the war, but the world economy will be heavily impacted. World leaders have to leave back cold war mind set up to resolve this crisis which has made Ukraine paralyzed.

## **Conclusion:**

It is now high time to resolve the Ukrainian Crisis. Each nation needs to compromise and stop getting influenced by others and coexist. Many other nations will be benefited from this war and wouldn't want to end this war. But both Ukraine and Russia need to build up mutual understanding and end the war as soon as possible. Also, the UN needs to act and interfere accordingly to minimize the war damage and secure

the safety of Ukrainian citizens. All the countries should act together in harmony to end this crisis otherwise another world war might start which will destroy our human civilization for which we have worked so hard for centuries.

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