

International Law, Global Peace and Security: A Study of the Russo-Ukrainian War

Akaonyeji, Edith Ogechi

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Port Harcourt.

DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no12.2025.pg297.307

Abstract

The study investigated international law, global peace and security with emphasis on the Russo-Ukraine war, 2014 to date. Despite the existence of a well-established body of international law that prohibits the use of force, guarantees State sovereignty, and upholds territorial integrity, the outbreak and persistence of the Russia-Ukraine war highlight critical gaps in the enforcement of these international norms. The objectives of the study were to investigate the humanitarian consequences of the war and how international humanitarian law has been applied or neglected in the Russia-Ukraine war; examine the Russia-Ukraine war and the violations of international law; and proffer appropriate measures on how to bring to an end. The theoretical framework adopted for the study was the Power Politics Theory propounded by Niccolo Machiavelli in 1527. The study relied on secondary sources of data. Data were sourced from official documents and treaties such as the United Nations Charter, Geneva Conventions, rulings of the International Court of Justice, and relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council, among others. This was supported with information from textbooks, journal articles, and conference papers, among others. The study also found that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia violates international law, especially that which prohibits States from the use of force in the acquisition of another State's territory. The study concluded that the universal political consequences of the war in Ukraine are unforeseeable. Whatever the outcome of this war may bring regarding international relations or the world economy, it has entailed basic changes in the security policy of NATO and the Euro-Atlantic Region, the consequences of which we cannot yet predict. This much is certain: the world order resting on the cooperation of the Great Powers, established following World War Two, has been severely damaged, and we can only guess if it can be restored, or if the damage caused is irreparable. The study therefore recommended, amongst others, that the UN should encourage States to recommit to the UN Charter principles on sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful coexistence.

Focus/Keywords: International Law; Russia; Ukraine; NATO; and War

1. Introduction

Every society, irrespective of its population, makes a legal framework (law) under which it functions and develops. Santos (1995) noted that it is permissive in nature as it allows individuals to form legal relations with rights and duties, and restrictive in nature as it punishes the wrongdoers. The world today requires a framework through which interstate relations can be developed. International laws fill this gap. International law serves as the backbone of modern global governance, designed to regulate the conduct of states, safeguard human rights, and promote peaceful coexistence among nations. Rooted in treaties, conventions, and customary practices, it aspires to create a rules-based order that limits the use of force, resolves

disputes, and fosters cooperation. International law is a set of rules, agreements, and treaties that are binding between countries (Shaw, 2021). States come together to make binding rules that they believe will benefit the citizens. It is an independent system of law existing outside the legal framework of a particular State. International law is the system of treaties and agreements between nations. International law falls into two categories: private and public international law. Private international law deals with controversies between private entities with ties to more than one nation, while public international law concerns the relationships between nations (Cassese, 2005).

One of the most significant challenges to international law in the 21st century has been the Russia–Ukraine conflict, which began in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea and escalated into a full-scale war in February 2022. The Ukraine–Russia conflict has been a longstanding and complex issue, with far-reaching implications for global security. The conflict has its roots in the early 1990s, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, when Ukraine declared its independence (Kuzio, 2017). However, the conflict escalated in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea, a peninsula in Ukraine, and began supporting separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine (Mearsheimer, 2014). The conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths, millions of displaced people, and significant economic losses (United Nations, 2022). The genesis of the conflict can be traced back to the early 2000s, when Ukraine began to shift its foreign policy orientation towards the West, seeking closer ties with the European Union and NATO (Sherr, 2013). This shift is seen as a threat by Russia, which had long considered Ukraine to be within its sphere of influence (Trenin, 2014).

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has not only destabilised Eastern Europe but also exposed the limitations and complexities of enforcing international legal principles in the face of great power politics. Questions of State sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination, human rights, and the prohibition of the use of force lie at the heart of this conflict.

Despite the existence of a well-established body of international law that prohibits the use of force, guarantees State sovereignty, and upholds territorial integrity, the outbreak and persistence of the Russia–Ukraine war highlight critical gaps in the enforcement of these norms. The annexation of Crimea in 2014, the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine, and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia launched in 2022 demonstrate how powerful States can defy international legal principles with relative impunity.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which began in February 2022, represents a critical global security crisis with profound humanitarian, political, and economic consequences. The conflict has caused grave humanitarian suffering with thousands of civilian casualties, widespread displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure. The war has left thousands of Ukrainian civilians dead and injured, and cities partially razed to the ground (Rudenko, 2022). Over 8 million refugees have fled Ukraine since the invasion began. Neighbouring countries like Poland, Moldova, Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia have received the highest number of refugees (UNHCR, 2023). The majority of refugees are women, children, and older adults, as many men of fighting age are required to stay in Ukraine due to military conscription. Poland has hosted the largest number of Ukrainian refugees, with more than 1.5 million people as of mid-2023 (UNHCR, 2023). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) stated further that in February 2023, 1.7 million people in Ukraine require humanitarian assistance, 45% of whom are women, 23% are children, and 15% are people with disabilities (UNHCR, 2023).

This conflict has exposed several pressing challenges. First, it questions the effectiveness of international institutions such as the United Nations and the International Court of Justice in preventing aggression and ensuring compliance with international law. Second, it reveals the limitations of international sanctions and collective security mechanisms in deterring violations or compelling peace. Third, the humanitarian crisis resulting from mass displacement, civilian

casualties, and war crimes illustrates the inadequacy of existing frameworks for the protection of human rights during armed conflicts.

This study examines the Russia–Ukraine war through the lens of international law and its implications for global peace. It explores how international legal frameworks have been invoked, challenged, and sometimes undermined throughout the conflict

The objectives of the study are to investigate the humanitarian consequences of the war and how international humanitarian law has been applied or neglected in the Russia-Ukraine war; examine the Russia-Ukraine war and the violations of international law; and proffer appropriate measures on how to bring to an end the Russia-Ukraine war.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of International Law

Bentham (2016, p.89) defines “international law as a collection of rules governing relations between states”. According to him, the above definition demonstrates a mark of how far international law has evolved, as this original definition omits individuals and international organisations, two of the most dynamic and vital elements of modern international law (Bentham, 2016). He went further to state that “it is no longer accurate to view international law as simply a collection of rules; rather, it is a rapidly developing multifaceted system of rules and influential, though not directly binding, principles, practices, and assertions coupled with increasingly sophisticated structures and processes” (Bentham, 2016, p.89). In its broadest sense, international law provides normative guidelines as well as methods, mechanisms, and a common conceptual language to international actors; primarily sovereign States but also increasingly international organisations and some individuals. Gray (2018, p.47) noted that “the range of subjects and actors directly concerned with international law has widened considerably, moving beyond the classical questions of war, peace, and diplomacy to include human rights, economic and trade issues, space law, and international organisations”. Although international law is a legal order and not an ethical one, it has been influenced mainly by ethical principles and concerns, particularly in the sphere of human rights (Gray, 2018).

Mertus (2009, p.104) conceived international law as “an independent system of law existing outside the legal orders of a particular State”. It differs from domestic legal systems in a number of respects. For example, although the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, which consists of representatives of some 190 countries, has the outward appearance of a legislature, it has no power to issue binding laws. Rather, its resolutions serve only as recommendations except in specific cases and for certain purposes within the UN system, such as determining the UN budget, admitting new members of the UN, and, with the involvement of the Security Council, electing new judges to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Mertus, 2009).

2.2 Global Peace

Global peace is the concept of an ideal state of peace within and among all people and nations on Earth. Different cultures, religions, philosophies, and organisations have varying concepts on how such a state would come about (Gartzke & Jiakun, 2015). Various religious and secular organisations have the stated aim of achieving world peace through addressing human rights, technology, education, engineering, medicine, or diplomacy, used as an end to all forms of fighting. Since 1945, the United Nations and the five Permanent Members of its Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) have operated under the aim to resolve conflicts without war. Nonetheless, nations have entered numerous military conflicts since then (Gartzke & Jiakun, 2015).

Many theories as to how world peace could be achieved have been proposed. Several of these are listed below.

Capitalist peace theory; capitalist, or commercial peace, forms one of the three planks of Kantian peace, together with democratic peace theory and institutionalist arguments for peace. Although the evidence is inconclusive, various scholars have argued for capitalist peace. For instance, in her essay 'The Roots of War', Ayn Rand held that the major wars of history were started by the more controlled economies of the time against the freer ones and that capitalism gave mankind the longest period of peace in history—a period during which there were no wars involving the entire civilized world—from the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, with the exceptions of the Franco-Prussian War (1870), the Spanish–American War (1898), the Crimean War (1853–1856), the Boer Wars (1880–1881, 1899–1902), and the American Civil War (1861–1865)

Cobdenism; proponents of Cobdenism claim that by removing tariffs and creating international free trade, wars would become impossible because free trade prevents a nation from becoming self-sufficient, which is a requirement for long wars (Phillip, 2012). However, free trade does not prevent a nation from establishing some sort of emergency plan to become temporarily self-sufficient in case of war, or a nation could simply acquire what it needs from a different nation. A good example of this is World War I, during which both Britain and Germany became partially self-sufficient. This is particularly important because Germany had no plan for creating a war economy (Mousseau, 2009).

Democratic peace theory; proponents of democratic peace theory, developed mainly in the 1960s but relying in part on eighteenth-century Kantian theory, and frequently espoused by Western politicians, claim that strong empirical evidence exists that democracies never or rarely wage war against each other. However, several wars between democracies have taken place, historically, such as the Kargil War and the Cenepa War (Müller & Jonas, 2004). Relevant issues of debate include whether sufficient data is available to statistically prove the theory and whether peace results in democracy (territorial peace theory) or vice versa.

Marxism: World peace via world revolution; according to the dialectical materialist theory of Karl Marx, humanity under capitalism is divided into just two classes: the proletariat, who do not possess the means of production, and the bourgeoisie, who do possess the means of production. Once the communist revolution occurs and consequently abolishes the private property of the means of production, humanity will not be divided, and the tension created between these two classes will cease.

Deterrence; Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) is a doctrine of military strategy based on rational deterrence in which a full-scale use of nuclear weapons by two opposing sides would effectively result in the destruction of both belligerents. Proponents of the policy of MAD, which as a term was coined in 1962 during the Cold War, attributed this to the increase in the lethality of war to the point where it no longer offers the possibility of a net gain for either side (a form of Nash equilibrium), thereby making wars pointless (Hutchison & Starr, 2017).

2.3. Security

Security has to do with the process connected with assuaging any kind of threat to people and their precious values. This is why Buzan (1991), cited in Muiyiwa (2015), asserts that security is about freedom from threat and the ability of states to maintain independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as hostile, while its bottom line is survival. From the foregoing, security is generally agreed to be about the feeling of being safe from harm, fear, anxiety, oppression, danger, poverty, defense, protection, and preservation of core values and threats to those values. William (2008) submits that security is most commonly associated with the alleviation of threats to cherished values, especially those threats that threaten the survival of a particular reference object. In line with the above, Imobighe (2010) stated that security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a country's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate

interests, and enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom from or the absence of those tendencies, which could undermine internal cohesion, and the corporate existence of a country and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people (Ogaba, 2010). It could therefore be inferred that security, be it classical, state-centric and traditionalist or non-traditionalist, is all about the protection of assets, including living and non-living resources, against loss or damage.

Security is an all-encompassing condition which suggests that territory must be secured by a network of armed forces; that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military-police and the people themselves; that the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals such as unemployment, hunger, starvation, diseases, ignorance, homelessness, environmental degradation and pollution cum socio-economic injustices.

Dike (2010) and Omede (2011) extended the view expressed above by saying that Nigeria's security should be based on a holistic view which sees the citizens as the primary beneficiaries of every security and developmental deliverable that the state can offer. In the view of Nwanegbo and Odigbo

Nigeria's security will include determinations to support the bulk of the Federal Republic of Nigeria so it can advance its interests and objectives to encompass internal and external aggression, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development, progress, and growth, and improve the welfare and excellence of life of every citizen (2013, p.68).

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the power politics theory propounded by Niccolo Machiavelli in 1527. Power politics is a theory of power in international relations that contends that the distribution of power and national interests, or changes to those distributions, are fundamental causes of war and of system stability. Power politics provides a way of understanding systems of international relations; in this view, States compete for the world's limited resources, and it is to an individual State's advantage to be manifestly able to harm others. The theory is rooted in realist traditions of international relations, which argues that global affairs are driven primarily by the pursuit of power and national interest rather than by adherence to legal norms or moral ideals. According to this perspective, States act rationally to maximise their power, ensure survival, and protect strategic interests, even when such actions contradict international law (Morgenthau, 1948).

The theory is predicated on certain assumptions:

1. The theory contends that distributions of power and national interests, or changes to those distributions, are fundamental causes of war.
2. That States compete for the world's limited resources, and it is to an individual State's advantage to be manifestly able to harm others in order to secure these resources.
3. Power politics prioritises national self-interest over the interests of other nations or the international community and thus may include threatening one another with military, economic, or political aggression to protect one nation's own national interest.

Applying the power politics theory is relevant to the study because it explains why international law has struggled to prevent or resolve the Russo-Ukrainian war. International law prohibits aggression and upholds sovereignty, yet powerful states often act based on national interests rather than legal obligations. Russia's annexation of Crimea and the 2022 invasion reflect strategic efforts to expand influence and counter NATO, showing how power overrides law. Likewise, Western sanctions and military aid to Ukraine are driven not just by legal duty but

by balance-of-power concerns. The inability of the UN Security Council to act, due to Russia's veto, further shows the limits of law when confronted with great power politics. In essence, the theory highlights the gap between the ideals of international law and the realities of global power relations.

4. Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design, which was appropriate for examining events, patterns, and phenomena as they exist, without manipulating variables. The design allowed for a detailed exploration of the Russia–Ukraine war in relation to international law and global peace by describing the legal principles, institutional responses, and humanitarian impacts involved. Through a descriptive approach, the study provided an in-depth account of how international law has been applied, violated, or challenged in the context of the conflict. The study relied on secondary sources of data. Data were sourced from official documents and treaties such as the United Nations Charter, Geneva Conventions, rulings of the International Court of Justice, and relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly and Security Council. Data were also obtained from reports of international organisations such as publications from the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Union, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and international humanitarian bodies, among others. This was supported with information from textbooks, journal articles, and conference papers, among others.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Humanitarian Consequences of the War and how International Humanitarian Law has been Applied or Neglected in the Russia-Ukraine War

The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine started on 24 February 2022. The invasion of Ukraine has caused the greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War. Already, thousands of lives have been lost, and millions of livelihoods have been disrupted through displacement, lost homes, and lost incomes. The war has created a serious humanitarian crisis in Europe. For instance, 6,295,051 people have been displaced in Ukraine, as millions have fled to other neighboring countries; 2,144,244 in Poland, 256,838 in Slovakia, 324,397 in Hungary, 253,771 in Romania, 371,104 in Moldova, 271,254 in Russia, and 4938 in Belarus (HRW, 2024)

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, as of 7 March 2024, over 19 million border from Ukraine to neighboring countries, of whom just over 10 million and over 2.3 million crossed the border to Poland and Hungary, respectively. The UN reported that more than 10,000 civilians died and more than 18,500 were wounded in Ukraine between February 2022 and November 2023, mainly from Russian attacks. The U.S. Defence Department estimated total civilian deaths in Ukraine to be about 40,000. Below is a graph that depicts the cumulative number of deaths in Ukraine since the invasion of the country by Russia in 2022 (ICG, 2023).

The wave of refugees from Ukraine will affect Central European economies. It will test their capacity to mobilise aid to meet immediate needs. The health, education, and social protection systems in some host countries already had challenges in delivering services to more remote areas and in including marginalised groups. This will impact host countries' abilities to provide basic services and impact refugees. Support will be needed for both refugees and host communities to avoid overwhelming local public services.

On 2 March, a Russian missile strike on a five-story building in Zaporizhzhya reportedly resulted in 13 deaths, including children. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, Denise Brown, met with local authorities at the site, stressing that civilians and civilian infrastructure are protected under international humanitarian law and should never be targeted.

The security situation in the frontline town of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk region has deteriorated significantly, with sustained intense shelling. According to local authorities, access to the town remains limited. Of 80 000 people who lived in Bakhmut before the war, only around 7000 remain. Local authorities reported that the Russian forces repeatedly attacked the village of Kozache in the Kherson region, injuring more than 10 civilians. Two volunteers of a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) assisting with evacuation efforts in the village were also injured, as reported by partners on the ground (ICG, 2024).

Credible reports document large-scale forced movement of civilians from occupied Ukrainian territories to Russia or Russian-held areas, and specific allegations about the deportation and re-education of Ukrainian children. Forced transfer or deportation of protected persons is prohibited under IHL and can amount to a war crime. WHO and rights groups have recorded numerous attacks on hospitals, ambulances, and health personnel, which are protected under IHL unless they are being used for military purposes. Each verified attack both violates protection rules and worsens the humanitarian situation (WHO, 2025). Repeated strikes on power plants, substations, and water facilities have been documented and criticised as tactics that imperil civilians by depriving them of essential services. Such attacks may violate principles prohibiting attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population if used to coerce or cause disproportionate civilian suffering (OHCHR, 2024).

THE International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for the Russia President and other key officials in Russia, but the ICC depends on States to arrest and transfer suspects, and its processes are slow. Several States and Ukraine itself have opened investigations into alleged war crimes. These are important but fragmented and face evidence-collection challenges. UN human-rights mechanisms, HRW, Amnesty, ICRC, and others have documented abuses and produced public reports that support accountability and future prosecutions. (Human Rights Watch, 2024).

5.2 Russia-Ukraine War and the Violations of International Law

On 24 February 2022, the Russian ‘special military operation’ was launched against Ukraine, which violates an extensive array of international legal norms, partly general multilateral treaties, partly agreements expressly guaranteeing the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine. These are norms in the adoption of which the Soviet Union and its successor State, the Russian Federation, had a definitive role, since in the past nearly eight decades no important universal international treaty could be concluded without the cooperation of the Soviet Union, subsequently the Russian Federation; in addition, a part of the elaboration of these norms was initiated by the Soviet Union itself.

The basis of the international legal order after World War Two (WWII) consists in the UN Charter, and the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation goes against Art. 2 (4) of the Charter which sets forth that ‘All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations’. The ‘special military operation’ violates other fundamental provisions of the Charter: the sovereignty of the States, the rule of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the right to self-determination of peoples and nations, just to mention the most important ones. The 11th Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly, in its resolution entitled ‘Aggression against Ukraine’ (A/Res/ES-11/1) passed on 2 March 2022, some days after the Russian invasion, qualified the ‘special military operation’ as aggression (UNGA, 2022). We need to note that the UN Charter does not include the definition of aggression; however, in 1974, the General Assembly gave the definition of aggression in its resolution 3314 (XXIX), in a non-exhaustive manner under 7 points. The invasion by Russia breaches four points listed below; thus, according to the definition, it is aggression.

1. The invasion or attack by the armed forces of a State of the territory of another State, or any military occupation, however temporary, resulting from such invasion or attack, or any annexation by the use of force of the territory of another State or part thereof;
2. Bombardment by the armed forces of a State against the territory of another State or the use of any weapons by a State against the territory of another State;
3. The blockade of the ports or coasts of a State by the armed forces of another State;
4. An attack by the armed forces of a State on the land, sea, or air forces, or marine and air fleets of another State.

The definition of aggression was especially urged by the Soviet Union at the time, and the original purpose of the General Assembly with the Resolution of 1974 was to help the work of the Security Council primarily responsible for international peace and security according to the UN Charter. However, after its adoption, the Resolution became autonomous; thus, the definition formulated in the Appendix of a General Assembly Resolution, originally not binding, became a norm of international law. The question of aggression was dealt with in the elaboration of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (hereinafter: ICC), and Art. 5. (1) (d) of the Statute provides that the ICC will have jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. However, the definition of aggression was originally missing from the Statute, and according to Art. 5. (2), the jurisdiction of the ICC could only be exercised after the adoption of the definition of the crime of aggression. Only subsequently, upon the revision of the ICC Statute at the 2010 Kampala Review Conference, was the definition of aggression incorporated in the Statute (Art. 8 bis). This provision, although it repeats almost verbatim General Assembly Resolution 3314 (XXIX), contains a very important novelty. Namely, it expressly states that individuals can be held responsible for the crime of aggression, and thus, according to the ICC Statute.

For the purpose of this Statute 'crime of aggression' means the planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations. One could say that under this definition, the crime of aggression is a typical leadership crime. The aggression by Russia and the events taking place since February 2022 potentially violate other multilateral international treaties as well, such as the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Genocide Convention), the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the Protection of War Victims and their Additional Protocols of 1977, and other international treaties concluded by the Soviet Union or the Russian Federation. One could also mention the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, since with the escalation of hostilities, several sites and objects of cultural, historical, and religious significance in Ukraine have been partially or entirely damaged by Russian military attacks, or these objects and sites have been intentionally targeted. Of these treaties, the violation of the 1949 Geneva Conventions of international humanitarian law and their Additional Protocols of 1977 may be unambiguously established without further scrutiny, since Russia has breached the basic norm of international humanitarian law, namely, that during both international and non-international armed conflicts, the parties to the conflict shall distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly direct their operations against military objectives (Art. 48. Protocol Additional I. of 1977). Pursuant to the Geneva Conventions, those who are not taking part directly in the hostilities, i.e., civilians, must be protected, and civilians under the power of the enemy forces must be treated humanely and their human rights must be respected by the invading power. The Geneva Conventions also protect medical and religious military personnel and those who have ceased to take part in the hostilities, such as wounded, shipwrecked, and sick combatants, and prisoners of war.

5.3 Measures on how to bring an end to the Russia-Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine war requires a coordinated response at the global, regional, and national levels. The global community needs to support humanitarian relief efforts and share the burden of sustaining refugees. When hostilities subside, a large-scale mobilization of resources will be needed to reconstruct Ukraine. At a time when countries will be tempted to implement trade restrictions and price controls and intervene with subsidies and similar measures, it is critical to construct a coordinated response to avoid counterproductive policies. Otherwise, individual countries' decisions could trigger a race to the bottom, delay economic recovery even more, and exacerbate fiscal imbalances, inflation, and food insecurity (Coibion et al., 2023). Global, regional, and national responses are needed. Addressing the worsening humanitarian crisis triggered by the war will require a concerted and coordinated effort by the global community. Global and regional priorities include humanitarian relief followed by reconstruction as hostilities abate (ICRC, 2022). The immediate priority for the global policy community is to support humanitarian relief efforts in war-torn Ukraine. In Europe, a collective effort will be required to develop a regional approach to equitably share the responsibility of housing, sustenance, and possible settlement of refugees displaced by the war (OECD, 2023). The need to protect vulnerable groups and ensure basic services like health and education is also critical. Meanwhile, the global community can expand support to international agencies working to alleviate the burden of rising food prices, including the United Nations World Food Programme, which faces dramatic increases in operational costs (WFP, 2022).

Financial sanctions have focused on limiting Russia's access to its foreign exchange reserves and impeding the international operations of Russian financial institutions. Most significantly, the United States, the EU, and other countries have imposed sanctions on the Central Bank of the Russian Federation (CBR). These prevent the Russian authorities from accessing foreign exchange reserves in the custody of institutions in sanctioning countries, or the liquidation of which would require access to financial systems in sanctioning countries. This likely amounted to freezing roughly half of the \$643 billion in international reserves that Russia held in mid-February 2022. A large portion of the remaining reserves (around half) is physical gold in Russia. Given that G7 sanctions also cover transactions to liquidate gold holdings, it may be challenging for the CBR to monetise gold efficiently without access to G10 currency clearing. Yuan-denominated assets make up most of the balance. There are, therefore, severe constraints on Russia's capacity to support the ruble via foreign exchange interventions or provide dollar or Euro liquidity to the domestic banking system. Transactions with Russia's National Wealth Fund and Ministry of Finance have similarly been blocked. All these sanctions must be lifted to enable the warring parties to return to the negotiating table and resolve the impasse.

The United Nations, Regional organisations like the EU and AU must step in so as to bring the war to an end. NATO must take into cognisance the fear expressed by Russia over the inclusion of Ukraine into NATO. Experience in the global system has shown that war is not the most viable instrument for resolving disputes between nations, but rather dialogue. In the case of war, it is humanity that bears the brunt, as evidenced in the ongoing war. The United States and its NATO allies must stop fuelling the war by cutting the supply of weapons to Ukraine for self-defence. The fundamental issues that necessitated the war should be addressed for peace to reign.

A temporary halt in fighting could provide a window for diplomatic talks, allowing both sides to build trust and address immediate humanitarian needs. This could pave the way for more substantive negotiations. Neutral parties such as the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), or other respected international entities (like Turkey or Switzerland) could mediate negotiations between Russia and Ukraine. One potential solution could involve Ukraine adopting a neutral status, possibly similar to Austria after WWII, meaning it would not join NATO or any other military alliances (UNGA, 2024). In

exchange, Russia might agree to a formal ceasefire and the gradual withdrawal of troops. Also, Western countries, particularly the U.S. and NATO, could offer Ukraine security guarantees or a "defensive security pact" as part of a peace agreement, ensuring protection from any future aggression, even without formal NATO membership.

6. Findings

Based on the study, the following findings are reached:

1. The study found that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has grave consequences for the humanitarian crisis. Many children, women, and the elderly have migrated to neighboring countries such as Poland, Sweden, and Norway to seek refuge. This corresponds with the IOM report (2023), which stated that over 7 million people have been displaced within Ukraine.
2. The study also found that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia violates international law especially that which prohibits States from the use of force in the acquisition of another State's territory.
3. The work found that the continued supplies of arms and other logistics by the United States and NATO to Ukraine to enable her to defend her territory have further intensified the ongoing war. NATO and its allies' continued support for Ukraine has divided the superpowers in the international system, making it difficult to reach a common ground to bring the warring parties to a dialogue table so as to bring the war to an end.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

1. Governments, international organisations, and private donors should increase funding for essential humanitarian services, including food, medical supplies, shelter, and clean water. This support should be both immediate and long-term to address ongoing needs.
2. The UN should encourage States to recommit to the UN Charter principles on sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful coexistence.
3. Both NATO and Russia should prioritise direct dialogue through established diplomatic channels. Setting up a neutral space for negotiations, with international mediators if necessary, could create an opportunity for de-escalation.

8. Conclusion

The war waged by Russia incurred its isolation from the outset, which has been enhanced by the sanctions against Russia. Isolation has only been boosted by the Russian steps, which consist, among others, of the unilateral termination of several important international treaties. Just to mention two of them, since 16 March 2022, Russia has not been a member of the Council of Europe, and since 16 September 2022, Russia has not been a contracting party to the European Convention on Human Rights. The latter step means that Russia has deprived its citizens of the opportunity to have recourse to an international judicial institution in case of human rights violations.

The universal political consequences of the war in Ukraine are unforeseeable. Whatever the outcome of this war may bring regarding international relations or the world economy, it has entailed basic changes in the security policy of NATO and the Euro-Atlantic Region, the consequences of which we cannot yet predict. This much is certain: the world order resting on the cooperation of the Great Powers, established following World War Two, has been severely damaged, and we can only guess if it can be restored, or if the damage caused is irreparable.

9 References (Apa)

- Gartzke, E. Z. & Jiakun, J. (2015). *Trade and war*. The oxford handbook of the political economy of international trade.
- Hutchison, M. & Starr, D.G. (2017). *The territorial peace: Theory, evidence, and implications*. In Thompson, William R. (ed.). *Oxford research encyclopedia of politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Kuzio, T. (2017). *Putin's war against Ukraine: Revolution, nationalism, and crime*. Harvard University Press
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2014). Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault: The liberal delusions that provoked Putin. *Foreign Affairs*, 93(5), 77- 89.
- Mertus, J. A. (2009). *The United Nations and human rights: A guide for a new era (2nd ed.)*. Routledge.
- Morgenthau, H. (1948). *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace*. Alfred A. Knopf
- Mousseau, M. (2009). The social market roots of democratic peace. *International Security Journal*, 33 (8)
- Müller, H. & Jonas, W. (2004). *Dyadic democratic peace strikes back. 5th pan-European international relations conference*. The Hague.
- Muyiwa B. A. (2015). *Concept of insecurity*. Readings in intelligence & security studies
- Ogaba, O. (2010). *Security, globalisation and climate change: A Conceptual analysis* in Osita E. E. & Ogaba O. (ed) *Climate Change and Human Security in Nigeria*. NIIA
- Phillip S. M. (2012). *The formation and early history of strategic air command*. Alabama University press
- Ray, J.L. (1998). *Does democracy cause peace?* Annu. Rev. Political Science.
- Rudenko, O. (2022). *Hundreds of murdered civilians discovered as Russians withdraw from towns near Kyiv*. Grill Press
- Santos, B. S. (1995). *Toward a new common sense: Law, science and politics in the paradigmatic transition*. Routledge.
- Shaw, M. N. (2021). *International law (9th ed.)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sherr, J. (2013). *Hard diplomacy and soft coercion: Russia's influence abroad*. Chatham House.
- Trenin, R (2014). The 2018-19 Russian-Ukraine election cycles and the war in the Donbass prospects for a solution of the conflict and the idea of a UN peacekeeping mission in Eastern Ukraine. *International Review*. 39 (4) 30-41
- United Nations. (2023). *Ukraine: Situation Report*. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
- World Health Organisation (2024). *War in Ukraine situation report from the WHO Ukraine country office*. Washington
- World Health Organization (WHO) (2023). *Treating tuberculosis in Ukraine*. Available: Accessed June 28, 2025.