

RENMUN VII

Peace in Permanence



March 5-6, 2022

Chair Report

Chair Introduction

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the UN Security Council! We're Justin Cheng, 16, a junior at Diocesan Boys' School, and David Won, a sophomore at German Swiss International School, and we're delighted to have you for this conference. We look forward to the fruitful debate and hope that delegates can engage in an immersive and engaging debate. Having been involved in a number of MUN conferences over the past few years, we hope we'll be able to set an enjoyable yet professional tone for the seventh interaction of RENMUN this year.

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with ensuring international peace and security, as well as other roles; a committee we've both liked for its nuance and fast pace. As such, we've chosen the situations pertaining to Russia and South Sudan as the two topics for the council, which we believe encapsulates some of the best parts of the SC, as they are both still changing and evolving over time.

Being an advanced committee, delegates are expected to thoroughly research the topic and be prepared for debate, not only using this chair report but also other independent means. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out! That being said, don't stress yourself out too much for the conference; after all, having fun is also very important. Apart from awards and glory, we personally really hope all delegates would be able to make new connections and just have fun over the conference, and I'm looking forward to fruitful debate and dialogue.

I wish you the best of the luck in the conference!

Best wishes,

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Addressing the issue of Russian aggression in Ukraine

With Russia being increasingly belligerent in the region, combined with its past record of violence and occupation, Russia has long been viewed as a controversial nation to many, especially for states such as Ukraine, which have faced the brunt of Russian aggression multiple times, from all the way back in 2014 till now.

Along with other issues around the region, such as the 2022 European refugee crisis in Belarus, the situation in Ukraine has been, and remains an issue of geopolitical significance that requires the attention of institutions such as the Security Council, the United Nations' only binding organ.

Do keep in mind that this issue is one that is still evolving over time, and thus delegates are highly encouraged to keep track of the trajectory of the situation and how different stakeholders are impacted. As a result, apart from fundamental facts and knowledge about the situation, delegates are expected to have an open mind and seek compromises if necessary.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)	Established in 1949 after WWII, NATO is a Western security bloc spearheaded by powers such as the US and the UK. As opposed to the European Union, which primarily deals with economic and political integration, the Organisation is solely a defensive and security bloc.
Minsk Protocol	<p>A ceasefire agreement agreed by Russia and Ukraine regarding the incursions in the Donbas region, which was quickly violated by both parties</p> <p>Later replaced with the Minsk II agreement, which was also regularly contravened.</p>
Crimean Peninsula	A peninsula in Ukraine, occupied by Russia since 2014 along the northern coast of the Black Sea,

	home to a population of around 2.4 million people, many of which are ethnic Russians and some of which are Crimean Tatars.
Crimean Tatars	A Turkic ethnic group that are indigeneous to Crimea, Ukraine. Many members were reportedly oppressed by Russian forces after the annexation of the peninsula.
Verkhovna Rada	The parliament of Ukraine, which consists of 450 members (called <i>deputies</i>) and one chairman (called the <i>speaker</i>).

Background Information

Pre-2014

Russia and Ukraine's history goes back to the 18th century, when much of western Ukraine was absorbed into the Russian Empire. However, more recently, Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union since 1939, of which it was annexed under the terms of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

Tensions against the Soviet Union began to rise, in light of the iron fist of the Soviets in 1960, leading to a harsh repression in 1972. This, combined with the infamous explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 1986 - which was only shut down in 2000, directly causing the deaths of ten thousand people and endangering many more - consolidated Ukraine's motive to declare independence in 1991.

Hostilities persisted across the years, particularly intensifying when Ukraine was supported by the US in its bid to join NATO, in 2008. Further incidents include ones such as a 2009 dispute over natural gas, which led to a shutdown of Russian natural gas exports; Russian PM Putin publicly stated that "*Ukrainian political leadership is demonstrating its inability to solve economic problems, and [...] situation highlights the high criminalization of [Ukrainian] authorities*".

Despite the brief election of Viktor Yanukovich, the most pro-Russian president in the history of Ukraine, which engendered better relations between the two countries, tensions rose to an apex in 2013. Protests erupted amidst Yanukovich's suspension of signing the EU Association Agreement, in order to obtain closer relations with Russia. At this point, the situation was already tense.

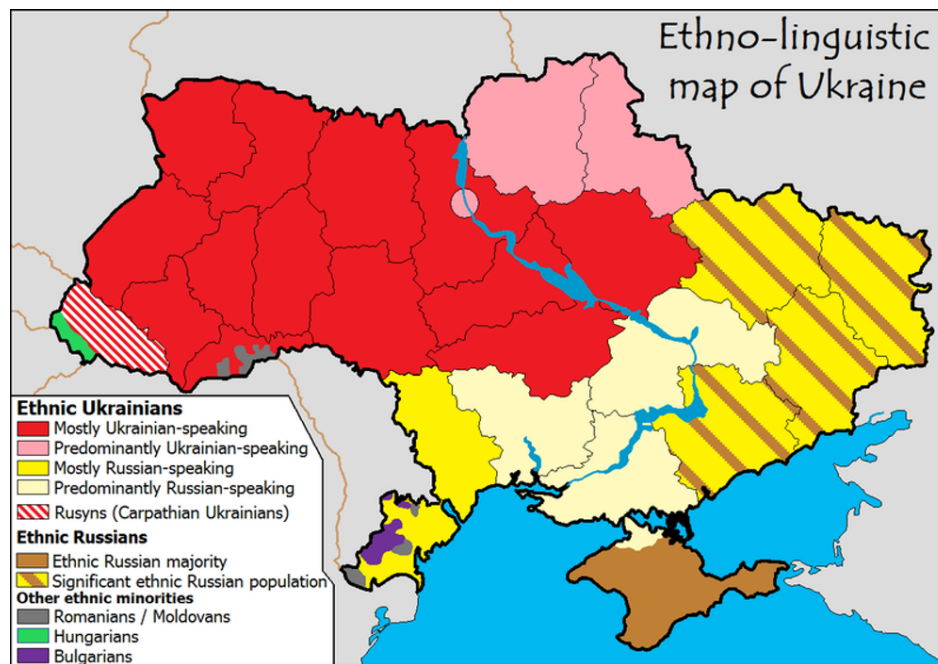
2014

Apart from the defeat of incumbent President Yanukovych, Russia began to annex the Crimean Peninsula, with unmarked personnel seizing two airports and the parliament building in the region. Closely after that, in March, a referendum was launched on the status of Ukraine - whether its citizens wanted to be part of Russia. Despite Russia's claims that it did not authorise the personnel's actions, and that the elections were free and fair, there are numerous pieces of evidence that suggest otherwise:

- The absence of bodies such as the United Nations and the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- The presence of Russian military forces
- The inclusion of other parties: a Russian journalist claimed that she was able to vote although she only had a one-year permit to reside in Crimea.

The final results, from the Republic of Crimea showed that 96.77% of ballots cast were in favour of the vote. In reaction to this, many countries voiced their opposition to the vote, with all 28 EU members unilaterally believing it to be a major contravention of international law, a sentiment backed by organisations such as the European Parliament and the Group of 7.

Despite overwhelming pushback from the international community, Russian troops have seized military bases and committed atrocities against the Crimean Tatars, an ethnic group indigenous to the region. However, ethnic Russians still maintain a majority in the Peninsula, depicted below:



Closely following the 2014 Ukrainian revolution as well as the annexation of Crimea, pro-Russian militants also seized other parts of Ukraine, such as the Donbass region, declaring republics such as the Donetsk People's Republic. This resulted in fierce fighting from both sides, effectively trapping the Donbas region, home to hundreds of thousands of civilians, in the crossfire. A video by Vox, [Why Ukraine is trapped in endless conflict](#), encapsulates this issue quite succinctly.

Critically, the Minsk Protocol was launched in late 2014 as a ceasefire between the two parties. The Minsk Protocol included twelve points, and a few significant points have been included below:

1. To ensure an immediate bilateral ceasefire (which would be monitored and verified by the OSCE).
2. To ensure the permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian border and verification by the OSCE with the creation of security zones in the border regions of Ukraine and the Russian Federation.
3. Immediate release of all hostages and illegally detained persons.
4. To take measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Donbas.
5. To withdraw illegal armed groups and military equipment as well as fighters and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine.
6. To adopt a programme of economic recovery and reconstruction for the Donbas region.

Importantly, many wordings here are quite vague, for instance to 'take measures' to improve the situation in Donbas. Fighting resumed in January 2015, with both sides regularly contravening the agreement.

2015-2020s

Relations continued to deteriorate across the years, with the Donbas region still embroiled in warfare and with Crimea still under Russian occupation. From banning all direct flights between the countries (prompted by Ukraine, 2015) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine recommending avoiding travel to Russia (2016), one of the most significant flashpoints transpired in 2018, when Russia struck and seized three Ukrainian Navy vessels off the coast of Crimea.

This led to a 30-day imposition of martial law in 10 Ukrainian border regions, in fear of a 'full-scale-war', (claimed by Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko), including banning all Russian men from 16060 from entering the country. In total, 1650 Russian citizens were refused entry into Ukraine.

In late 2021, tensions intensified once again with a reported 100,000 Russian forces operating near the Ukrainian border, with some troops stationed in the Crimean Peninsula.

Recent Russian military deployments

Satellite images show Russian troops near Ukraine border



Although Russia has dismissed claims of invasion as alarmist, with Russian armed force chief Valery Gerasimov even saying that ‘information circulating in the media about the alleged impending Russian invasion of Ukraine is a lie’, many Ukrainians may believe otherwise.

Potential Clashes

Humanitarian toll

Over the course of a decade or so, unfortunately, many casualties have occurred on both sides. The situation is quite complex, particularly seeing as some Russian troops are centred around Belarus, a state which has seen a major refugee crisis near its borders. Delegates are encouraged to investigate this issue further as well, considering that Belarus is quite volatile and neighbours both Russia and Ukraine.

Furthermore, with the current situation of Russia, which has seen anti corruption protests erupt across the nation, it is crucial to note that Russia itself is far from a monolithic entity.

Applications of Just War Theory

Although a direct invasion of Russia would be almost ludicrous, components of Just War Theory could also be quite pertinent for delegates. The six criteria of JWT (*jus ad bellum*) are outlined below:

- The war must be for a just cause.
- The war must be lawfully declared by a lawful authority.
- The intention behind the war must be good.
- All other ways of resolving the problem should have been tried first.
- There must be a reasonable chance of success.
- The means used must be in proportion to the end that the war seeks to achieve.

By replacing the 'war' with other means of engagement, such as sanctions or diplomatic boycotts, delegates could comment on the legitimacy of certain actions; for instance, delegates could argue that, given Russia's long-standing history of aggression and manipulation, that *all other ways of resolving the problem should have been tried first*, ie, it is a *last resort*.

On the other hand, the practicalities of any action must be well thought out to ensure that it has a *reasonable chance of success*, and that it is *in proportion*. These principles could, and ought to guide the drafting of clauses against Russia.

Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Involvement with the Issue
Russia	Russia has long been accused as an aggressor in the region, due to incidents such as the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and especially due to recent developments. Critically, Russia views NATO as a major threat to its regional dominance, and has attempted to use other means to expand its influence, such as by consolidating dictators such as in Belarus and by supporting populist movements across Europe.
United States	The chief architect and sponsor of NATO, the US has historically been in opposition to Russia. Not only has the US delivered aid and security assistance to Ukraine - around 450 million USD in 2021, the US has also publicly voiced its concern for the issue, with

	Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg saying that 'there will be a high price to pay for Russia' if it once again invades Ukraine.
Ukraine	The nation at the very centre of the conflict. Many Ukrainians have thus been
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	These three states were former Soviet satellite states but have since been incorporated into the NATO bloc, and have also experienced some extent of Russian aggression.
Germany	As one of the core members of the European Union and NATO, Germany has not been directly involved in the issue but has, similar to the United States, voiced their opposition towards the occupation of Crimea.

Possible Solutions

Peacekeeping Forces

Peacekeeping forces have been heralded as a solution, albeit temporary, to resolve conflicts such as these. For instance, peacekeeping was deployed in areas such as Turkey.

In addition, the details of ceasefire agreements should be investigated in detail, in order to tackle the root causes of the issue. Apart from what is stated in agreements, delegates should also consider the following (non-exhaustive)

- Would there be any ramifications for contravening ceasefire agreements? How effective would they be?
- How effective are peacekeeping forces, and would external help from actors such as NATO be conducive? This is particularly as states such as the US have sought to cut the UN peacekeeping budget, of which it funds 25%.

Sanctions

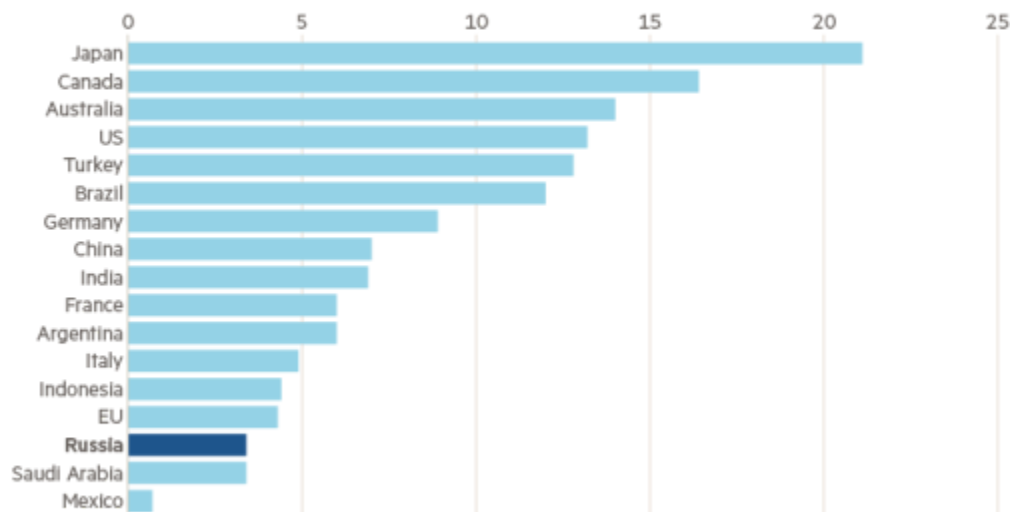
Sanctions have long been a highly controversial topic, particularly considering that sanctions oftentimes could lead to economic suffering for many, depending on their potency. While there have been multiple cases of success, it could also be argued that sanctions are ineffective, given that Russia itself is a P5 nation of the Security Council and that previous rounds of sanctions have only inflamed anti-EU sentiments.

On the other hand, given that Russia has been hard hit by COVID-19, and that the Russian economy itself is quite dependent on oil exports, which have been

obstructed due to the pandemic, a case could be made that sanctions may be the tipping point to compel Russia to halt its aggression in the region.

Russia's stimulus package one of the smallest in the G20

Value of fiscal stimulus as share of GDP (%)



Source: IMF
© FT

Russia's stimulus package has been quite small, a possible reason why its economy might be weak and why it may be willing to comply with possible sanctions

There are several factors that determine the effectiveness of sanctions, included (non-exhaustively) below:

- Whether it is multilateral or unilateral: if only one nation imposes a sanction on another nation, this could be easily circumvented; such as the current US sanctions on Iran.
- Whether the actor is receptive: as seen above, delegates will have to contextualize the current state of Russia and whether sanctions are appropriate, given Russia's geopolitical state
- Whether the sanctions target officials or the general public, or both: with Russia experiencing protests in 2021, with anti-establishment politician Alexei Navalny exposing the state of Russian corruption, targeting top officials may be effective, or ineffective in some regards to compel Russia to action, since the impact is far more personal.

Past Actions

The United Nations has not directly intervened in the conflict, as opposed to institutions such as NATO.

- 12/7/2020: the United Nations issued resolutions calling on withdrawal of forces from Crimea, for instance the *Problem of the militarization of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, as well as parts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov* which urged Russia to withdraw forces from Crimea
- 2018-2022: UNHCR humanitarian forces have been helping recovery efforts around Ukraine.

Guiding Questions

- What measures should be taken to ensure that the issue is contained, and that incursions such as that in 2014 are not repeated?
- Who would design and enforce such measures?
- How should Ukraine and other surrounding nations ensure the human rights of those at war, or those potentially affected by war?
- How should Ukraine and other surrounding nations balance their interests with blocs such as NATO?

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