

Forum: Security Council
Issue: The Question of Ukraine
Student Officer: Linda Chicco
Position: President

INTRODUCTION

When we think about nationalism and the consequential birth of imperialism, we imagine it as a period of the past, something that had had a beginning and a precise end with World War One. During that period we saw empires trying to conquer new territories (like what the United Kingdom and France did, for example) or other populations gaining some independence for the first time in ages (e.g. the Italian and the German unification process). Genocides, restriction of freedom, rapes and many other types of ill treatment too were part of those periods. Decolonization then had its chance to put an end to that horrible vexation that oppressed entire populations for over a century. Thus we are commonly brought to believe that those events and facts do not affect our world anymore and that they do not exist anymore.

However, still today the aggression of Countries is a true and uncomfortable reality and when an aggression occurs, it causes violation of the human rights, civil wars, rebellions and a tremendous number of casualties. Many times we saw this happening in front of our eyes during history, but now we would never imagine how many countries suffer because of violation of sovereignty and of the “regime of terror” established in their own territories. We saw this happening in Barcelona when the government sent its troops to quell the events following the referendum (condemned by the UN and all the other Countries) for Catalonia’s independence. We saw this happening when Russia invaded Crimea following the escalation of an uprising in Kiev. And that is the sequence of events we are going to talk about in this chair report.



KEY WORDS

I. CONTROL: the action of having full jurisdiction and power over a territory, that can be both authorized and recognized by the other Countries, or illegal and unrecognized. In this case it is a main character of the conflict because two States and a number of rebels are fighting to have the control of some regions part of Ukraine. However, the UN and the Security Council do not recognize the independent republics (see below) or the Russian annexation of Crimea as legitimate. The UN supports Ukraine’s sovereignty on its official territories.

- II. **SOVEREIGNTY**: it defers from control as it is always held by a Country, that is both recognized by the UN and the other Countries and that has supreme and unrestricted power on its official territories. Russia and Russia-backed rebels are affecting Ukraine's sovereignty as they are fighting for the control of some regions, especially located in the south of Ukraine.
- III. **CONFLICT**: a struggle or clash between opposing forces that can also involve weaponry. In Ukraine's south regions rebels and Ukrainian troops are fighting to gain the control of some regions; however, Ukraine is also fighting Russia to gain back Crimea that was annexed to Russia in 2014. Conflict does always take with itself human rights violation or heavy restrictions operated by both sides towards the opponents: indeed, both Ukraine and Russia are operating restrictions over Russian or Ukrainian citizens (for more details see below).
- IV. **DISCRIMINATION**: unfair treatment of a personal, racial group, minority. When Russia imposed its law on Crimea, it was able to start persecuting Crimean Tatars, a minority of Ukrainian Muslims living in the region that were peacefully opposing the annexation of Crimea to Russia. The minority's principle representative organization, Mejlis, was then banned as an "extremist organization".



HISTORICAL SURVEY

Ukraine (at the time Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) had been a part of the Russian Empire ever since the creation of the Soviet Union (URSS): it was one of the fifteen small republics parts of it since its establishment (1922) to 1991, when the Ukrainian government organized a referendum for its independence. The act of independence was the first step towards a more democratic country, since the same day (December the 1st) the first Ukrainian president was elected.

The country then started a process to approach Europe and it was even considering joining the European Union (EU). What happened later was a surprising sequence of events to the Ukrainians. In 2013 President Viktor Yanukovych seemed to sympathize for Russia and the gossip was then confirmed when the president himself rejected a deal for economic integration with the EU. People were deeply surprised and the anger and surprise escalated in a rebellion in the capital city, Kiev. Due to these violent events, Yanukovych fled the country in 2014.

After the president's escape, elections took place in the country and a new president was elected, Oleksandr Turcynov. While the country was distracted, Russia invaded Crimea and organized a referendum asking the population if they wanted to join Russia. The region was then declared a part of Russia, as the population had expressed its want to be joint with the country. Russian president Vladimir Putin declared that Russia needed to annex the region in order to protect its citizens in

Crimea and southern Ukraine. This crisis highlighted ethnical division and many pro-Russian people in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions decided to separate from Ukraine with a referendum in 2014, giving birth to the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.

War started to be fought between Ukrainian and separatists troops, joint together with Russian reinforcements. Moscow denied any type of involvement, but both Ukraine and NATO have reported a conglomerate of Russian troops and artillery in the conflict zones in south Ukraine. Together with war, many violations of human rights (such as torture, kidnap and various types of ill-treatment) started to plague the area. Members of the Tatar opposition in Crimea, together with many Ukrainian journalists, started to disappear. Their corpses were then found with traces of torture or ill treatment.

Shelling is affecting not only the troops and civilians -what has happened in Avdiivka on February the 14th 2017 is just one of the many examples of shelling on civilians, on their homes and on the factories where they work, - but also on schools. According to UNICEF, more than 215,000 children have been displaced and 1 school out of 5 has been disrupted or damaged, affecting their education. The organization is thus calling for a better protection of children in the conflict. The UN also expressed its concern about the conflict and the violation of human rights in many occasions.

The Ukrainian question escalated again into an international crisis when a Malaysian plane got shot down by a Russian surface-to-air missile while it was flying on Ukrainian airspace. Investigators then proved that the missile was taken to the Ukrainian ground to shoot the plane and then taken back to Russian territory. Eventually Germany and France decided to take part in diplomatic actions in 2015 to try to put an end to this crisis: they worked together with Ukraine and Russia to sign a two-year-long ceasefire that could actually help to improve civilians' conditions, but also take to a stable peace. The Minsk II agreements provided a ceasefire for two years, as already said, withdrawal of heavy weaponry and they guaranteed Ukraine a full control on the conflict zones. Sadly, two years later, in 2017, the conflict started again –even though it violated the agreements. Fearing Russian power and reaction, NATO decided to deploy four battalions in Eastern Europe, rotating through a number of countries to prevent the occurrence of a Russian attack to Europe, especially to the Baltics.

MAJOR PLAYERS

Here you can find a list of the major players involved in the question of Ukraine. At the end, there is a section for the NGOs.

GERMANY

The head of the Free Democratic Party has recently declared that Germany might be considering recognizing Russia's annexation of Crimea as a first step to a diplomatic and peaceful solution. However the Country itself has not stated something like this up to now. Germany took part in the diplomatic action in 2015 in order to make Ukrainian civilians' life in conflict zone much easier and less dangerous. The country does not recognize the self-proclaimed People's Republic in Eastern Europe.

FRANCE

The country is fully supporting Ukraine's full restoration of its sovereignty and territorial integrity in its recognized borders. France recognizes the call for independence in the East and the Russian aggression in the South as a violation of the International law. The country also supports UN General Assembly's resolution 71/205 calling for the release of those who have been imprisoned in

violation of the international law. The Country then supported the Minsk II agreements and took part in its drawing up.

RUSSIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed Russia's position many times, *in primis* when Russia invaded Crimea, declaring that they were "forced" to do such a thing to protect the Russian citizens' interests and rights in the region, then reaffirming many times that Russia was not taking part or giving support to the rebels in Eastern Ukraine. Its involvement was then confirmed and the Country contributed to the Minsk II agreements, which were later violated by both Ukraine and Russia.

USA

Even though president Donald Trump is in good terms with Russian president Vladimir Putin, the only matter they seem to have some friction on is Ukraine's sovereignty. The US are deeply concerned by the outbreak of violence in the East and the country is calling upon Russian troops to abide by the terms of the Minsk II agreements and it is considering to sell some antitank missiles to Ukraine in order to let the country be able to defend its borders. As the US do not want a war with Russia, this action might be abandoned in order not to provoke a global escalation. A number of Sanctions has been taken against Russian actions in Crimea and Southern Ukraine, but American Defense Secretary Jim Mattis does not think it would be effective to sanction Russia again, as the country has not stopped with the previous ones.

Amnesty International, jointly with Human Rights Watch, is operating a denunciation of human rights' violations happening especially in Crimea, where Russian authorities are persecuting Tatars. Their reports include ill treatment, torture, denied medical attention and sexual violence due to a vacuum of rule of Law in self-proclaimed People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk.

The two NGOs also denounced the lack of freedom of expression and the anti-Ukrainian propaganda operated by Russia in Crimea and South Ukraine. Many Ukrainian journalists have disappeared or they have been kidnapped, imprisoned and tortured because of their activity in South Ukraine.

There are also a number of Crimean NGOs, like the Crimean Tatar Initiative, trying to fight for their rights and their number has largely increased since 2014.

UN'S ACTIVITY

There is a consistent number of UN missions or organizations dealing with Human Rights and security in Ukraine, such as:

The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (UNHRMMU) has recently expressed its concern about the number of casualties occurred since 2014: the fighting has killed over 9,000 people and injured more than 21,000. According to the Mission there has been a 66 percent increase of casualties of civilians from May to August 2016;

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) discussed the situation in Eastern Ukraine and adopted a resolution to highlight the lack of remedies (<https://www.unian.info/politics/1569666-pace-passes-two-resolutions-on-ukraine.html>);

The UN Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination checked over Ukraine's conformity to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination because of rise in hate speeches held in public by public figures and in racist propaganda by groups like Right Sector, Azov Civilian Battalion and the Social National Assembly;

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has created a special mission, the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, to monitor on civilians' situation in the areas of conflict and it has expressed its concern for the number of civilian casualties together with violation of

children's rights. The UN high Commissioner for Human Rights also expressed its concerns about the lack of protection for civilians in conflict areas;

The UN Security Council tried to solve the question of Crimea in 2014 with a draft resolution that was approved by thirteen Member States, but was vetoed by Russia. The draft resolution was thus abolished. On March the 27th 2014 the General Assembly adopted the resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, immediately asking for a peaceful solution and last year, on December the 19th 2016, it adopted the resolution 71/205 stating that it is crucial for NGOs and Monitoring Missions to have access to the entire territory of Ukraine, including conflict zones. The Secretary General expressed his concern about the human rights' violation and the civilians' situation in Southern and Eastern Ukraine in many occasions.

PRESIDENT'S SUGGESTIONS

A number of suitable and interesting measures could be adopted by taking into account the following suggestions:

- Guaranteeing the access of the NGOs in the war zones in order to let them take care of injured people and try to protect the civilians in order to avoid other casualties while being protected by the army or UN peacekeepers.
- Exploiting the effectiveness of Ukrainian sovereignty on the conflict zones, followed by the restitution of the contended territories in order to put an end to the war.
- Warding minorities like Tatar, journalists and the opponents' human rights through a restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty in those areas where it has collapsed.

Please consider that it is impossible to put an end to a war without taking care first of those who were harmed. In order to give some suitable solution to the problem, clauses should be endowed with *both* humanitarian and warlike aspects. As it is known, it would not be effective to solve a war without trying to deter a possible new one through the population of the invaded area and the sovereign state. The president then suggests all the delegates to reflect on those aspects and try to find a suitable solution for everyone.

USEFUL LINKS

- <http://www.un.org/en/index.html>
- <https://www.unian.info/>
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/>
- <https://www.hrw.org/it>
- <http://www.un.org/en/sc/>
- <http://www.un.org/en/ga/>