

**Committee: DISEC 1**

**Topic: The Question of Ukraine**

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## **Summary**

The crisis in Ukraine has drastically escalated into a security challenge for Europe and the broader international community and represents one of the greatest security threats to the world since the end of the Cold War. It began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea, a densely Russian speaking population in Ukraine, and the removal of pro-Russian President, Viktor Fedorovych Yanukovych, due to multiple protests. Violence has continued since then while many Russians backed separatists took control of parts of Luhansk and Donetsk. In 2022 Russia drastically escalated its attacks by launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This conflict has destabilized the region and made for one of the worst refugee crises in Europe in decades, as well as raises fears for nuclear escalation and a world war.

## **Definition of Key Terms:**

**Annexation** - The illegal addition of land by force into another nation.

**Sovereignty** - The ability for a state or nation to rule over itself, free from foreign interference.

**Hybrid Warfare** - The mix of traditional/conventional warfare, irregular warfare, and cyber warfare.

**NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)** - The alliance between 31 countries, primarily in Europe and North America.

**OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe)** - The world's largest regional security organization, tasked with preventing conflict.

**IDP's (Internationally Displaced Persons)** - People who have to evacuate their homes but still remain in their country.

**Minsk Agreements** - In 2014 and 2015 ceasefire agreements were negotiated between Russia and Ukraine but were not fully implemented.

### **Background Information:**

Ukraine, which historically belonged to the Soviet Union, became independent in 1991. Since then, Ukraine has been in a difficult 'tug-of-war' between western independence (joining NATO and the EU) and keeping its historical and economic ties with Russia. This proved to be a heavy balance to maintain. The situation escalated in 2013 when the pro-Russian Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich suspended all talks in regards to joining the EU and opted to work closer with Russia. This resulted in large spread protests in the Ukraine Capital, Kyiv, widely known as the Euromaidan movement. These protests were largely made up of the Ukrainian population who wanted integration with the West and further independence from Russia. The protests further escalated resulting in violence and over 100 deaths, causing President Yanukovich to flee the country in 2014 and the Ukrainian Parliament to vote to remove him from Office.

In response to what Russia deemed an illegal coup, Russian forces, which were unmarked at first, entered Crimea. A referendum was held in March 2014 by Russia, claiming that the Ukrainian people wanted to join Russia. This received backlash as many countries and the UN deemed this vote unfair and illegal and a resolution was passed (68/262) stating that Crimea still belongs to Ukraine. Russia still took control of Crimea however, claiming that they needed to protect the large number of ethnic Russians that still lived there. This was deeply opposed by the international community, which led to them removing Russia from the G8 group of major economies and turning it back into a G7. Formal sanctions on Russian banks, leaders, and energy companies then followed by the US, Canada, and members of the EU, hoping to pressure them into stopping its actions.

Following the annexation of Crimea, unrest began to spread in the eastern Ukrainian regions known as the Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk). Armed separatists which were backed by Russian military, training, and funding, declared the formation of two republics, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR). This led to a bloody conflict and a result of over 13,000 deaths and around 1.3 million people being displaced over the following years. In response to this the UN and its partners began to supply humanitarian aid to the displaced people and an agreement targeted at a ceasefire called the Minsk Agreement was created.

On February 24 2022 Russia began a full scale invasion of Ukraine, claiming the need to “demilitarize Ukraine”, claims widely rejected by the International community. Ukraine, now under the leadership of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, held a strong defense, leaning heavily on international military and financial support. Ultimately this war created a humanitarian crisis, millions of refugees, and harmed the global food and energy supplies.



Map of Ukraine



Map of Russian invasion tactics

### Major Countries and Organizations Involved:

**Ukraine** - Defending its land against Russia, wishes to join NATO and the EU.

**Russia** - Wants to take back Ukraine and reassert Influence, does not want Ukraine to join NATO.

**NATO** - indirectly supporting Ukraine with weapons and military training.

**European Union** - Provides military support for Ukraine, Humanitarian Aid, as well as sanctions against Russia.

**United States** - Sending a lot of military equipment to Ukraine.

**Belarus** - Allowing Russian troops to attack from their territory.

**United Nations** - providing and coordinating Humanitarian Aid as well as creating resolutions.

## Timeline of Major Events

Date	Description
1991	Ukraine becomes an independent country
1994	Ukraine hands over its nuclear weapons in exchange for security assurances from Russia, the US, and the UK.
2010	Viktor Yanukovich becomes president of Ukraine
2014	Euromaidan protests lead to the abolishment of pro-Russia Ukraine president
03/2014	Russia annexes Crimea
04/2014	War begins in Eastern Europe
2015	Minsk II Ceasefire
2018	Russia captures three Ukrainian Ships, leading to a rise in tensions
2019	Volodymyr Zelenskyy becomes president of Ukraine
2022	Russia launches full scale invasion of Ukraine
2023	ICC issue Arrest Warrant for Putin, accusing him of multiple war crimes
2024	Ongoing fighting and Global Food and Energy Crisis

## Possible Solutions

### Diplomatic Negotiations

A possible solution could be to strengthen the Minsk II Agreement, which was an agreement created to establish ceasefires and abolish conflicts. It could be beneficial to renew these negotiations under a neutral body, such as the UN, with talks focused on troop withdrawals, territory control, and other such negotiations. This is rather feasible as war fatigue and international pressure could push the two sides to want to cooperate, even though tensions are very hostile as of right now.

### Cybersecurity Warfare Protections

Russia has historically used cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns throughout this war. It is paramount that these attacks are monitored and prevented as Ukraine's energy grid, communications, and civilian infrastructure have all been targeted. This could be done by developing a UN backed cyber-monitoring and defense strike team or mechanism to help protect civilians and deter cyberwarfare. It is also crucial to counter disinformation through fact checking networks and other such deterrents.

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