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***Russo-Ukrainian War: Looming Challenges***

A Thesis submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in Literature and civilization.

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material that has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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## **Dedication**

To my dearest family, your unwavering love and endless support have been the foundation of my journey. Thank you for being my guiding light, my pillar of strength, and my constant inspiration.

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I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Selmi who guided me complete my thesis your guidance and expertise illuminated my path, I am profoundly grateful for your invaluable insights and unwavering support. I would also extend my sincere gratitude to the jury members, Professor Benadla and Dr. Moussaoui, for their time, patience, and invaluable feedback

## **Abstract**

The Russo-Ukrainian war began in 2014 after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine, Just after the revolution of Ukraine. The Conflict escalated in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists seized control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The war has been marked by intense fighting, ceasefire violations, and international condemnation of Russia's involvement. This research sheds light on the historical background and the causes that triggered this ongoing war. It also examines the harsh impacts and consequences on multiple fields. Additionally, it gives an insight into the possible future scenarios of war. This study finds that the Russo-Ukrainian war is a highly intricate modern conflict, stemming from deep-seated complexities within its historical backdrop, in addition to direct primary causes. Its repercussions have been profound across various fields the economy, society, politics, and the environment. Furthermore, its future remains uncertain and baffling to forecast. By elucidating the multifaceted nature of this conflict, emphasizes the urgent need for collaborative endeavors aimed at peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the region.

**Keywords:** Conflict Escalation, Future Scenarios, Geopolitics, Historical Background, Impacts, Russia, Ukraine

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## **List of Acronyms**

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
ABM	treaty Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems
US	United States
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
GDP	Gross domestic product
GDB	Global Data Base
EU	European Union
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
CNN	Cable News Network
CUAET	Canada Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel

U4U	Uniting for Ukraine
G7	Group of Seven
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies

# **General Introduction**

# General Introduction

## General Introduction

The Ukraine War, also known as the Russo-Ukrainian War, is a complex and deeply consequential conflict that has reverberated far beyond the borders of Eastern Europe. At its heart lies a clash of historical narratives, ethnic identities, and geopolitical ambitions. The roots of the conflict can be traced back to Ukraine's complicated history, marked by centuries of foreign rule and shifting borders. The country's struggle for independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was met with hope and challenges. While Ukraine sought to chart its course towards democracy and integration with the West, it also grappled with deep-seated divisions, particularly between its Ukrainian-speaking western regions and the predominantly Russian-speaking east.

In 2014, tensions reached a boiling point when pro-European protests in Kyiv's Maidan Square culminated in the ousting of Ukraine's pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovich. Russia, viewing these events as a threat to its sphere of influence, swiftly annexed Crimea, a strategic peninsula with historical ties to Russia. This move was met with condemnation from the international community and triggered a chain of events that would escalate into full-scale conflict. In the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, separatist movements, supported by Russia, declared independence from Ukraine. The Ukrainian government, determined to maintain its territorial integrity, launched a military crackdown against the separatists. What ensued was a brutal war marked by intense fighting, civilian casualties, and allegations of human rights abuses on both sides.

The war has had profound impacts on both Ukraine and the broader international community. It has resulted in thousands of deaths, displaced millions of people, and caused significant economic and humanitarian suffering. The conflict has also strained relations between Russia and Western countries, leading to sanctions and diplomatic tensions. This conflict has not only exacted a heavy toll on the people of Ukraine, with thousands dead and millions displaced, but it has also strained relations between Russia and the West to levels not seen since the Cold War. Western nations have imposed economic sanctions on Russia, accusing it of military aggression and violating Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia, in turn, has accused the West of interfering in its

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sphere of influence and supporting what it sees as a hostile regime in Kyiv. As the conflict enters its second decade, the road to peace remains uncertain. The Ukraine War is a stark reminder of the enduring power of history, identity, and geopolitical rivalries to shape the course of nations and the fate of millions.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the historical background and underlying causes that precipitated the war between Russia and Ukraine. Additionally, it seeks to shed light on the impacts and consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian War, economically, politically, and socially. Furthermore, the research aims to reveal some of the possible future scenarios and predictions surrounding this ongoing war.

This research is essential for revealing and examining the causes of the ongoing war by providing historical background and identifying its triggers. It is crucial not to overlook mentioning the impacts and consequences of this conflict on various aspects. Moreover, it is important to consider potential future scenarios and outcomes. Before delving into the research, it is important to ask first some essential questions that the study aims to address. This foundational step ensures that the research effectively tackles pertinent issues and provides meaningful insights.

### **This research aims to address the following questions:**

- What are the primary causes of the crisis between Ukraine and Russia, and how has the historical background influenced and contributed to the escalation of conflict between the two nations?
- How has the Russo-Ukraine war impacted the political, economic, and social landscapes of Ukraine and Russia, and what are the broader regional and international consequences of the conflict?
- What are the potential future scenarios and outcomes of the Russo-Ukraine war and how might geopolitical, economic, and social factors shape these scenarios?

The thesis comprises three chapters, each Chapter provides insights into the questions posed earlier. These chapters not only address the previous inquiries but also provide well-constructed

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justifications supported by strong evidence. The first chapter offers a thorough examination of the historical context and root causes that led to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It delves into past events, unraveling the complex blend of geopolitical strains, ethnic divisions, and territorial disagreements, ultimately leading to armed confrontation. Through analyzing significant moments in the history of Russo-Ukrainian relations, ranging from the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the annexation of Crimea, this chapter sheds light on the profound grievances and power dynamics involved. Moreover, it scrutinizes the impact of identity politics, economic motives, and external influences in heightening tensions and shaping the course of the conflict. The second chapter seeks to illuminate the economic, political, and social consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian War. Through thorough analysis, the aim is to investigate the extensive effects of the conflict, offering insights into its impacts on geopolitics, economics, and society. The third chapter aims to explore the future of the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine by considering different potential outcomes. By analyzing possible scenarios, we aim to gain insight into the future scenarios of this conflict. This understanding will enable us to anticipate both challenges and opportunities.

# **Chapter One**

## **Historical Background and Causes of the Russo-Ukrainian War**



# **Chapter One: Historical Background and Causes of the Russo-Ukrainian War**

## **Introduction**

The night of February 27, 2014, armed individuals seized control of the Parliament and Cabinet of Ministers buildings in Crimea, hoisting Russian flags. Shortly after, additional unidentified personnel took over airports in Sevastopol and Simferopol. Meanwhile, a Russian naval vessel blockaded Balaklava harbor near Sevastopol, where Ukrainian sea-guard troops were stationed, while Russian helicopters deployed from Russia to Crimea. Following an expedited plebiscite eighteen days later, Vladimir Putin formally annexed Crimea to the Russian Federation. Subsequently, on April 7, pro-Russian factions seized government structures in Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, advocating for referendums on regional independence. Although Ukrainian forces reasserted control over Kharkiv the following day, attempts to recapture the other two regions sparked a conflict between Ukraine and Russia that lasted until February 2015, with lingering tensions the toll was heavy, with over ten thousand casualties by 2019.

What initially appeared as an amicable separation in 1991 evolved into one of the most perilous crises in post-Cold War Europe. Despite a shared history and Ukraine's relatively peaceful independence in 1991, by early 2014, discord over Ukraine escalated into an armed confrontation between Russia and Ukraine, exacerbating tensions between Russia and the West, reminiscent of a new Cold War. (D'Anieri, 2019, p. 1)

This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the historical background and underlying causes that precipitated the war between Russia and Ukraine. Delving into the complex tapestry of historical events, it unravels the intricate web of geopolitical tensions, ethnic divisions, and territorial disputes that have simmered for centuries, culminating in the eruption of armed conflict. By examining key milestones in the relationship between Russia and Ukraine, from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the annexation of Crimea, this chapter illuminates the deep-seated grievances and power dynamics at play. Moreover, it scrutinizes the role of identity politics, economic interests, and external influences in exacerbating tensions and shaping the trajectory of the conflict. Through meticulous analysis and contextualization, this chapter endeavors to offer valuable insights into the multifaceted factors driving one of the most

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significant geopolitical crises of the 21st century, shedding light on the complexities of interstate relations and the enduring legacy of historical legacies.

### **1.1. Unraveling the Roots of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict**

On July 6, 1989, Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, advocating for "Europe as a Common Home." One statement from his speech garnered widespread attention "Any interference in internal affairs, any attempts to limit the sovereignty of states whether of friends and allies or anybody else are inadmissible." This line was seen as a departure from the Brezhnev Doctrine, which justified Soviet intervention in socialist countries like Czechoslovakia in 1968, claiming the right to intervene when socialist development was threatened by capitalist forces. Gorbachev's apparent endorsement of reform and increased autonomy encouraged movements in Eastern Europe, leading to regular peaceful protests in East Germany by October, witnessed by Vladimir Putin in Dresden. In November, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolically marked the end of the Cold War.

Gorbachev's speech serves as a starting point for understanding the roots of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It not only expedited the collapse of the Soviet Bloc but also raised questions about the independence of Soviet Republics, many of which had long sought autonomy. Since then, disputes over Russia's role and rights in the region have persisted, conflicting with the aspirations of Ukraine, the Baltic States, and Western powers. The principle of non-use of force was quickly challenged, as seen when Soviet Special Purpose Police Unit forces attacked the Latvian Interior Ministry in January 1991.

Gorbachev's vision of a "common European home" presented an alternative to the "Europe whole and free" proposed by US President George H. W. Bush in Mainz, Germany, a few months earlier. While Gorbachev envisioned a pluralistic Europe where socialist and capitalist states coexisted peacefully, Bush advocated for a Europe unified by liberal democracy and market principles. This ideological disparity revealed a fundamental disagreement about the future principles of European politics even as the Cold War ended.

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By December 1993, nationalist and communist parties were gaining influence in Russia's parliament. Resolutions were passed asserting Russian territorial claims, such as considering Sevastopol, traditionally part of Ukraine since 1991, as Russian territory. In Ukraine, leaders struggled to achieve legal independence from Russia while grappling with dependence on Russian energy. Moreover, 1991 saw not only the collapse of the Soviet Union but also the beginning of Yugoslavia's disintegration, sparking conflicts that would plague the continent and later be cited by Vladimir Putin as a justification for annexing Crimea. (D'Anieri, 2019, pp. 27-28)

### **1.2. Triangular Struggle Between Ukraine, Russia, and the West**

As the post-Cold War era solidified in 1994, fresh challenges began to surface. These challenges can be categorized into three main groups' tensions between Ukraine and Russia, tensions between Russia and the West in Europe, and tensions between Russia and the United States that exacerbated distrust.

#### **Between Ukraine and Russia**

The recurring issues revolved around Russia's assertions regarding Crimea and particularly Sevastopol, heightening Ukraine's apprehensions and prompting it to seek Western support. Additionally, Russia pushed for Ukraine to join a Russia-led economic bloc, a proposal even rejected by Ukraine's more pro-Russian leaders, Kuchma and Yanukovich. Ukraine's pivot towards the West irritated Russia, as did its struggles to afford the Russian energy it relied on.

#### **Between Russia and the West in Europe**

Many disagreements emerged. The handling of Yugoslavia's collapse sparked debates over Bosnia in 1994–1995, Kosovo in 1999, and the recognition of Kosovo's independence in 2007. Economic reform in Russia fueled divisions during the 1990s, with the Russian financial crisis of 1998 convincing many in Russia that the Western model was eroding their country. Western concerns about the progression of democracy in Russia heightened significantly after Vladimir Putin assumed power in 2000. Actions such as reigniting the war in Chechnya, suppressing independent media, and selectively prosecuting political opponents drew criticism in Europe, yet solidified Putin's authority and bolstered the Russian state. The expansion of NATO, starting

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with initial decisions in 1994 and continuing through the Bucharest summit in 2008, remained a constant source of discord. Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 reinforced the perception in the West of Russia as an active security threat. Moreover, disagreements between Russia and the West regarding Ukraine intensified. Beyond matters of European security and Ukraine-Russia relations, additional events further strained their ties.

### **Between Russia and the United States**

The end of the Cold War saw a decline in global competition between the United States and Russia, yet it gave rise to new challenges. Early disputes included Russian support for Iran's nuclear program, which was effectively managed. However, the most significant disagreement arose from the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the impact of which on Russian foreign policy is likely underestimated. Russia was particularly irked by the US deployment of ballistic missile defense and the abrogation of the 1972 ABM treaty, primarily due to the unilateral nature of these decisions and their dismantling of Soviet-era agreements that underscored Russia's claim to a status equal to that of the former Soviet Union. The onset of the Arab Spring in 2011 further heightened Putin's apprehension that the West was nurturing protest movements to topple governments that resisted US dominance, potentially targeting Russia next. Certainly, there were numerous efforts from all sides to enhance relations. However, what stands out is how these endeavors often faltered or were overshadowed by more negative developments.

Western assistance to Russia was indeed tangible, but it fell short of expectations, leading to as much resentment as gratitude. Ukraine's decision to relinquish its nuclear arsenal potentially averted more profound conflicts with both Russia and the US. However, even then, the perceived inadequacies of the security assurances provided to Ukraine left many feeling resentful. Moreover, both the United States and Russia were irked by Ukraine's negotiation over its nuclear weapons. Similarly, the 1997 Friendship Treaty yielded minimal goodwill, facing opposition from numerous Russian elites. Its signing, primarily driven by NATO's intention to forge an agreement with Ukraine, had a scant effect on Ukraine-Russia relations. Likewise, the leadership transitions in Russia and the United States in 2000–2001 failed to significantly alter the landscape. Despite George Bush famously expressing his understanding of Putin's character, it did not sway his stance on ballistic missile defense. Even the profound impact of the September

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2001 attacks on US politics and foreign policy failed to significantly alter US-Russia relations. Although Putin's prompt expression of condolences to Bush and their collaboration against the Taliban in Afghanistan garnered attention, the relationship remained largely unchanged. While the United States launched an attack on Iraq despite Russia's vocal objections and those of many US allies, Russia's assault on Georgia was similarly met with opposition from the United States and the entirety of Europe.

The "reset" policy initiated by Barack Obama in 2009 reflected a broader trend where genuine attempts to enhance relations ultimately fell short. During Obama's tenure, the United States sought to move past the invasion of Georgia, adopted a less unilateral foreign policy approach, and displayed greater reluctance to resort to the use of force. The replacement of Putin with Dmitri Medvedev as Russian president appeared to offer a potential avenue for a new relationship. However, these developments had minimal impact on US-Russia relations. Even the decision to indefinitely defer a NATO Membership Action Plan for Ukraine inadvertently provoked Russia. Furthermore, it unintentionally spurred the European Union to intensify its efforts to economically integrate with Ukraine, culminating in the drafting of the Association Agreement, which contributed to the escalation of tensions in 2013. (D'Anieri, 2019, pp. 257-259)

### **1.3. Unraveling Security Dilemma**

The underlying dynamics of global politics exhibited persistence, where actions taken by each nation to enhance its security were perceived as menacing by others, regardless of the original intent. This led to a reinforcing cycle. As Russia asserted claims over Ukrainian territory, Ukraine swiftly escalated its military buildup and contemplated retaining nuclear weapons within its borders, provoking concerns not only from Russia but also from the United States. Likewise, Central European nations sought NATO membership to bolster security, a move that Russia viewed with apprehension. Russia's behaviors further fueled suspicions that it could pose a threat to its neighbors once again, perpetuating the cycle. In a pre-election letter to voters in 2000, Vladimir Putin remarked, "It is irrational to fear a powerful Russia, but one must acknowledge its influence. Offending us would have serious consequences for anyone." Many neighboring countries, given recent history, interpreted a strong Russia with apprehension,

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viewing the statement about consequences for offending Russia as a veiled threat that warranted precautionary measures.

To scholars specializing in international politics, the persistent cycle known as the "security dilemma" represents a longstanding challenge in global affairs, one that has plagued nations throughout history and appears exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to overcome. In this context, even nations aiming for peace inadvertently generate threats to others as they pursue their own security interests. Some observers noted that the end of the Cold War failed to resolve this dilemma. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall, John Mearsheimer foresaw that if the United States withdrew from Europe, security concerns would likely drive Germany to seek nuclear armament. This prediction partly influenced the decision for the United States to maintain its presence in Europe and for NATO to remain intact. However, there were concerns about the uncertainty surrounding the limits of NATO expansion and the potential for permanently alienating Russia. The crux of the security dilemma lies in the fact that both adopting new security measures and refraining from doing so can leave nations feeling vulnerable. From this perspective, the blame lies not with individual actors but with the structure of the situation or the system itself, trapping nations within this dynamic.

Breaking free from the security dilemma would have necessitated one or both sides relinquishing their entrenched views on what constituted an acceptable status quo following the Cold War. Either the Western nations and Ukraine would need to abandon the notion that democracy should be the prevailing norm in the new Europe, allowing for the unrestricted growth of democratic institutions, or Russia would have to relinquish its territorial claims over Ukraine. Along the way, there were opportunities for both sides to make smaller concessions. Assigning blame for the eventual conflict to Russia, Ukraine, or the West largely hinges on which party should have been more willing to adjust its expectations and, by extension, whose vision for post-Cold War Europe was deemed more just. (D'Anieri, 2019, pp. 12-13)

### **1.4. Ukraine's Nuclear Disarmament Dilemma**

In the early 1990s, Ukraine dismantled its significant nuclear arsenal, which was the world's third largest at the time, inherited from the Soviet Union. This arsenal included intercontinental

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ballistic missiles, strategic bombers, and tactical Nuclear Weapons. In 1994, Ukraine joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state, transferring all nuclear warheads to Russia and dismantling strategic delivery vehicles with U.S. assistance. By mid-1996, the last nuclear warhead left Ukraine, and by the end of 2001, the last missile silo was demolished. However, since 2014, Ukraine's decision to disarm has faced increased scrutiny domestically. Many Ukrainians view it as a mistake, especially following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. There have been proposals within Ukraine to withdraw from the NPT and renew its nuclear status, including launching an indigenous nuclear weapons program. In 2014, popular support for Ukraine's nuclear rearmament increased to nearly 50 percent, up from 33 percent in 1994. Despite controversies and debates, Ukraine's foreign minister affirmed that the country had no intention of violating its international obligations and that recent comments suggesting otherwise were taken out of context.

In December 1994, during Ukraine's denuclearization process, the United States, The United Kingdom, and the Russian Federation, as the key parties of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), signed the Budapest Memorandum in Hungary. This agreement, known as the Budapest Memorandum, promised to uphold Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, refrain from economic coercion, and avoid threatening or using force against Ukraine. However, Russia's actions in 2014, particularly its illegal annexation of Crimea, blatantly disregarded these commitments, highlighting the failure of international agreements to safeguard the security of non-nuclear states like Ukraine.

With the breach of the memorandum and Ukraine facing ongoing security threats, numerous Ukrainians believe that the decision to denuclearize was disadvantageous. Volodymyr Ohryzko, a former foreign minister of Ukraine, contends that Ukraine possesses legal and moral grounds to withdraw from the NPT. Notably, when Ukraine's parliament ratified the NPT in November 1994, it explicitly reserved the right to interpret the use or threat of force against its territorial integrity and border inviolability, as well as economic coercion by a nuclear-armed state. (Budjeryn, 2021)

### **1.5. Ukraine's Energy Politics**

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Ukraine's reliance on Russian energy remained a central point of conflict. However, the relationship between the two nations underwent significant changes. Firstly, the gas trade control in Ukraine became a focal point of political maneuvering and a source of power. Secondly, rising global energy prices exacerbated Ukraine's and Europe's dependence on Russia, leading to economic growth in Russia. This growth legitimized Putin's leadership and bolstered Russia's influence. By 2005, Ukraine's gas debt to Russia had accumulated \$23.9 billion. The described developments were interconnected, with corruption in Ukraine playing a pivotal role in enabling Russia to exploit the energy trade for political leverage. Internal dynamics within Ukraine have enabled Russia to utilize energy resources as a tool for foreign policy objectives. This involves perpetuating existing dependencies and establishing new ones to further Russia's strategic interests.

In 2000–2001, Viktor Yushchenko, along with his deputy Yuliya Tymoshenko, implemented reforms in Ukraine's energy sector. These reforms aimed to eliminate barter, enhance price transparency, and reduce opportunities for corruption and rent-seeking activities. However, these reforms faced strong opposition from powerful oligarchs who resisted the changes. This resistance contributed to a coalition that emerged to oust Yushchenko from office in 2001. During this period Russian capital was increasingly investing in Ukrainian assets, while Ukrainian "clans" were striving for greater control. Ukrainian factions recognized the financial resources and political influence of Russian firms as valuable in their internal power struggles. However, they sought to benefit from this support without ceding control to Russian oligarchs. Notably, the interests of these actors regarding Ukraine's relationship with Russia were primarily driven by their own power dynamics rather than concerns for the Ukrainian state.

During Kuchma's presidency, Ukraine shifted its strategic focus towards Russia, leading to the signing of several energy agreements between 2000–2004. These agreements included significant Russian investments in Ukrainian refineries, aligning with Kuchma's reorientation. In July 2000, Kuchma agreed for the Ukrainian state to absorb energy debts, a move that undermined the reforms initiated by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko and provided Russia with a new leverage point. In February 2001, both countries agreed to connect their electrical grids, aiming to improve supply management. Subsequently, in October 2002, a deal was struck



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between Russia and Ukraine to establish a consortium for gas transportation. This deal threatened Ukraine's strategic advantage in energy relations with Russia, particularly its control over pipelines delivering Russian gas to Europe. Controlling these pipelines has been a longstanding goal of Russian policy since the early 1990s. Despite the apparent victory for Russia, this agreement, like many others, never came into effect. The energy relationship between Ukraine and Russia stabilized during this period because it aligned with the interests of various powerful actors

Consequently, Ukrainian oligarchs benefited significantly from the arrangement, earning substantial profits, and President Kuchma utilized his control over access to these profits to maintain political support. Consequently, Ukrainian consumers were shielded from the hardships of reform. Meanwhile, Russian elites also gained from rent-seeking activities. Additionally, the Russian government, through its control of Gazprom, tolerated payment delays because it served Russia's long-term interests, which increased the likelihood of Ukraine making significant concessions in lieu of payment. To avoid a crisis, Russia ensured that measures to reduce Ukraine's dependence on Russian energy were not implemented, and Europe's gas supply remained uninterrupted during this period, giving it no reason to intervene in the situation between Ukraine and Russia. (D'Anieri, 2019, pp. 117-118)

### **1.6. Western Involvement in the Russo-Ukraine Conflict**

From a Western perspective, there's a prevalent belief that Putin is the main instigator of the Ukraine crisis and the ongoing war. He's accused of having imperial ambitions, aiming to conquer Ukraine and potentially other nations to establish a greater Russia akin to the former Soviet Union. Essentially, Ukraine is seen as Putin's initial objective, with suggestions that his ambitions extend beyond it. Some scholars characterize his actions as driven by a long-standing, malevolent goal of erasing Ukraine from the global map.

The mainstream media and nearly every Western leader consistently echo this storyline, yet there is a lack of evidence to substantiate it. Even when proponents of this conventional wisdom offer evidence, it often fails to convincingly connect to Putin's motivations for the invasion of Ukraine. Some individuals highlight Putin's characterization of Ukraine as an "artificial state" or

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not a "real state." However, such ambiguous remarks do not provide clear insight into his motives for initiating the war. Similarly, Putin's statement regarding Russians and Ukrainians being "one people" with a shared history is often cited, but it does not directly explain his decision to go to war. Others draw attention to his description of the collapse of the Soviet Union as the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." However, it's worth noting that Putin also remarked, "Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain." Besides, some reference his comment that "Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia or, to be more precise, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia." Yet, in the same speech, Putin acknowledged, "Of course, we cannot change past events, but we must at least admit them openly and honestly." The core cause of the crisis lies in the American-led endeavor to establish Ukraine as a Western stronghold on Russia's borders. This strategy encompasses three key elements, integrating Ukraine into the European Union, transforming Ukraine into a pro-Western liberal democracy, and crucially, incorporating Ukraine into NATO. The strategy was initiated during NATO's annual summit in Bucharest in April 2008, where the alliance declared that Ukraine and Georgia "will become members." Russian leaders promptly reacted with outrage, emphasizing that this decision posed an existential threat to Russia. They explicitly stated their refusal to allow either country to join NATO. According to a reputable Russian journalist, Putin reacted furiously, cautioning that "if Ukraine joins NATO, it will do so without Crimea and the eastern regions. It will simply fall apart."

William Burns, who currently serves as the head of the CIA and was the U.S. ambassador to Moscow at the time of the Bucharest summit, penned a memo to then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, summarizing Russian perspectives on Ukraine joining NATO. He emphasized that Ukrainian entry into NATO represents the most critical red line for the Russian elite, extending beyond just Putin. Burns noted that in over two and a half years of discussions with various Russian figures, ranging from Kremlin hardliners to Putin's staunchest liberal critics, he found unanimous agreement that Ukraine's NATO membership directly challenges Russian interests. According to Burns, NATO's decision would be interpreted as a strategic provocation, prompting a response from Russia. He predicted that Russian-Ukrainian relations would deteriorate significantly, leading to increased Russian interference in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. (Mearsheimer, 2022)

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### **1.7. Dragging Ukraine into NATO**

On March 18, 2014, during his justification for the annexation of Crimea, President Putin emphasized the sense of humiliation Russia experienced due to perceived hostile actions and unfulfilled promises by the West, notably citing NATO's eastward expansion. The Kremlin views NATO's enlargement into Eastern Europe as an anti-Russian initiative designed to encircle Russia, identifying it as a primary factor in the Ukraine crisis and the heightened tensions between Russia and the Western nations.

Russian objections to NATO expansion primarily center on two claims. firstly, that the admission of former Warsaw Pact countries into NATO contradicts an earlier assurance by the Alliance not to expand eastward, and secondly, that Western powers have actively pursued Ukraine's integration into NATO, characterizing it as an attempt to "drag" Ukraine into the Alliance but these claims are not confirmed yet. It's crucial to examine the claim suggesting that Western nations assured Russia of not expanding NATO eastward. Russian officials have asserted that during the 1990 German reunification negotiations, the United States and West Germany made a solemn promise to the USSR. This promise purportedly stated that if the Soviet Union agreed to Germany's NATO membership post-reunification, NATO would refrain from incorporating other Eastern European states. These assertions have sparked extensive debate, with some commentators like Robert McNamara, James Blight, and Leon Sigal contending that NATO's expansion eastward has humiliated Russia by breaking this alleged promise.

Scholars such as Mark Kramer and Michael Rühle argue that NATO never made such assurances. They view the notion of a no-NATO-expansion pledge as a myth, perpetuated by Moscow to justify its policies by portraying Russia as a victim. However, there's no written evidence of such a pledge in 1990 to prevent NATO enlargement beyond Germany. The Treaty on the Final concerning Germany, signed in September 1990 by key stakeholders, focused solely on the reunification of Germany without discussing NATO's future composition beyond eastern Germany. The treaty only guaranteed special military status to the former East Germany upon reunification, ensuring non-German NATO troops wouldn't be stationed there. The treaty didn't address NATO expansion into other Eastern European countries. Furthermore, American and

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Russian politicians involved in the German reunification process have denied the existence of such a commitment. James A. Baker, then US Secretary of State, refuted any intention to rule out new NATO member states. He highlighted that integrating East Germany into NATO effectively moved the alliance eastward.

Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union, stated that NATO enlargement wasn't discussed in the early 1990s, neither by Eastern European countries nor Western leaders. Based on these findings, it's evident that NATO leaders never formally committed to refraining from enlarging the alliance into former Warsaw Pact countries. This supports the argument that the supposed No-NATO expansion pledge to Russia is merely a myth, serving as a pretext for Moscow to justify its assertive actions.

The claim that the West aimed to involve Ukraine in NATO requires scrutiny. This assertion was put forth by President Putin, who used it to rationalize Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, arguing that failure to intervene would result in Ukraine being "pulled into NATO." This perspective is echoed by Realist scholar John J. Mearsheimer, who, in his Foreign Affairs article titled 'Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West's Fault,' contends that NATO expansion forms "the central element of a larger strategy to move Ukraine out of Russia's orbit and integrate it into the West." NATO membership was a key strategic objective for Ukraine during the administrations of Kuchma and Yushchenko. However, the government under President Viktor Yanukovich, which assumed power in 2010, reversed the pro-Western policies pursued by the preceding Yushchenko administration. In June 2010, Yanukovich's government passed a bill removing the goal of NATO membership from the country's national security strategy and opted for a non-aligned policy. NATO acknowledged Ukraine's decision and continued collaborating with it on reforms within the existing framework of the NATO-Ukraine Commission.(Roininen, 2017)

The potential expansion of NATO was a contributing factor, albeit a lesser one, in the Russo-Ukraine conflict. Although the West established a NATO-Russia Council to facilitate communication, Russia anticipated more substantial cooperation. Initially, US Secretary of State James Baker indicated to his Russian counterpart in the early 1990s that NATO would not expand, but historians like Mary Sarotte have revealed that this verbal assurance was swiftly

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reversed without a formal agreement. During discussions between US President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin in the 1990s, there was reluctant acceptance from Russia regarding some NATO enlargement, but both sides had differing expectations. However, NATO's decision in 2008, at its summit in Bucharest, to consider Ukraine (and Georgia) as potential future members exacerbated Putin's concerns about Western intentions.

Putin's disillusionment with the West had begun earlier, evident in his 2007 speech at the Munich Security Conference, despite his cooperation with the United States after the September 11, 2001, attacks. The prospect of NATO expansion was just one of several factors leading to the conflict, especially since France and Germany later indicated they would veto Ukraine's NATO membership, reducing the significance of NATO's decision in 2008. (Nye, 2022)

### **1.8. The Orange Revolution**

Since gaining independence in August 1991, Ukraine's leadership has advocated for the development of a democratic, free-market society, aiming for robust ties with Russia while also seeking deeper integration with Europe. The initial two presidents following independence, Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, both campaigned on reform platforms. However, Kuchma's tenure became increasingly associated with corruption as he prioritized maintaining power, adopting more conservative stances and reversing some reforms. In response to dissent, he tightened control over media freedom. In November 2001, Kuchma dismissed the reform-oriented Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko, replacing him with Viktor Yanukovich. These two figures later contended for the presidency in November 2004, leading to a remarkable turn of events. When a political controversy shook Ukraine during an election, numerous citizens of Ukraine gathered in the streets of Kyiv to peacefully express their discontent, leading to what was later termed The Orange Revolution. Following a rerun of the election in December, opposition figure Viktor Yushchenko emerged as the candidate. (Wilson Center, 2005)

The 2004 Ukrainian presidential election stirred controversy, particularly due to events surrounding the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. Amidst the election campaign, Yushchenko fell victim to poisoning by TCDD dioxin. Viktor Yushchenko has called on Russia to surrender key individuals involved in his near-fatal poisoning with dioxin. Yushchenko

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emphasized in an interview broadcast on Channel 1+1 on Sunday night that the testimony of three individuals present at a dinner in 2004, where he believes he was poisoned, is critical to concluding the investigation. Yushchenko stated "These three people who directly received me, treated me, and served me, unfortunately, are now in Russia," He asserted that their extradition is essential, yet Yushchenko fell severely ill while contending against a Russia-supported rival in the 2004 presidential race. Subsequently diagnosed with dioxin poisoning, which left lasting facial scars, he ultimately won the election amid extensive public protests known as the "Orange Revolution." (Interns, 2009)

Former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine and Senior Policy Scholar at the Wilson Center, William Green Miller, personally experienced the unfolding of the crisis during his six-week stay in Ukraine. Reflecting on the events, he described the Orange Revolution as a remarkable display of popular will, characterized by spontaneity and vibrancy. Miller noted the sudden emergence of the color orange in Ukrainian politics, with banners, ribbons, scarves, and various other items adorning the streets. Even orange kazoos were used by protesters, adding a unique musical element to their chants in support of Yushchenko. He remarked that the revolution showcased unprecedented urban mass political engagement, representing a direct form of democracy. (Wilson Center, 2005)

The Orange Revolution, occurring in 2004, marked a significant turning point in Ukrainian perception of their national identity. Prior to this event, the boundaries between Ukraine and Russia were often blurred, with many seeing the two countries' fates as closely linked. However, the mass mobilization of millions of Ukrainians in defense of free elections during the Orange Revolution changed this perception. The protests acted as a catalyst for a national awakening, affirming Ukraine's commitment to democracy and diverging from the increasing authoritarianism in Russia under Vladimir Putin. Since the Orange Revolution, Ukraine has held eight national votes without experiencing the political oppression and widespread vote-rigging common in other former Soviet states. This success has reinforced a sense of European identity among Ukrainians and deepened their psychological separation from authoritarian Russia. Overall, the Orange Revolution played a crucial role in shaping Ukraine's democratic trajectory and strengthening its distinct national identity. (Dickinson, 2020)

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### **1.9. Cultural Identity as a Source of Conflict**

Russia aims to eliminate Ukrainian statehood and erase its identity underscores the urgency of prioritizing the safeguarding of Ukrainian culture on a national level. Despite Kremlin denials of Ukraine's legitimacy and Putin's assertion of Ukrainians being essentially Russians, the surge in Ukrainian national pride since February 2022 has played a pivotal role in sustaining the country's resilience and resistance against Russia. Putin and his counterparts in Russia miscalculated the depth of Ukrainian national identity. Yet, there is substantial evidence indicating Russia's persistent objective to eradicate Ukrainian identity entirely. According to the UN rapporteur for cultural rights, Alexandra Xanthaki, in a December 2022 interview with *The New York Times*, Russia's agenda extends beyond territorial conquest to the systematic dismantling of Ukraine's cultural fabric. She emphasized that a key rationale behind the war is to undermine the distinct cultural identity of Ukrainians. The assault on Ukrainian cultural identity by Russia is evident in various forms, ranging from widespread looting of national treasures to the deliberate destruction of significant historic sites, including museums, theaters, libraries, and monuments. These acts constitute clear evidence of a calculated Kremlin-led campaign aimed at eradicating Ukraine's unique culture and heritage.

Notable targets have included the museum dedicated to Ukrainian folk artist Maria Prymachenko in the Kyiv region, the Sviatohirsk Monastery in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, the Transfiguration Cathedral located within the UNESCO-listed historic city center of Odesa in southern Ukraine, and a Kharkiv museum dedicated to the eighteenth-century Ukrainian philosopher Hryhorii Skovoroda. Recognizing the escalating threat to Ukraine's cultural heritage, UNESCO has acted by placing several historic Ukrainian landmarks on its list of endangered sites. Russia's invasion is not solely destroying the tangible remnants of Ukraine's cultural heritage; it is also exacting a human toll by claiming the lives of individuals who are instrumental in shaping the country's modern cultural landscape. One such tragic loss was that of Victoria Amelina, a celebrated 37-year-old novelist and poet. She fell victim to a Russian missile attack in July 2023 while dining in a restaurant in eastern Ukraine.

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The efforts of the Putin regime to stifle Ukrainian national culture and identity are rooted in a longstanding Russian imperial tradition that spans centuries. This is particularly evident in the extensive history of constraints placed on the use of the Ukrainian language. The suppression of the Ukrainian language dates to the early seventeenth century, with over 100 distinct measures being implemented by successive imperial administrations during both the Tsarist and Soviet periods. A stark illustration of this linguistic imperialism is found in a decree issued by the Tsarist regime in the mid-nineteenth century, which categorically denied the existence of the Ukrainian language, asserting that it "never existed, does not exist, and shall not exist." Thus far, the attempts by the Putin regime to eradicate Ukraine's cultural identity seem to be yielding unintended consequences. Despite the devastation wrought by Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukrainians are embracing their culture, history, and identity in unprecedented ways.

Since February 2022, millions of Ukrainians have embraced the Ukrainian language in their daily lives. Narratives of Ukrainian history, long suppressed under Russian imperial rule, are resurfacing and reshaping perceptions of Ukrainian identity. Across various domains such as poetry and pop music, contemporary Ukrainian culture is flourishing. It is crucial that this strengthening of Ukrainian identity becomes an integral part of the country's recovery efforts, both at the governmental level and through initiatives like the National Council for the Recovery of Ukraine. While numerous heritage preservation projects are underway, prioritizing the protection of cultural identity within broader national reconstruction plans is essential. Providing support to individuals and institutions as they explore and express the essence of Ukrainian identity is vital for the nation's future. Moreover, it serves as a powerful rebuttal to Russia's ambitions of erasing Ukraine's presence from the map entirely. (Holder, 2024)

### **1.10. Primary Triggers**

It's crucial to emphasize the significance of proximate and contingent factors, as despite the presence of underlying tensions, the outbreak of violent conflict was never inevitable. Without the unpredictable events that transpired in 2013-2014, which easily could have unfolded differently, Russia might never have annexed Crimea or intervened in the Donbas region. If Viktor Yanukovich had signed the EU Association Agreement, the Euromaidan protests might never have taken place, though Russia could still have reacted to such a development. If the



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initial Maidan protesters had been ignored rather than subjected to violence and arrests, the protests likely wouldn't have gained momentum. Furthermore, if Yanukovich's government had not enacted repressive "dictatorship" laws on January 16, attention might have remained focused on the Association Agreement or constitutional reform rather than ousting Yanukovich from power. Moreover, if a crisis resolution had been reached before widespread violence erupted, it probably would have been held. Even after protesters rejected an agreement, if Russia, the United States, and Europe had continued to support it, it might have endured. Moreover if more security forces loyal to the interim government had been present in Donetsk and Luhansk, like Kharkiv, initial separatist militants might have been expelled before establishing strongholds. Lastly, if the Russian leadership opted against seizing Crimea and intervening in eastern Ukraine, war could have been averted. In summary, despite the underlying sources of conflict, which had gained prominence, war was not inevitable until it began. (D'Anieri, 2019, p. 20)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, delving into the historical backdrop, underlying roots, and the causes of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine illuminates a complex narrative shaped by centuries of geopolitical entanglements, territorial disputes, and shifting power dynamics. From deep-seated historical grievances to contemporary political maneuvers, the conflict underscores the enduring significance of historical legacies in shaping contemporary conflicts and the imperative of nuanced analysis in addressing the challenges facing these two nations and the broader international community. Ultimately, understanding the roots of the Russia-Ukraine conflict requires delving into historical grievances, geopolitical ambitions, and the struggle for national identity.

# **Chapter Two**

## **Impacts and Consequences of the Russo- Ukrainian War**

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### **Introduction**

The Russo-Ukraine war, ignited in 2014 has left profound and far-reaching impacts. Beyond the loss of life and devastation of communities, this conflict has strained diplomatic relations, challenged international norms, and reshaped security paradigms. With its blend of hybrid warfare tactics and economic repercussions, the war stands as a stark reminder of the complexities and consequences of modern conflict. The Russo-Ukraine war sparked a refugee situation as Ukrainians escaped the conflict in their country. Over 8 million refugees have escaped Ukraine, a crisis deemed by the World Health Organization as "the most extensive displacement of people in the European Region since World War II." While some have been forcibly relocated by Russia, others have strained resources, including schools and hospitals, in Poland and Germany. (Neuman & Hurt, 2023)

The war has left a profound economic impact, not only within the borders of the conflict but also resonating across global markets. With Ukraine being an agricultural powerhouse and a significant producer of commodities like wheat and corn, the disruption caused by the conflict has rippled through international food markets, leading to price volatility and supply chain challenges. Moreover, the war has prompted widespread sanctions on Russia, affecting its energy exports, financial sector, and access to global markets. This has not only strained Russia's economy but also had repercussions on countries reliant on Russian energy, disrupting trade and investment flows. Additionally, the influx of refugees from Ukraine has placed burdens on neighboring countries' economies, straining resources and infrastructure. As the conflict persists, its economic ramifications continue to evolve, shaping both regional and global economic landscapes. As the war enters its second decade, its hard impacts and consequences continue to shape the trajectory of Eastern Europe and reverberate throughout the global order. Addressing and forging a path towards lasting peace remains a challenge, one that requires diplomatic efforts, a commitment to international law, and a recognition of the shared humanity that binds us all.

This chapter aims to shed light on the impacts and consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian war, economically, politically, and socially. Through comprehensive analysis, It aims to explore the

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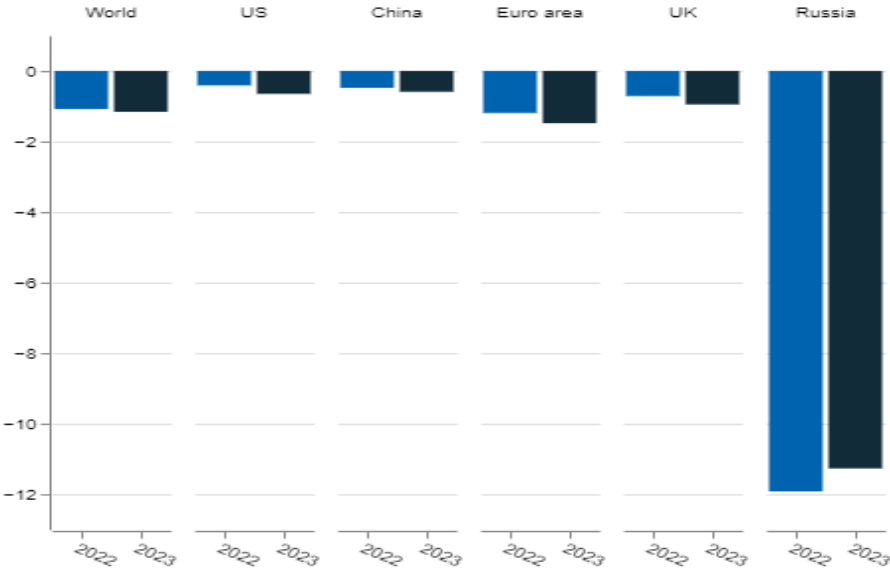
wide-ranging effects of the conflict, providing an understanding of how it has influenced geopolitical interests, economic stability, and social interactions.

## 2.1. The Economic Impact

### 2.1.1. The Significant Burden of Living Costs

Many would argue that war is never opportune. However, the timing of Russia's initial full-scale assault on Ukraine in February 2022 seemed especially harsh. It occurred just as societies worldwide were striving to return to normalcy after enduring two taxing years of the pandemic. Businesses grappled with disrupted supply chains while striving to meet a resurgence in demand for goods and services. They also began transferring heightened production expenses to consumers.

#### The GDP cost of the war for the global economy

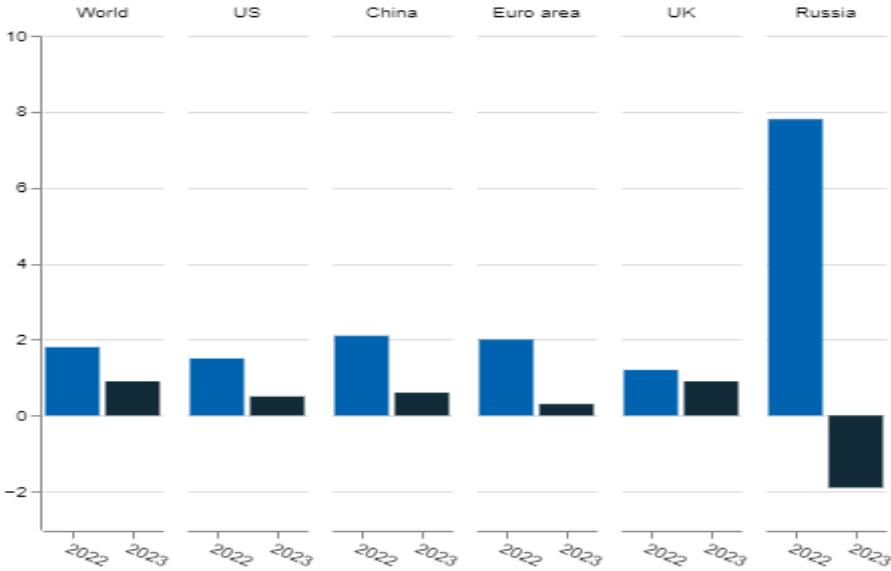


Source: National Institute Global Econometric Model (NiGEM) simulations

Russia's incursion into Ukraine exacerbated pressures on vital resources such as food and energy. This stemmed from diminished output in both nations and the imposition of sanctions on Russia. Costs surged even further, leading to inflation rates that far exceeded wage increases. This surge in living expenses has adversely affected the health and welfare of people globally, particularly the most vulnerable, and heightened the risk of famine. (Kilfoyle, 2023)

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## The inflation cost of war



Source: NiGEM simulations

### 2.1.2. Worldwide Food Insecurity

The conflict has severely impacted food security worldwide. Before the war, Ukraine and Russia jointly held the position of the world's largest wheat exporters, accounting for over a third (36%) of global wheat exports. Additionally, they supplied more than half of the world's sunflower oil. Unfortunately, early predictions, including those from the Economics Observatory, regarding the conflict's exacerbation of global food insecurity have been proven accurate. Developing and emerging economies have been hit the hardest, as they heavily depend on Ukraine and Russia for fuel and grain imports. The Food Security Information Network identifies the war, along with the pandemic, other conflicts, and extreme weather events, as a major factor contributing to a significant increase in the amount of food-insecure people.

In 2022, nearly 258 million people across 58 countries and territories faced food crisis or moderate-to-severe acute food insecurity, up from 193 million in 53 countries and territories in 2021. This marks the highest figure recorded since the organization reported such data in 2017. Despite efforts such as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which aimed to increase grain exports from Ukraine, data indicates that most of these exports went to wealthier countries. As of January 2023, low-income and lower-middle-income countries received less than 20% of Ukraine's grain exports. One possible explanation, as suggested by a commentator on the

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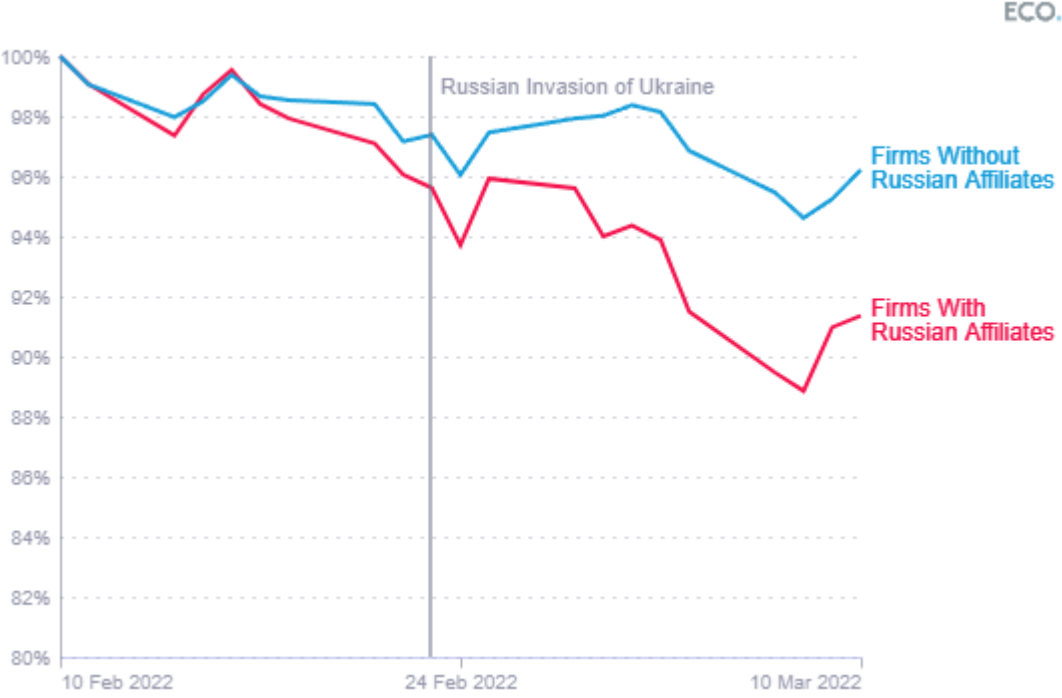
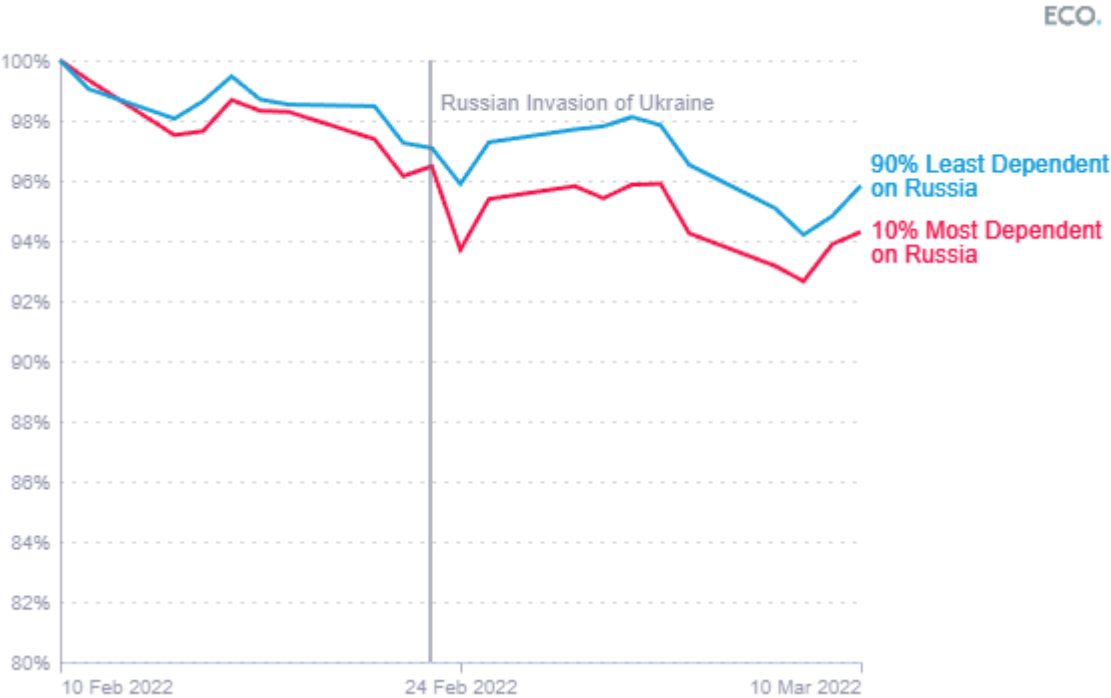
Economics Observatory, is that Ukraine prioritized trade deals based on financial incentives. Without equitable food distribution, achieving global food security one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 may become increasingly challenging, even with a surge in food exports and supply. Food prices continue to soar in many developing countries. For instance, in March 2023, food inflation exceeded 24% year-on-year in Nigeria, while some European countries experienced a cautious decline in global food prices. (Kilfoyle, 2023)

### **2.1.3. Effects on Worldwide Financial Markets**

The ongoing conflict has impacted both global businesses and consumers. Data from the stock market indicates that companies with significant ties to Russia, whether through trade or ownership, witnessed a notable decline in their share prices following the invasion. According to research conducted by the London School of Economics, trade connections with Russia led to an average decrease of 1.53% in the value of each country's overall stock market index. Before the war, firms had an average reliance on Russia of 0.25%. For instance, a company with a \$1 billion output would typically engage in exports and imports with Russia totaling \$2.5 million. However, the degree of dependence on Russia varies among countries, with European nations experiencing the most significant losses. East European countries are particularly affected by trade links, whereas West European countries bear the brunt of ownership connections. Conversely, countries with less substantial ties to Russia, such as the United States and China, have faced comparatively lesser impacts. This implies that Europe is poised to endure the most pronounced long-term international financial repercussions of the conflict.

### **Average cumulative returns of firms, by level of exposure to Russia**

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Source: Leromain and Biermann, 2023

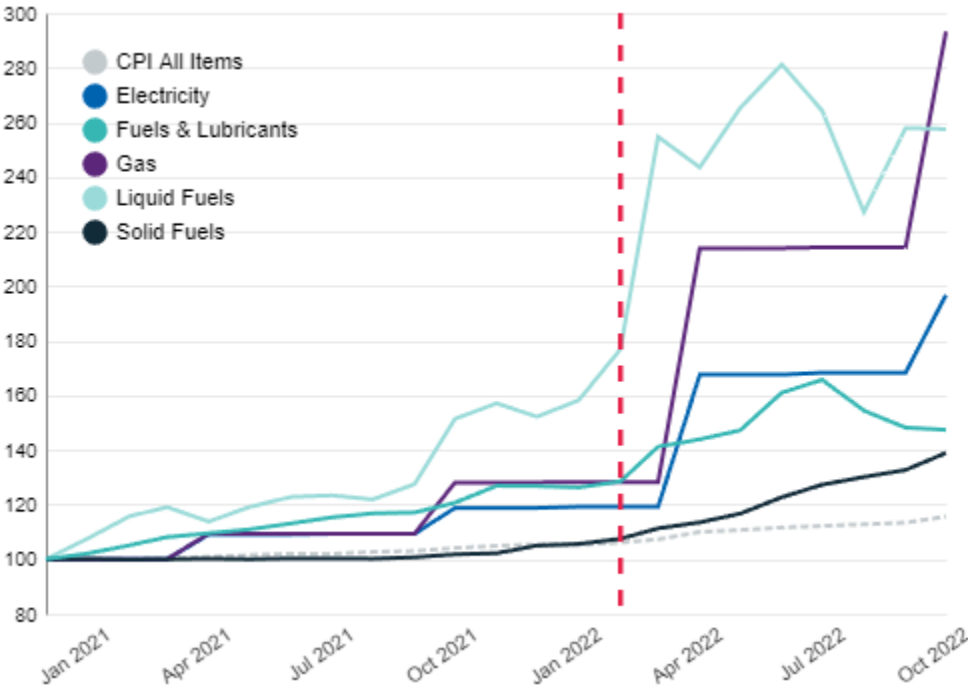
## 2.1.4. Surging Energy Prices

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The stringent economic sanctions imposed on Russia have spurred additional hikes in global energy prices. This leads to a broader scenario of heightened inflation, as energy expenses increase across all stages from production to storage and transportation within the supply chains of goods and services. In the initial fortnight of the conflict, Brent prices, the European oil benchmark, surged by over 25%. By the close of March, European gas prices soared to approximately 580% higher compared to the previous year, although they have somewhat retreated since then. European nations, including the UK, swiftly moved to reduce their reliance on Russian oil and natural gas, resulting in the dormant status of the newly constructed Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Notably, both Nord Stream 1 and 2 suffered sabotage in September 2021.

The endeavor to substitute Russian energy sources has posed significant challenges, often necessitating the utilization of pricier alternatives like liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States. Although the UK's direct consumption of Russian gas is minimal, its close ties to the European wholesale market mean that supply disruptions in continental Europe directly impact UK prices. In 2021, the EU collectively constituted the largest purchaser of Russian oil, acquiring 42% of Russia's oil production.

**Energy prices, December 2020 to October 2022**





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Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) consumer price inflation, November 2022

Amidst the conflict, one potential silver lining could be the acceleration of cleaner energy resource development, including renewables, which would further diminish reliance on fossil fuels at a swifter pace. Moreover, the downturn in economic growth spurred by escalating energy costs is expected to curb fossil fuel consumption in countries such as the UK and EU member states. This unintended consequence offers a glimmer of hope in the face of the impending climate crisis. (Kilfoyle, 2023)

### **2.2. Refugees Crisis**

Approximately 10 million individuals have been compelled to leave their residences in Ukraine following the invasion by Russia in 2022. This number represents nearly a quarter of the country's population, which was estimated at 44 million by the World Bank in 2020. Of those who have evacuated, the majority, around 6.48 million as of March 16, according to data provided by the International Organization for Migration, have been internally displaced since the conflict commenced on February 24. Others have sought sanctuary in neighboring countries such as Poland, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia, Russia, and Belarus.

The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, reported that over 90% of the 3.1 million individuals who have fled Ukraine are women and children. Raouf Mazou, the assistant commissioner of UNHCR, pointed out that this statistic highlights a "heightened risk of gender-based violence and other forms of exploitation and abuse, including trafficking." According to UNICEF spokesman Joe English, speaking to CNN, 1.5 million Ukrainian children have become refugees due to Russia's invasion, with an additional 3.3 million children displaced within the country. English emphasized that each of these children is an individual whose life has been disrupted and whose world has been turned upside down. (Ramsay, 2022)

The extensive migration sparked by the conflict instigated by Russia in Ukraine extends beyond simply seeking refuge in the nearest safe nation; it has evolved into a multifaceted phenomenon. This intricacy has become increasingly apparent in recent months, with refugees moving from countries bordering Ukraine further westward, primarily towards Germany, and

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even reaching as far as Canada, which boasts a sizable Ukrainian diaspora. Numerous Ukrainians maintain connections with their homeland through temporary back-and-forth relocations, building upon existing practices of seasonal labor migration. While millions of refugees have permanently returned to Ukraine, they seldom settle back in the regions they fled from.

### **Refugees in Europe**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) approximates that there are presently approximately 6 million Ukrainian refugees situated across Europe. There has been a notable shift in the distribution of refugees over the past year. While Poland held the highest number of forcibly displaced individuals in the spring of 2023, Germany has now emerged as the primary destination. Official figures indicate that around 1.1 million Ukrainian refugees currently reside in Germany. The refugee landscape has undergone significant changes in Poland as well. Out of the more than 1.6 million refugees granted temporary protection by Poland, only approximately 960,000 remain within its borders.

Numerous factors contribute to the substantial departure of Ukrainians from Poland, with Germany being the primary destination, although other Western European countries also attract migrants to a lesser degree. The primary incentives for secondary migration to Germany include higher income prospects and improved social welfare benefits. Nearly half of those migrating report being motivated to move further west based on recommendations from friends or relatives. When considering the number of refugees relative to the population, Estonia leads the EU rankings, with approximately 37 Ukrainian temporary protection holders per 1,000 inhabitants. Only two other European countries, situated outside the EU's borders, report a higher proportion of refugees within their populations. In Moldova, refugees make up nearly a twentieth of the population, while in Montenegro, they exceed a tenth. Among Western European nations, it may come as a surprise to many that it's not Germany but Ireland that boasts the highest relative number of refugees. Despite having a population of just five million, Ireland has already surpassed 100,000 Ukrainian refugees, and the number continues to rise. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar's government has grappled with the persistent increase in refugee numbers, especially as it exacerbates the longstanding housing market crisis. It's essential to recognize that in the case of Ireland, as well as in Germany and Austria, the Ukrainian refugee crisis is just one

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among many challenges. The mass influx of Ukrainians coincides with record numbers of asylum seekers from non-European nations like Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Venezuela arriving in these countries. (Migration Awareness, 2024)

### **Refugees in Canada and the United States**

A considerable number of Ukrainian refugees have sought refuge abroad, with over 400,000 migrating to Canada and the US since February 2022. Both countries have implemented special visa arrangements for Ukrainian refugees. Those seeking to settle in Canada can apply through the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) program, which provides access to work and study permits, among other benefits. There is substantial interest in participating in the program, with Canadian authorities receiving approximately 1.2 million applications. Nearly two-thirds of these applications have been approved, but the number of individuals who have utilized the entry permit is notably lower. According to the latest data, just over 210,000 people have entered Canada under the CUAET program. The United States has granted either Temporary Protected Status or, for those arriving after April 1, 2022, a special humanitarian visa provided under the Uniting for Ukraine (U4U) program to the majority of the roughly 270,000 Ukrainians who have arrived. These visas, valid for two years, are predicated on the assurance of sponsorship from individuals or families already legally residing in the US. This sponsorship role can be undertaken by relatives, friends of the applicants, or volunteers from the public. (Migration Awareness, 2024)

### **2.3. The Environmental Impact**

The primary and most severe tragedy of any armed conflict is its immediate impact: each war results in a significant toll of civilian and military lives lost due to combat. Beyond those directly affected by firearms, there are numerous individuals who suffer from the secondary repercussions of war: refugees fleeing conflict zones, economic downturns in disputed regions leading to heightened unemployment, malnutrition, increased mortality rates, and the breakdown of essential services from security to education and healthcare. Despite receiving less attention, environmental ramifications also occur, including pollution stemming from weaponry materials and the abandonment of areas that become hazardous themselves. However, these indirect consequences often lead to more fatalities in the long term than the actual conflict itself, with the

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climatic and environmental effects of any conflict receiving inadequate media coverage. According to findings from the Environmental Performance Index, Ukraine had already been rated poorly on environmental metrics like air quality, biodiversity preservation, and ecosystem health even before the onset of the Russian invasion in February 2022. Consequently, the environmental situation in Ukraine is likely to deteriorate further because of the conflict.

The Russian military's targeting of Ukraine's military infrastructure and urban centers has led to significant environmental ramifications. Fires in military installations have resulted in the dispersal of large smoke clouds containing toxic gases and particles over civilian areas. Additionally, using explosive weapons in populated regions contributes to pollution from building materials such as asbestos, metals, and combustion byproducts. The destruction of these sites generates substantial waste, posing risks of soil and groundwater contamination and subsequent health issues for humans. On the first day of the invasion, there were reports of gamma radiation levels in the Chernobyl zone reaching approximately 28 times the annual limit, attributed to heavy vehicle movements. Ukraine currently operates 15 nuclear reactors across four different locations. If even one reactor were to sustain damage during the conflict, it could trigger a second Chernobyl-like disaster. Debris and radiation released in such an event could spread over thousands of kilometers, potentially causing various health problems, including thyroid cancer, not only in Ukraine but also in neighboring countries. Moreover, the Donbas region harbors numerous outdated coal mines, presenting a significant hazard in Ukraine. When a mine ceases operations, it cannot be simply abandoned. There are ongoing tasks such as continuous water pumping to prevent reservoirs from becoming contaminated with heavy metals like mercury, lead, and arsenic. The conflict further restricts these essential maintenance activities, exacerbating a situation that was already evident even before the invasion, with 35 different sites experiencing neglect due to a lack of will and resources from pro-Russian separatists.

These mines become abandoned, flooded, and contribute to water pollution, compromising water sources meant for drinking and irrigation. Ukraine boasts 35% of Europe's biodiversity, with over 70,000 rare and endemic flora and fauna species. Unfortunately, the ongoing war poses a significant threat to this biodiversity, with the potential for irreversible destruction.

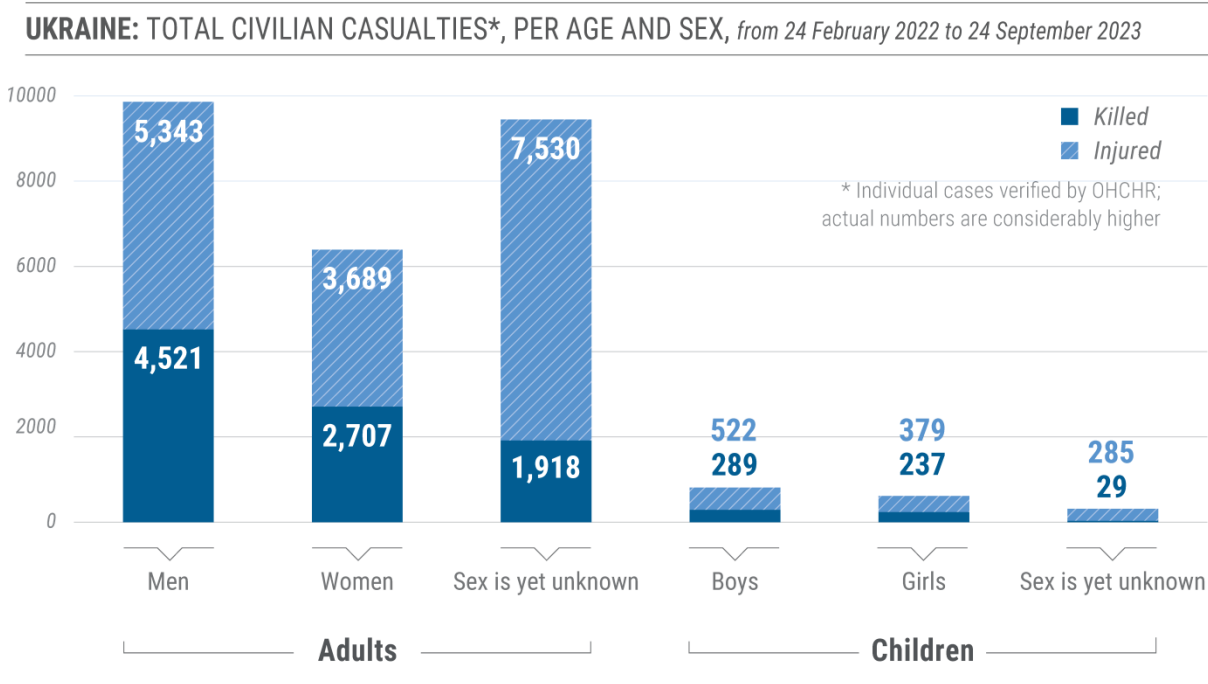
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Additionally, 16% of Ukraine's land area is covered by forests, and the use of artillery during the conflict increases the risk of forest fires. In 2020 alone, such fires ravaged 20,000 hectares of the Luhansk region. Furthermore, the weaponry utilized in this conflict will escalate the region's carbon footprint, trapping more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and heightening Ukraine's vulnerability to climate change-related disasters. (European Union, 2024)

## 2.4. War Casualties

Between September 1 and September 24, 2023, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documented 554 civilian casualties in Ukraine, consisting of 111 fatalities including 64 men, 40 women, and 1 girl, as well as 6 adults whose gender has not been identified and 443 injuries comprising 207 men, 138 women, 12 boys, 3 girls, and 83 adults whose gender remains unknown. Between February 24, 2022, which marked the onset of the large-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation, and September 24, 2023, the OHCHR documented a total of 27,449 civilian casualties in the country, comprising 9,701 fatalities and 17,748 injuries.

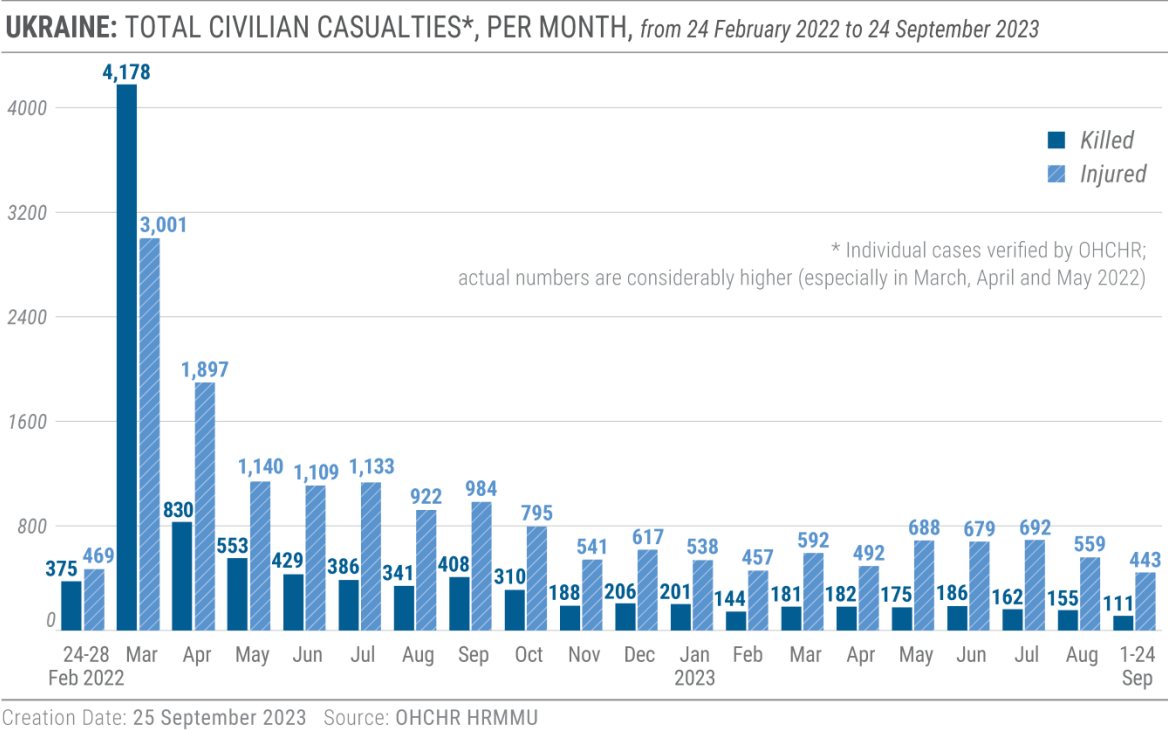
### Total civilian casualties per age and sex from 24 February 2022 to 24 September 2023



Creation Date: 25 September 2023 Source: OHCHR HRMMU

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## Total civilian casualties per month from 24 February 2022 to September 2023



Source: OHCHR HRMMU

OHCHR asserts that the reported figures likely underestimate the true extent of civilian casualties, as delays in receiving information from areas experiencing intense hostilities have occurred, and numerous reports are still awaiting confirmation. Particularly, concerns are raised regarding locations such as Mariupol in the Donetsk region, as well as Lysychansk, Popasna, and Sievierodonetsk in the Luhansk region, where there are allegations of significant civilian casualties. (United Nations, 2023)

### 2.5. The Political Impact

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine emerges as a pivotal moment with extensive consequences. Beyond simply reshaping territorial boundaries, it has fundamentally shifted political and strategic dynamics across Europe and internationally. Some of the political impacts, for example, include

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The conflict has spurred a significant strengthening of cohesion among Western countries, which have joined forces in support of Ukraine while implementing sanctions against Russia. This solidarity has been prominently displayed within the G7, NATO, and the European Union, playing a pivotal role in thwarting Russia's early war objectives. Key unifying elements among Western nations include the imposition of sanctions, the delivery of financial and military assistance, and backing Ukraine's aspirations for EU membership as well as potential NATO accession. (Roles, 2023)

### **Tensions and Divisions within the West**

The conflict has additionally generated friction within Western nations, with differing levels of readiness among countries to offer military support to Ukraine. These disparities have sparked debates over the appropriate course of action in response to the war, prompting uncertainties regarding the continuity of the transatlantic alliance. (Roles, 2023)

### **Impact on Political Stability in West Africa**

The conflict has ushered in a fresh security paradigm, rendering nations more susceptible to instability. This altered security terrain has elevated the threat of terrorism, the spread of arms, and the disruption of economic operations. In West Africa, such circumstances may precipitate heightened conflict and violence, along with a regression in democratic governance. Noteworthy developments encompass military coups in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Guinea, alongside the erosion and potential dissolution of ECOWAS, coupled with the ascendancy of jihadist factions. (Roles, 2023)

### **Wagner**

The Wagner Group, widely believed to have close ties to the Russian government, has been implicated in military and security endeavors across various nations including Libya, Sudan, and the Central African Republic. The group's engagements frequently coincide with Russian geopolitical aims, such as resource acquisition, fostering strategic alliances, or countering Western influence in those regions. With the passing of Yevheniy Pryhozin, the wagner group will probably become integrated into the framework of the Russian military or special services. This move is anticipated to bolster Russian sway throughout the African continent. (Roles, 2023)

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### Wagner's alleged engagement in Africa



Source: Global initiative against transnational organized crime February 2023

### Impact on political stability

The conflict in Ukraine has disrupted the global order, triggering repercussions in the Middle East and South Asia. There are apprehensions that this turmoil could exacerbate political instability in these regions, along with heightening tensions among neighboring nations. In Egypt, for instance, the war has exacerbated tensions between the ruling government and opposition factions. The government alleges that the opposition harbors sympathies toward Russia, while the opposition accuses the government of being overly aligned with the United States. Similarly, in India, the conflict has escalated tensions between India and Pakistan. There are fears that the situation could potentially escalate into a confrontation between the two nuclear-armed adversaries. (Roles, 2023)

### Reaction of Middle Eastern countries to the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

Middle Eastern nations typically adopt a neutral stance in the ongoing tensions between the United States and Russia over the Russia-Ukraine conflict. They aim to uphold a sense of equilibrium between these two major powers and base their policy decisions on their own interests. Some Middle Eastern countries have even demonstrated the audacity to turn down



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certain requests from the US, indicating a growing trend towards balancing foreign influence in the region. (Liu & Shu, 2023)

### **Reaction of Arab Countries to the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict**

When addressing the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Arab nations have typically pursued a neutral stance, refraining from aligning with either side. This approach is marked by two key features. Firstly, Arab countries have intensified their engagement with all involved parties and collaborated with relevant nations on various matters to pursue strategic hedging. Secondly, they have enhanced intra-regional dialogue and reciprocal aid, aiming to mitigate potential harm and the spread of external risks while maximizing collective benefits. This stands in stark contrast to Arab countries' behavior towards the US or Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) during the Cold War and its aftermath. (Liu & Shu, 2023)

### **2.6. Impact on Human Rights**

The discourse concerning the impact of the armed conflict in Ukraine on human rights typically centers on the conditions within Ukraine. This emphasis is entirely justified, given that the conflict, instigated by Russia's aggressive actions in March 2014 and escalated to full-scale conflict in February 2022, has significantly affected the realization of nearly all human rights for individuals residing or present within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine, including those in temporarily occupied areas such as Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk. The conflict in Ukraine has significantly influenced the human rights landscape beyond its borders, notably in the European Union. This is attributed to the proximity of certain EU nations to Ukraine and the proactive support for Ukraine endorsed by many of these countries as well as the EU.

#### **2.6.1. Safeguarding Ukraine Refugees**

The conflict in Ukraine has resulted in what has been described as "the fastest growing refugee crisis since World War II." As of July 4, 2023, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had documented over 6.3 million war refugees globally originating from Ukraine. Approximately two-thirds of these refugees were registered in European Union (EU) member states, with Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic hosting the largest numbers of

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individuals. These refugees joined approximately 1.6 million Ukrainians who had already relocated to EU member states, primarily Poland and the Czech Republic, before Russia's full-scale attack. The majority of those who arrived in the EU between 2014 and 2022 had obtained residence permits lasting at least 12 months, typically for employment purposes. However, around 82,000 individuals had submitted asylum applications in EU member states, primarily in Italy, Spain, Germany, and France. By the end of 2021, approximately 16,000 positive decisions had been issued, with 85 percent of them in the first instance and 15 percent in the final instances, with over half of these decisions made in Italy, followed by France, Spain, and Germany.

Ukrainian citizens who fled Ukraine following the onset of the full-scale armed conflict, specifically after February 24, 2022, have encountered a distinct legal framework compared to those who relocated to EU territories before this date. For the first time in its history, the EU activated the temporary protection mechanism outlined in Council Directive 2001/55/EC dated July 20, 2001. Temporary protection involves an extraordinary procedure aimed at promptly and temporarily sheltering displaced persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin due to a mass influx or imminent mass influx, particularly if there is a risk that the asylum system would struggle to handle this influx efficiently without negative consequences. This measure is taken in the interest of both the affected individuals and others seeking protection. Through its decision on March 4, 2022, the EU Council recognized "the existence of a mass influx into the Union of displaced persons who have had to leave Ukraine as a consequence of an armed conflict" and determined that temporary protection, initially lasting for one year, would be extended to war refugees from Ukraine. This includes Ukrainian citizens, stateless individuals, or nationals of third countries who had been residing in Ukraine under certain conditions as of February 24, 2022.

As demonstrated by this overview, war refugees from Ukraine have generally been welcomed in EU Member States, and a legal structure has been established to guarantee the full protection of their human rights. However, despite this, some deficiencies have arisen in the execution of this framework. Nevertheless, these issues have been acknowledged and, particularly within the initial 18 months following the escalation of the full-scale war, EU

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Member States have largely managed the substantial influx of war refugees in the post-World War II era quite effectively. Conversely, the situation in the other two areas addressed in the following sections presents a notably distinct scenario. (Bílková, 2023)

### **2.6.2. Sanctions against the Russian Federation and Belarus**

The conflict in Ukraine has impacted human rights within the EU concerns the targeted sanctions directed at individuals from the Russian Federation and, to a lesser degree, Belarus. The EU has a robust history of implementing sanctions against third countries, as well as against individuals and non-state entities residing or holding assets within these countries or EU member states. These sanctions sometimes align with measures set by the UN Security Council, while in other cases, the EU establishes its own sanctions, either by extending existing measures or introducing additional ones. The legal foundation for these sanctions in EU law is outlined in Articles 75 and 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Article 75 pertains to sanctions linked to counter-terrorism efforts, while Article 215 covers other types of sanctions. As of July 2023, the EU had instituted over 40 sanction regimes, although some have been temporarily suspended. Most of these sanctions stem from the actions of specific countries, while the four regimes have broader applications, targeting serious human rights violations, terrorism, cyber-attacks, proliferation, and the use of chemical weapons.

The sanctions imposed by the EU in connection with the conflict in Ukraine rank among the most stringent. Initially introduced in 2014 in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine, these measures have significantly expanded since February 24, 2022, with the adoption of eleven successive packages. These measures target both the Russian Federation as a whole and specific individuals and organizations. As of July 31, 2023, the sanction list related to the Ukraine conflict comprised over 1,800 individuals, including Russian government officials, military personnel, prominent business figures, oligarchs, and propagandists. Additionally, sanctions have been applied to Belarus and its affiliates for human rights violations and support for Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine. The sanctions primarily involve travel bans and asset freezes against targeted individuals. Some EU member states have also implemented measures restricting Russian and Belarusian citizens from certain educational programs, cultural or sports events, or using their vehicles within EU territory.

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Discussions have emerged in recent months regarding the possibility of transitioning temporary asset freezes into permanent confiscation of property owned by Russian or Belarusian citizens as part of the compensation mechanism for Ukraine. While certain measures like visa denials typically don't interfere with human rights, others such as asset freezes and potential confiscations may raise concerns regarding the right to property and the right to private and family life. Any such measures must be lawful and consistent with relevant human rights standards. (Bílková, 2023)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the Russo-Ukraine war has left a profound imprint on nations and the broader global landscape, with wide-ranging impacts felt across economic, environmental, and social spheres. Economically, the conflict has disrupted trade, destabilized markets, and imposed significant costs on Ukraine and Russia, hindering development and exacerbating existing economic challenges. Environmental consequences have also been severe, with damage to ecosystems, pollution from military activities, and the displacement of populations leading to long-term environmental degradation. Politically, the conflict has reshaped regional dynamics and tested international alliances, highlighting the fragility of geopolitical stability in the 21st century. The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine has sparked debates over sovereignty and territorial integrity, challenging the norms of international relations and raising questions about the effectiveness of diplomatic solutions. As we grapple with the aftermath of this conflict, its effects will continue to reverberate for years to come.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Future Scenarios of the Russo- Ukrainian War**

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### **Introduction**

As Russia's conflict in Ukraine progresses into its third year, the current stalemate on the battlefield conceals significant shifts. The primary battleground has shifted to the political arena, with Russian President Vladimir Putin banking on divisions and hesitations within the Western powers to secure the victory he has been unable to achieve militarily. European governments, concerned about the security implications for their continent if the United States withdraws and Ukraine falls, have stepped up their assistance in recent months. Together, they have now provided or pledged more military aid to Kyiv than Washington has, and when economic aid is factored in, the support is more than double. This represents a noteworthy change from the early stages of the conflict, yet it has not been sufficient to change the course of the war in Ukraine's favor. The question remains how and when will this conflict reach its conclusion? The Kremlin has made it clear that it will only accept a negotiated resolution that entails Ukraine's surrender, while the Ukrainian side has vehemently asserted its determination to resist absorption into Moscow's sphere of influence. Two years into the conflict, the prospect of peace in Europe remains elusive. (Stefan Theil, 2024)

Looking ahead, the conflict casts a shadow over regional stability, with its future trajectory uncertain. As diplomatic efforts continue, there's hope for a peaceful resolution, but challenges persist. The resilience of the Ukrainian people and the involvement of global stakeholders add layers of complexity to the situation. While the path to peace remains unclear, the imperative for dialogue and negotiation remains paramount to mitigate further escalation and pave the way for a stable and secure future for all involved.

This chapter aims to delve into the future of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, exploring various scenarios that could unfold. As tensions persist, understanding the potential trajectories of this conflict is paramount. By examining future scenarios, we can better anticipate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, paving the way for informed decision-making and proactive diplomacy.

### **3.1. Exploring the Future of the Ukraine Conflict**

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What will be the resolution for Ukraine? Are there historical comparisons that might offer insight into predicting its outcome? Putin has rationalized his military action through vague and subtle allusions to previous Western involvements. By citing an alleged "genocide" in the Donbas, he draws parallels to NATO's rationale in 1999 for enforcing a peace agreement on Serbia, culminating in Kosovo's independence. Additionally, there are striking resemblances to the U.S. discourse from two decades ago, during preparations for the invasion of Iraq: the imperative to oust a regime linked to "Nazism," along with concerns albeit unfounded about a Ukrainian nuclear weapons program. The Russian discourse, along with a portion of the Western dialogue, also hinted at the potential for a new "Cuban missile crisis." However, at least in the initial stages of the conflict, this notion seemed equally far-fetched. There are no Western missiles stationed in Ukraine, nor are there any plans or justifications for their deployment there. The only NATO missiles in the vicinity are the anti-missile interceptors positioned in Poland and Romania, which are not designed to counteract a Russian offensive strike.

The Cold War does offer a couple of more pertinent comparisons. One is the Berlin crisis of 1961. Like six decades ago, it appears that Russia mistakenly believed that a weak U.S. president would be indecisive in the face of a significant strategic move by Moscow. Other, perhaps more fitting parallels, include the Soviet interventions in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), and Afghanistan (1979), all aimed at preventing the loss of a friendly regime. The so-called "counter-terrorism operation" in Kazakhstan by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), albeit on a smaller scale, also fits into this pattern. From Putin's perspective, Ukraine was increasingly aligning itself with Europe and the West, posing a threat of permanently departing from what Russia considers its "sphere of influence."

What lies ahead? Are there historical instances that can provide insights into the eventual outcome? On the extreme end, there's the possibility of Ukraine being annexed, like Iraq's annexation of Kuwait in 1990. However, this scenario would likely only occur following a prolonged and devastating war. Another possibility is the partitioning of Ukraine, akin to the division of Germany or Korea in 1945, or the outcome of the 1686 "Perpetual Peace" Moscow Treaty between Russia and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which physically divided Ukrainian territories. However, this scenario is unlikely given the resilience of Ukrainian forces

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and the presence of multiple frontlines. If Ukraine were to be subjugated, it would find itself in a situation like neighboring Belarus, which effectively came under Moscow's influence after Putin supported the Lukashenko regime in 2020-2021. However, such a scenario would only materialize if Russia managed to defeat Ukrainian forces and establish a puppet government in Kyiv. Nonetheless, it's evident that this outcome would be inherently unstable, given the significant resistance maintained by many Ukrainian citizens.

Moving into somewhat more plausible scenarios, there's the concept of Ukraine adopting a "Finlandization" approach, signifying a deliberate and sovereign decision to pursue military neutrality. This would address one of Russia's expressed concerns: the potential future inclusion of Ukraine in the Atlantic Alliance. However, proponents of this idea many of whom are reputable experts and statesmen often overlook the fact that it could leave Ukraine vulnerable to Kremlin influence. This scenario could only come to fruition as part of a comprehensive resolution to the conflict, wherein Ukrainian forces, like Finland during 1939-1940, would effectively stalemate Russian aggression.

Then there are scenarios less favorable for the Kremlin, such as a prolonged quagmire for Russian forces, akin to Afghanistan or, for the United States, Iraq. However, these comparisons have their limitations: Ukraine holds far greater importance for the Kremlin than Afghanistan did for the Soviet Union or Iraq did for the United States. Consequently, it's improbable that Moscow could simply withdraw after imparting a "lesson" to Ukraine, as China did to Vietnam in 1979. Hence, scenarios of escalation seem increasingly plausible, presenting various potential outcomes. Russia may opt to escalate by instigating incidents along European borders, potentially rupturing European and transatlantic security. For instance, neutral Sweden is closely monitoring Russia's actions concerning Gotland Island in the Baltic Sea. Additionally, Russia could employ tactics such as cyberattacks or even terrorism to further destabilize the situation.

Moscow might opt to "open a new front" by supporting the small Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina to declare independence, thereby stirring regional tensions. Furthermore, it could leverage the nuclear option by making aggressive statements and visibly adjusting its strategic forces posture, reminiscent of the Soviet Union's actions during the Suez crisis of 1956.



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Another tactic could involve deploying Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory to intimidate Europe and sow division within the Atlantic Alliance. Additionally, as Turkey increasingly aligns with Ukraine, any attempt to block the passage of Russian ships in the Bosphorus straits could prompt a retaliatory response from Russia, evoking memories of the Crimean War of the 19th century. Alternatively, escalation could occur inadvertently rather than as a deliberate strategy. For instance, a Russian bomber flight might stray off course, inadvertently crossing a European border and being intercepted or downed by NATO forces, reminiscent of the Turkish-Russian incident in 2015. In Ukraine, Western instructors or volunteers could suffer mass casualties during a Russian bombing campaign, leading to outrage and demands for retaliation in the West like the incident in 2018 when over 200 Russian soldiers were killed by US forces in Syria during the battle of Khasham. A comprehensive examination of scenarios would also need to consider the possibility of a significant Russian military defeat, potentially resulting in the departure of President Putin, akin to the outcomes seen with Milosevic after the Kosovo war or the Argentinian junta after the 1982 Falklands conflict. Such a scenario could pave the way for a swift reconquest of the breakaway Donbas Republics, like the Croatian forces' actions in 1995 during Operation Storm.

In the meantime, Russian forces may continue to pursue maximum military gains on the ground, with their primary objective being the destruction of Ukrainian armed forces and state institutions through escalating kinetic force. As Lenin purportedly said, "You probe with bayonets: if you find mush, you push. If you find steel, you withdraw." Unfortunately, another troubling analogy arises: the devastating destruction of Grozny in 1999, serving as a reminder of the potential horrors if Chechen forces were to become involved in carrying out the Kremlin's objectives in Ukraine. (Tertrais, 2022)

### **3.2. Future Scenarios from the Western Perspective**

Ukrainians often find themselves grappling with a profound lack of confidence in the future, compounded by persistent stress and fear that the ongoing war will never cease. Such feelings are not uncommon given the toll on mental well-being, yet the pressing query of "when will the war in Ukraine end" increasingly weighs on the minds of many. Initially, amidst the full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukrainians clung to the notion of the "two weeks of Arestovich" as a source of

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solace, aiding in maintaining a semblance of rationality while carrying on with basic daily tasks. However, after enduring over two years of intense conflict, optimism has waned considerably among Ukrainians. As such, there is a growing interest in expert opinions regarding the cessation of hostilities, coupled with various speculations circulating on the internet.

The war could end as early as 2024. According to the German newspaper Welt, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict may come to a halt this year, but not in the manner Ukrainians have hoped for. The Kremlin might opt to freeze the conflict, leaving Russian occupiers entrenched in the territories, while halting the supply of Western weapons and negotiations for Ukraine's accession to the EU and NATO. Several factors suggest the possibility of a frozen state of war in Ukraine, as highlighted by the publication. Notably, neither side holds a significant advantage on the battlefield, and the prolonged conflict is depleting both military and material resources, rendering a definitive peace agreement improbable. In the scenario of a "frozen conflict," Ukraine may avoid a decisive defeat, albeit at the cost of relinquishing immediate territorial gains. However, it remains uncertain whether Ukraine will be able to reclaim the occupied territories this year. There is a likelihood that Kyiv will need to concentrate on fortifying its current frontline, although it's premature to draw definitive conclusions. Moreover, the specter of new Russian attacks looms over Ukraine, potentially resulting in substantial territorial losses. Ultimately, the crucial factor that could sway the outcome of the conflict is when the West extends significant assistance to Ukraine. Analysts warn that a delay in such aid could pave the way for Ukraine losing territory as early as this summer.

In contrast to German analysts, the war will not end in 2024. The American press presents a divergent perspective, suggesting that the war in Ukraine could persist for an extended period. The Wall Street Journal, for instance, posits that Putin may aim to conclude the conflict by 2025, driven by the realization that the West's support for Ukraine makes it unlikely for Russia to achieve a clear victory. This viewpoint stems from the substantial financial investments made by Western countries in Kyiv, leading to the belief that allowing Russia to triumph would be unwise. Other reputable American media outlets echo this sentiment, suggesting that the third year of the conflict could prove pivotal for Ukraine and Russia, with significant challenges looming on the horizon. Foremost among these challenges is the level of assistance provided to

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Ukraine by the West, a factor contingent upon the stance of the Republicans and the outcome of the US presidential election. Additionally, the implementation of mobilization efforts in Russia to bolster the military with fresh resources and the onset of an economic downturn in Russia are cited as crucial determinants shaping the trajectory of the conflict. (Visit Ukraine, 2024)

### **3.3. War Stalemate**

Defense analysts widely anticipated that by 2024, the conflict would reach a standstill, with neither side gaining nor losing significant ground. However, Russia's substantial military resources have enabled it to wear down Ukraine's defenses and make advances, particularly in eastern Ukraine. Recent weeks have seen Moscow capturing the industrial city of Avdiivka and several smaller settlements. This recent momentum by Russia, combined with ongoing concerns about Ukraine's shortages of weapons and ammunition, as well as delays in U.S. military assistance, has raised fears that a stalemate might be the best possible outcome for Kyiv this year. At the worst, there's a possibility of Russian forces breaching Ukraine's defensive lines along certain parts of the front.

Ben Barry, a senior fellow for Land Warfare at the IISS defense and security think tank, highlighted the critical nature of the upcoming months in shaping the conflict's trajectory. He pointed out that Russia's recent successes, including the capture of Avdiivka, challenge the previous belief that the war would stalemate in 2024. Barry also noted Moscow's willingness to seize territory despite facing high casualties, contrasting with the lack of consistent Western supply of artillery ammunition to Ukraine. These factors have contributed to the recent shift in momentum in the land campaign as the third year of Russia's full-scale invasion unfolds.

Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has cautioned about Russia's intentions to initiate fresh offensives in early summer, emphasizing the critical shortage of ammunition and weaponry. Barry observed that Russia is poised to launch a series of significant assaults throughout spring and summer, aiming to cause Ukrainian casualties, push defenders westward, and extend its control over occupied territories, especially in Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine. According to the IISS assessment, Russia, having already mobilized several hundred thousand troops, has the capability to sustain an offensive campaign for an extended period.

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“Moscow has managed to recruit enough contract soldiers to maintain its force structure and should be capable of replacing tank losses on the battlefield for two or more years. Additionally, it has shifted its economy into a wartime footing, with military expenditure now constituting one-third of its national budget and reaching around 7.5% of GDP,” Barry remarked.

The supply of artillery ammunition, loitering munitions, and ballistic missiles from Iran and North Korea alters the balance of firepower against Ukraine, he added. Despite denials from Iran and North Korea regarding any arms deals with Russia, there is ample evidence of one-way transfer of attack drones and missiles from both countries. “This implies that in the coming year, Russia is likely to produce sufficient missiles and drones to sustain its recent level of pressure on Ukraine's air defenses, target its defense industry, and attempt to undermine Ukrainian civilian and military morale,” Barry cautioned.

Kyiv's global allies are stepping up their commitments to support Ukraine, which is facing dire circumstances due to ongoing conflict. However, the procurement of F-16 fighter jets and additional long-range missiles, requested from a hesitant Germany, remains unresolved. There is optimism that a U.S. military aid package worth \$60 billion could soon be approved, while Europe has agreed on a 5-billion-euro (\$5.48 billion) assistance fund for Ukraine, established in March.

Ian Bremmer, the founder and president of the Eurasia Group, emphasized the increasing international backing for Ukraine. He highlighted the significance of this support for Ukraine's capabilities and morale. Bremmer also mentioned the anticipation of further troop mobilization by Ukraine, potentially lowering the draft age below the current 27, within the next few weeks. Bremmer noted that these developments coincide with recent achievements by Ukraine's military commander, Oleksandr Syrskyi. Syrskyi's strategy prioritizes fortifying defenses rather than risking troops to reclaim lost territory. Additionally, Ukraine has demonstrated its ability to directly threaten Russia, such as through recent strikes on Russian oil refineries across the country. While Ukraine's future remains dependent on various factors, including the outcome of U.S. elections in November and disparities in military capabilities in the long term, Bremmer acknowledges that Ukrainians have gained some temporary respite. (Ellyatt, 2024)

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### **3.4. Three Potential Scenarios**

Diane Francis, Editor-at-Large at the National Post and columnist at Kyiv Post, along with being a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Center and an author and publisher on Substack, outlines three potential scenarios for the unfolding events in Ukraine in 2024. The first scenario suggests that if the House rejects military assistance on February 28, leading to a shortfall that Europe doesn't fill, the conflict could stagnate into a "frozen" state. In this situation, a ceasefire would be imperative, yet negotiations with Putin might lack sincerity. Consequently, borders would remain static, millions of displaced Ukrainians would linger abroad, and the country's reconstruction would face significant hurdles. Alternatively, if Europe steps in to bridge the aid gap left by the US, Ukraine may embark on a fresh counteroffensive. Recent moves, such as Denmark's pledge of artillery and ammunition donations, signal a growing trend toward bolstering Ukraine's military capabilities among European nations. This includes France and Germany's strategic investments in defense, alongside NATO's collective ramp-up of military spending. The European Union is also poised to unveil a plan to expedite military expansion and cooperation across member states. A third scenario is Ukraine securing the necessary funding in 2024 to potentially reclaim its territory from Russia by 2025. This approach, advocated by Wall Street Journal chief foreign correspondent Yaroslav Trofimov, suggests delaying major military action until next year while focusing on enhancing capabilities, particularly through domestically produced naval drones and missiles. This asymmetric warfare strategy has already weakened Russia's naval dominance. Francis emphasizes that the outcome may hinge on the results of the US presidential elections, with Trump vowing to halt funding to Ukraine to swiftly end the conflict, whereas Biden is likely to maintain current policies if he and the Democrats win. Irrespective of the scenario, Francis asserts that Russia faces an uncertain future, having been significantly weakened by the conflict in Ukraine, while Europe emerges as a burgeoning military force, supported by its robust economic stature compared to China and the US. (Ukrainian world congress, 2024)

### **3.5. Possible Nuclear War**

President Vladimir Putin asserted that Russia is prepared to deploy nuclear weapons in defense of its sovereignty or independence, delivering another direct message to the West shortly

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before an election where his victory appears all but assured. Since the onset of a comprehensive invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Putin has frequently mentioned his willingness to employ nuclear arms. His most recent declaration occurred during a recent state-of-the-nation address, cautioning the West that heightened involvement in the Ukrainian conflict could provoke a nuclear confrontation. During an interview with Russian state television, Putin was asked whether he had contemplated the use of tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine. He replied that such action had not been necessary thus far. Moreover, he expressed confidence that the world was not on the brink of a nuclear conflict, characterizing U.S. President Joe Biden as a seasoned politician who comprehends the potential dangers of escalation. In response to Putin's statements, the spokesperson for UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Stéphane Dujarric, emphasized the imperative to refrain from rhetoric that might lead to misjudgment or escalation, warning of catastrophic consequences for the world. (The Associated Press, 2024)

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his annual state of the nation address, making direct nuclear threats towards the West while also assuring Russians that their country could succeed in the war in Ukraine and prosper economically domestically. The Kremlin presented the speech as like a campaign platform unveiling, essentially showcasing Putin's vision for Russia's future before the upcoming March election, where he faces minimal competition for a fifth term in office. However, Putin did not reference the election in his speech, instead combining aggressiveness with optimism during a lengthy, over two-hour address to Russia's Federal Assembly. The beginning of his speech predominantly focused on the ongoing two-year conflict in Ukraine. Putin cautioned that if Ukraine's Western supporters escalated their involvement in the conflict, such as by deploying troops, the repercussions for the "aggressors" would be "catastrophic," potentially sparking a nuclear conflict. He emphasized, "They must understand that we possess weapons capable of reaching targets on their soil," likely alluding to the increasingly potent Western armament provided to Kyiv. Putin asserted that the actions being proposed instilled fear about carrying a genuine risk of triggering a nuclear confrontation, ultimately leading to the annihilation of civilization. These statements followed closely after French President Emmanuel Macron suggested that Western nations should consider deploying ground forces in Ukraine, a notion rejected publicly by NATO allies, including the United States.

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Putin refuted recent accusations from the U.S. that Russia planned to launch nuclear weapons into space, dismissing them as American "demagoguery" and a political maneuver aimed at leveraging Russia into arms control discussions, particularly during an election year in the U.S. Furthermore, he accused the West of intentionally engaging the Soviet Union in an arms race that drained its resources and pledged that Russia would pursue a more strategic approach this time around. "We aim to develop our military-industrial complex in a manner that enhances the scientific, technological, and industrial capabilities of our nation," Putin affirmed. (Maynes, 2024)

### **3.6. Uncertain Future Course**

The future of Russia's war in Ukraine hinges on various factors. Firstly, it rests heavily on the level of assistance that the U.S. Congress ultimately decides to provide, considering the significant military aid Washington has historically supplied compared to Europe. Furthermore, the extent of support from the European Union and other Western nations, militarily and non-militarily, will play a crucial role. Additionally, the effectiveness of U.S.-led efforts to tighten sanctions and control Russia's exports, alongside combating evasion tactics, will be pivotal. Within security assistance, key items such as systems for detecting and neutralizing threats like drones and missiles, as well as advanced weaponry, will be vital for Ukraine's defense against Russian attacks. The resolve and capabilities of both Ukrainian and Russian forces will significantly influence the course of the conflict, with potential shifts in public opinion within Russia as casualties mount. Moreover, advancements in unmanned technologies, exemplified by Ukraine's successful use of sea drones, could alter the dynamics of naval operations in the Black Sea. While, unlocking the frozen Russian reserves in Western countries for Ukraine's use would have a substantial impact, aiding in the country's recovery and military development. Ultimately, the evolution of the battlefield, the development and deployment of new technologies, and the improvement of military capabilities on both sides will shape the conflict's progression. Given these factors, the coming year is anticipated to be challenging for both Ukraine and Russia, with no clear end to the war in sight after two years of conflict. (Petraeus, 2024)

### **3.7. Western Division Will Shape the War's Future**

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The absence of significant military advances for Ukraine in 2023 has sparked deep divisions within the Western world. While these divisions may come as a surprise, they are not uncommon during major conflicts, often exacerbating internal political turmoil. The initial unity among European and Western nations following Russia's invasion in February 2022 has now given way to substantial disagreements regarding key aspects of war strategy and peace negotiations. These divisions are evident within the U.S. political sphere, between the U.S. and its European allies, as well as within Eastern and Central Europe. Even Ukraine, despite its immense sacrifices in repelling the Russian invasion, has faced internal disagreements regarding wartime policies. In contrast, Russia appears outwardly unified under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, especially following the dramatic events surrounding the mutiny of the Wagner mercenary army in June of the previous year. However, the year 2024 will serve as a litmus test for all parties involved to maintain internal unity amidst the escalating costs of the war. While Russia's authoritarian regime may help suppress domestic divisions, it's improbable that the substantial economic and human toll of Putin's chosen conflict will leave no political ramifications. However, the immediate concern remains whether the West can prevent the fractures in its Ukraine policy from deepening into irreparable divides. On the surface, the West's significant economic advantage over Russia should theoretically enable Ukraine to withstand a prolonged conflict with Moscow. However, the West's response to this imperative has been sluggish, and the coming year will reveal whether it can formulate a strategy to support and sustain Kyiv's defense against Russian forces in the short term, and ultimately overcome Putin in a protracted war that may surpass initial expectations.

For Europe, the war in Ukraine presents two divergent paths. One entails a rapid decline in Europe's strategic relevance vis-à-vis the United States and Asia due to its ongoing reluctance to bolster its defense capabilities. The alternative path involves a revitalization of Europe's geopolitical stature by enhancing its defense capacities, adopting a more strategic global outlook, and thereby retaining influence over the long-term balance of power in Eurasia. Should Europe commit to addressing its security challenges seriously, it will be better positioned to keep the U.S. engaged and persuade a future Russian leadership to abandon territorial expansionism in favor of security assurances and a regional order where Moscow can participate legitimately.



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Alternatively, Europeans should anticipate a scenario where a future U.S. president directly negotiates with Moscow (and Beijing) to determine the continent's prospects. (Mohan, 2024)

### **3.8. Europe Will Stand on Its Own**

If the conflicts in Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014 served as wake-up calls for the West regarding Russia's assertive great-power aspirations, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 delivered a jolting wake-up call to Europe's steadily eroding defense capabilities. Adding to this, Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has openly encouraged Russia to target European NATO members.

As Ukraine enters its third year of grappling with a multifaceted war encompassing land, sea, air, and information battles, there's a palpable concern that Russia may gain the upper hand on the battlefield. The diminishing flow of U.S. military aid to Ukraine and the looming possibility of Trump's electoral victory in November compound European leaders' gravest strategic challenge in generations. Failure on Europe's part could embolden Moscow to further assert its influence and undermine NATO, as it has explicitly stated. While European leaders acknowledge the need to brace for potential abandonment by the United States, tangible actions to bolster defense spending, arms production, and support for Ukraine have yet to match their rhetoric. Debates in the West regarding Russia betray a lack of strategic clarity and resolve, with the fear of a Russian defeat prompting a desire for a stalemate where neither Russia nor Ukraine emerges victorious. Such wavering only encourages Russia to persist until achieving victory, echoing Putin's belief that time is on his side. Both the United States and Europe have much at stake, with Ukraine's defeat potentially dealing a heavier blow to Washington's global credibility than its withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, 2024 presents a pivotal opportunity to refute Putin's assumptions and pave the way for Ukraine's triumph. According to estimates by the Estonian Defense Ministry, Western nations would only need to allocate 0.25 percent of their GDP to military aid for Ukraine to sustain its defense efforts in 2024 and prepare for a renewed counteroffensive in 2025. Such investment could significantly alter Russia's calculations regarding Ukraine and broader European security dynamics, signaling a steadfast Western commitment to defending its interests and deterring Russian aggression.

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Moscow's victory becomes more plausible if the West fails to muster the necessary resources and determination. The prospect of a Russian triumph in Ukraine could potentially serve as the catalytic shock needed to compel Europe and the United States to adopt a more resolute stance against Russian expansionism. However, it's a test best avoided, underscoring the urgency for decisive Western action to support Ukraine and safeguard European security. (Raik, 2024)

### **3.9. Gearing Up for an Extended Battle**

As Russia's conflict with Ukraine progresses into its third year, the current state of affairs suggests a persistent stalemate. Neither side is making significant gains or suffering decisive losses. Russia's territorial advancements come at a high cost of casualties and equipment losses, while Ukraine, following the setbacks of its 2023 counteroffensive, finds itself on the defensive and sustaining considerable losses as well. This prolonged war of attrition is exacting a toll on Ukraine, evidenced by President Volodymyr Zelensky's recent decision to replace his top military commander, Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, amid publicized tensions between them. Both nations require increased troop mobilization, but Russia's mobilization efforts are unlikely until after the upcoming purported reelection of President Vladimir Putin next month. With Ukraine's population less than a third the size of Russia's, mobilizing the necessary forces poses a greater challenge. However, the conflict extends beyond troop numbers to the continuous supply of weaponry. Russia is procuring drones from Iran and escalating its acquisitions of artillery ammunition and certain missiles from North Korea. Meanwhile, Ukraine relies on weapon deliveries and financial aid from Europe and the United States. The recent approval by the European Union of \$54 billion in financial assistance will help sustain Ukraine's governmental functions, with additional weapons expected from European NATO members. However, the United States remains pivotal, being the primary source of advanced weaponry. Yet, the dysfunctional nature of U.S. domestic politics raises concerns about Ukraine's ability to continue resisting Russian aggression. Failure by Congress to approve the requested \$60 billion in aid to Ukraine, coupled with delays in the delivery of advanced weaponry by the U.S. government, could significantly diminish Ukraine's prospects for effectively countering Russia in 2024. The outlook for negotiations to conclude the war in 2024 appears bleak, with neither side capable of achieving a decisive victory. The Kremlin's stance is clear; it refuses to engage in negotiations unless they result in Ukraine's surrender, including the permanent relinquishment of the

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territories illegally annexed by Russia in 2022. Russia's stated objectives of "de-Nazification" and demilitarization of Ukraine are terms no Ukrainian leader could accept. Putin is biding his time until the outcome of this year's U.S. election, hoping for a shift in U.S. policy back to a more accommodating stance toward Russia, which could jeopardize Ukraine's independence and sovereignty. Suggestions for potential resolutions to the conflict, such as the Korean model involving an armistice without a peace treaty and Western security assurances for Ukraine, presuppose Russian acceptance of an independent Ukraine. However, as long as Putin or a successor sharing his worldview remains in power, such acceptance seems unlikely. (Stent, 2024)

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the myriad of potential future scenarios and predictions surrounding the Ukraine conflict paint a complex picture of uncertainty and possibility. From diplomatic negotiations to military strategies, the trajectory of this conflict remains fluid and unpredictable. As we contemplate these potential outcomes, it becomes increasingly clear that the choices made in the coming days and months will have far-reaching implications for the region and the world at large. Whether the conflict evolves towards a peaceful resolution through dialogue and compromise, or escalates into further violence and instability, remains to be seen. However, what is certain is the need for continued attention and engagement from the international community. In the face of such uncertainty, it is imperative that diplomatic efforts are redoubled, and that all parties involved commit to seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. As we look towards the future, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to promoting dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. Only through concerted and collaborative efforts can we hope to navigate the challenges ahead and build a more secure and prosperous future for all.

# **General Conclusion**

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Overall, this research provides a detailed examination of the historical context and root causes that led to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It navigates through a labyrinth of historical events, unraveling layers of geopolitical tensions, ethnic divisions, and territorial disputes, ultimately resulting in armed conflict. By dissecting pivotal moments in the Russia-Ukraine relationship, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and the annexation of Crimea, the chapter exposes deep-seated grievances and power dynamics. Furthermore, it analyzes the influence of identity politics, economic interests, and external forces in fueling tensions and shaping the course of the conflict. Through meticulous analysis and contextualization, this research provides valuable insights into the complex factors driving one of the most significant geopolitical crises of the 21st century, highlighting the intricacies of interstate relations and the enduring impact of historical legacies.

The roots of this conflict delve deep into the historical animosities between Ukraine and Russia, exacerbated by disputes and power struggles. Moreover, the security dilemma inherent in Ukraine's desire for nuclear disarmament has further intensified tensions, as Russia perceives potential NATO expansion as a threat to its own security interests. Ukraine's energy politics have added another layer of complexity to the conflict. Russia uses its control over energy resources as a tool for political leverage, while Ukraine seeks to diversify its energy sources to reduce dependence on its eastern neighbor. Western involvement in the Russo-Ukraine conflict, particularly through economic and military support to Ukraine, has drawn criticism from Russia and contributed to the escalation of hostilities. Moreover, the prospect of dragging Ukraine into NATO has been a particularly contentious issue, with Russia vehemently opposing any expansion of the alliance into its traditional sphere of influence. Furthermore, the Orange Revolution, with its aspirations for democratic reform and closer ties with the West, further exacerbated tensions between Ukraine and Russia, highlighting the divergent paths the two countries have taken since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Additionally, cultural identity has also played a significant role in shaping the conflict, with Ukraine's diverse population and historical ties to both Russia and Europe influencing political allegiances and national identity. Consequently, the struggle between Ukraine, Russia, and the West has become not only a geopolitical contest but also a battle for cultural and ideological supremacy.

## General Conclusion

Moreover, this research has provided insight into the impacts and consequences of the Russo-Ukrainian war, economically, politically, and socially. Through comprehensive analysis, this study aimed to explore the wide-ranging effects of the conflict, providing an understanding of how it has influenced geopolitical interests, economic stability, and social interactions. The Russo-Ukrainian War has reverberated far beyond the confines of the battlefield, with its economic impact casting a long shadow over both nations and global markets. The Significant Burden of Living Costs weighs heavily on civilians caught in the crossfire, as inflation spikes and basic necessities become increasingly scarce. Food insecurity looms large, exacerbated by disrupted supply chains and the displacement of populations. Meanwhile, the conflict's ripple effects extend to worldwide financial markets, injecting uncertainty and volatility. Surging energy prices, driven by geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions, further strain economies already grappling with the fallout of conflict. As the war persists, its economic consequences deepen, underscoring the interconnectedness of global stability and regional conflicts.

In addition, the political impact of the Russo-Ukrainian war resonates across continents, reshaping alliances and testing the unity of the West. The West Unity emerges as a fragile concept, as divergent interests and priorities strain solidarity among Western nations. Tensions and Divisions within the West become pronounced, as debates over intervention strategies and sanctions policies expose underlying fissures. In West Africa, the conflict's reverberations destabilize fragile political landscapes, amplifying existing tensions and exacerbating regional insecurity. The shadowy presence of Wagner, a private military company allegedly linked to the Kremlin, underscores the complexities of modern warfare and the blurring lines between state and non-state actors. As political stability wavers, the Reaction of Middle Eastern countries to the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict emerges as a barometer of shifting geopolitical dynamics, with regional powers recalibrating their alliances and strategies. Similarly, the Reaction of Arab Countries to the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict reflects a nuanced response, balancing historical ties, economic interests, and geopolitical considerations in navigating the tumultuous aftermath of the conflict.

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Furthermore, The Russo-Ukrainian War has led to a significant displacement of people, creating a refugee crisis with far-reaching implications. In Europe, countries have grappled with the challenge of accommodating the influx of Ukrainian refugees, offering temporary shelters, humanitarian aid, and assistance with integration. Nations like Germany, Poland, and Hungary have played pivotal roles in providing refuge to those fleeing the conflict. Similarly, in North America, Canada and the United States have extended their support by opening their doors to Ukrainian refugees, offering resettlement programs, financial aid, and resources to help them rebuild their lives. This global response underscores the urgency of addressing the humanitarian consequences of the conflict and the collective responsibility to provide sanctuary to those in need.

The Russo-Ukrainian War has inflicted profound environmental damage, with far-reaching consequences for both ecosystems and human health. The conflict has resulted in the destruction of vital infrastructure, including industrial facilities, power plants, and transportation networks, leading to widespread pollution of air, water, and soil. Additionally, the use of heavy weaponry and the indiscriminate targeting of civilian areas have exacerbated environmental degradation, causing long-term harm to biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The environmental impact of the war underscores the urgent need for comprehensive remediation efforts and international cooperation to mitigate further damage and restore the health of affected ecosystems. On the other hand, the casualties of the Russo-Ukrainian War extend beyond the battlefield, encompassing a devastating toll on civilian populations. The conflict has led to a staggering number of deaths, injuries, and displacement, with innocent men, women, and children bearing the brunt of violence and destruction. Civilians have been caught in the crossfire of intense fighting, subjected to indiscriminate shelling, airstrikes, and other forms of warfare that have resulted in tragic loss of life and widespread suffering. Moreover, the war has left lasting scars on survivors, with many facing physical and psychological trauma that will haunt them for years to come. The human cost of the Russo-Ukrainian War serves as a sobering reminder of the profound consequences of armed conflict and underscores the imperative of prioritizing peacebuilding efforts to prevent further loss of innocent lives.

## General Conclusion

Additionally, The Russo-Ukrainian War has precipitated a dire human rights crisis, with profound implications for both Ukrainians directly affected by the conflict and individuals in neighboring countries. Safeguarding the rights of Ukrainian refugees has emerged as a paramount concern, as millions flee their homes in search of safety and stability. Host countries, particularly in Europe, face the challenge of ensuring that refugees are provided with essential humanitarian assistance, protection from exploitation, and access to basic services such as healthcare and education. Moreover, the war has prompted a robust international response, including the imposition of sanctions against the Russian Federation and Belarus for their involvement in the conflict. These sanctions target key individuals, entities, and sectors implicated in human rights abuses, aiming to hold perpetrators accountable and deter further violations. By leveraging diplomatic and economic pressure, the international community seeks to uphold the principles of human rights and justice, affirming its commitment to defending the rights and dignity of all individuals affected by the Russo-Ukrainian War.

In conclusion, this research has provided a comprehensive insight into the future of the Russo-Ukrainian War by offering possible scenarios and predictions regarding whether the conflict is nearing its conclusion or is likely to persist. It analyzed various factors influencing the trajectory of the war and assessed the likelihood of different outcomes. By examining key geopolitical dynamics, military strategies, and diplomatic efforts, this study endeavored to elucidate the potential paths forward for the conflict. In addition, this study proved beneficial in addressing the problems surrounding the dilemma of the Russo-Ukrainian War. As no one knows for certain its future trajectory, whether it will come to an end or continue indefinitely, it remains a pressing issue with far-reaching consequences. However, by the insights given into potential scenarios and predictions, this research contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved. Moving forward, ongoing analysis and diplomatic efforts are essential in seeking a resolution to the conflict and fostering stability in the region



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