

# **TEXMUN 2023**

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Background Guide

General Assembly Third Committee

By: Megan Finkbeiner & Rosanna Vargas

## *Committee Overview*

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) has existed since the creation of the UN and is one of the six principal organs of the UN established by the Charter of the United Nations (1945). The GA is divided into six Main Committees, and each has a specific purpose:

1<sup>st</sup> Committee—the Disarmament and International Security Committee;

2<sup>nd</sup> Committee—the Economic and Financial Committee;

**3<sup>rd</sup> Committee—the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee;**

4<sup>th</sup> Committee—the Special Political and Decolonization Committee;

5<sup>th</sup> Committee—the Administrative and Budgetary Committee;

And finally, 6<sup>th</sup> Committee—the Legal Committee.

As the only main body with universal membership, the GA is a unique forum for discussion within the UN System. As such, it represents the normative center of the UN and its roles in the political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal spheres can be summarized in three principal aspects: a generator of ideas, a place of international

debate, and the nucleus of new concepts and practices. All Member States of the UN are represented in all of the six Main Committees due to the different roles and themes they represent.

The General Assembly allocates to the Third Committee, agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect people all over the world. The Committee also discusses questions relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination.

### **Governance, Structure and Membership**



In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly is composed of 193 Member States, as well as the two Observer States, the Holy See and the State of Palestine. All Member States and Observers of the General Assembly can attend sessions of the Third Committee. The work of the committee is additionally supported by non-governmental and intergovernmental observers like the European Union and the

International Criminal Court (ICC). The Third Committee meets annually for eight weeks from October to November after agenda items are allocated in September by the General Assembly Plenary depending on their theme and content. The Secretary-General issues reports for the corresponding agenda items to inform the committee, and is at its disposal to answer questions in an allotted time for clarification.

Each annual session of the Third Committee begins directly with the substantive debate as there is no General Debate beforehand. The customary workflow for each item consists of an interactive dialogue between the Member States and experts, who submit reports and answer questions. The Third Committee recommends draft resolutions to the General Assembly Plenary committee which adopts draft resolutions through a simple majority vote. On each agenda item, the Third Committee



can adopt resolutions and decisions by simple majority although approximately 70% of its resolutions were adopted by consensus between the 60th and 70th session. It also issues reports to the General Assembly Plenary about its work and recommendations on its decision-making.

In December, all documents are presented to the Plenary for adoption either through a vote or by consensus, as recommended in the committee's report. It is customary for the Plenary to follow the recommendations and mirror the form of adoption of the committee; therefore a decision adopted by consensus in the committee is adopted by consensus in the Plenary, and similarly for adoption by vote.



The Third Committee has a Secretariat composed of the Secretary of the Committee, a Deputy Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, and three Assistants. Each year ahead of the session, the committee elects a Bureau with a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur. The Bureau of the committee assists with opening and closing each meeting, managing the discussions, pronouncing decisions, assisting with drafts and documents, and ensuring compliance with the rules of procedure.



The Bureau of the 76th session (2022) consists of the Chairperson H.E. Mohamed Siad Doualeh, the Vice Chairs Ms. Hanne Carlé, Ms. Devita Abraham, and Mr. Joongil Shin and the Rapporteur Ms. Maria-Iuliana Niculae. Given the large scope of the committee, various experts, special rapporteurs, working groups, regional organizations, and UN entities, such as the UN Volunteers

program, are encouraged to participate in an interactive dialogue with the committee and assist in policy implementation.

The UN Secretariat assists the Third Committee by delivering substantive and logistical support. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



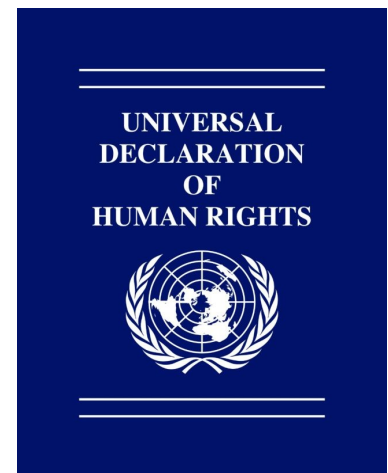
contribute to the committee's work as the UN focal point for human rights bodies, reports, and other publications. Furthermore, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), established in 2006 by General Assembly resolution 60/251, provides an annual report to the Third Committee on its own recent sessions and discussions. Independent Experts, Special Rapporteurs, and Working Groups that compile

reports and advise the HRC also engage in interactive dialogues with the committee.

### **Mandate, Function and Powers**

The Third Committee derives its mandate from a variety of UN documents. Articles 10 to 17 of the Charter of the United Nations are the principal guidelines for the substance and scope of all General Assembly committees, whereas Articles 23, 61, 86, and 97 provide the Third Committee with its mandate and the agenda items allocated to it. In regard to the committee's work in the field of human rights, Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations* speaks of the promotion of human rights, and has been said to be the foundation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).

The Third Committee used the UDHR as the groundwork to adopt additional and more specific international human rights instruments, chief among them the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (1966) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966). These documents, along with the two optional protocols to the ICCPR make up what is known as the International Bill of Human Rights and they guide the work of the committee.



In addition to the human rights framework, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) guide the work of the committee as they relate to many of the committee's issue areas. The SDGs are strongly linked to human rights; among others SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) relate to the protection of children

from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation and to the right to access to justice, which impacts matters of criminal justice. These are all issue areas the Third Committee engages with and strongly relate to the area of social affairs. The General Assembly is also highly engaged in the implementation of the SDGs as it arranges the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) together with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The HLPF consists of ministers or heads of state or government of Member States serves as the main United Nations platform to follow-up and review the 2030 Agenda.



The Third Committee does not focus on operative tasks, but on policy recommendations, and primarily works through the initiation of studies and the creation of nonbinding recommendations. Studies are then carried out by relevant bodies, like OHCHR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Its work is of normative nature as it does not carry out operations, field work, or tasks

called for in the committee's resolutions. Policy recommendations are primarily delegated to the various agencies and offices of the UN Secretariat.

For example, for the agenda item on refugees, returnees, and displaced persons, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has prepared a report for the Third Committee's 75th session and the Secretary-General submitted a report on Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. The Third Committee can also call for conferences to highlight certain issues, with a notable recurring example being the World Conference on Women, originating from the Third Committee resolution 3276 (XXIX) in 1974. Additionally, the Third Committee examines the reports of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The Special Procedures are independent human rights experts with mandates to report and advice from a thematic or country specific perspective.

## **Recent Sessions and Current Priorities**

The General Assembly is now moving into its 77th session. The 77th session will begin on September 13th of 2022. As the assembly moves into this new session the agenda of topics discussed has changed. The agenda items of each General Assembly session fall into the same categories however the focus of those items will shift with every session.

For example, in this upcoming session the focus for the Third Committee ranges from the importance of equality in the COVID-19 recovery to improving disaster risk reduction systems.





## *Topic I: Human Rights Situation in Eastern Europe*

### **Introduction**

“We are not in the middle of a new world war, or a Holocaust, but the lessons for the world of that terrible conflict - and the promises made in its aftermath - have a relevance we cannot ignore today.” – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressing the United Nations Security Council, April 4th 2022



The human rights situation in Ukraine deteriorated rapidly following the launch of a Russian Federation military offensive on February 24th 2022. The armed violence escalated in at least eight oblasts (regions), including Kyivska oblast and the capital city of Kyiv, as well as in the eastern oblasts Donetsk and Luhansk which were already affected by conflict.

The escalation of conflict has triggered an immediate and steep rise in humanitarian needs as essential supplies and services are disrupted and civilians flee the fighting. The UN estimates that 12 million people inside Ukraine will need relief and protection,

while millions of Ukrainian refugees may need protection and assistance in neighbouring countries in the coming months.

The relationship of Member States in Eastern Europe has a history. A history that has not always been kind to its people. Now as this war is waged across Ukraine, the Member States of the United Nations are beginning to act upon the human rights that have been violated. The threat to the peace of Europe is greater now than at any time since the end of the Cold War in 1989.



### **Political History of Eastern Europe Leading to the Current Situation**

At the inception of the United Nations, the whole of Europe was at the end of the conflict of WWII. The region, especially the Eastern European region (known after WWII as the USSR) was not stable economically, socially or politically. This instability has led to a timeline of events causing human rights to be infringed upon for many years to come and has created a current high-pressure driven situation.

In order to understand the current humanitarian crisis in Ukraine we must first look to the events that brought us to this point.

## Timeline

### – July, 1990

After years of anti-communist protests sweeping across Eastern Europe, The Rada, the new Ukrainian parliament formed out of the previous Soviet legislature, votes to declare independence from the Soviet Union.

### – Aug, 1990

Following a failed coup in Moscow, the Ukrainian parliament declares independence a second time on Aug. 24, Ukrainians vote to make their independence official when they approve the declaration by a landslide 92% of votes in favor. The Soviet Union officially dissolves on Dec. 26.

### – December, 1994

After the Soviet Union's collapse, Ukraine is left with the world's third-largest nuclear stockpile. In the *Budapest Memorandum*, Ukraine agrees to trade away its intercontinental ballistic missiles, warheads and other nuclear infrastructure in exchange for guarantees that the three other treaty signatories — the U.S., the U.K. and Russia — who will "respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine."



### – Over the course of 2004

The presidential election pits Leonid Kuchma's incumbent party — led by his hand-picked successor, Viktor Yanukovich, and supported by Russian President

Vladimir Putin — against a popular pro-democracy opposition leader, Viktor Yushchenko.

In the final months of the campaign, Yushchenko falls mysteriously ill, and is confirmed by doctors to have been poisoned. Yanukovich wins the election amid accusations of rigging. Massive protests follow, and the public outcry becomes known as the Orange Revolution. After a third vote, Yushchenko prevails.

– January, 2005

Yushchenko takes office as president, with Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister.

– April, 2008



Following efforts by Yushchenko and Tymoshenko to bring Ukraine into NATO, the two formally request in January that Ukraine be granted a "membership action plan," the first step in the process of joining the alliance.

U.S. President George W. Bush supports Ukraine's membership, but France and Germany oppose it after Russia voices displeasure. In April, NATO responds with a compromise: It promises that Ukraine will one day be a member of the alliance but does not put it on a specific path for how to do so.

– January, 2009

On Jan. 1, Gazprom, the state-owned Russian gas company, suddenly stops pumping natural gas to Ukraine, following months of politically fraught negotiations over gas prices. Because Eastern and central European countries rely on pipelines through Ukraine to receive gas imports from Russia, the gas crisis quickly spreads beyond Ukraine's borders.





Under international pressure to resolve the crisis, Tymoshenko negotiates a new deal with Putin, and gas flows resume on Jan. 20. Much of Europe still relies on Russian gas today.

– February, 2010

Yanukovych is elected president in February. He says Ukraine should be a "neutral state," cooperating with both Russia and Western alliances like NATO

– October, 2011

Ukrainian prosecutors open criminal investigations into Tymoshenko, alleging corruption and misuse of government resources. In October, a court finds her guilty of "abuse of power" during the 2009 negotiations with Russia over the gas crisis and sentences her to seven years in prison, prompting concerns in the West that Ukrainian leaders are persecuting political opponents.

– November 2013 through February

2014 Just days before it is to be signed, Yanukovych announces that he will refuse to sign an association agreement with the European Union to bring Ukraine into a free trade agreement. He cites pressure from Russia as a reason for his decision.



The announcement sparks huge protests across Ukraine — the largest since the Orange Revolution — calling for Yanukovych to resign. Protesters begin camping out in Kyiv's Maidan, also known as Independence Square, and occupy government buildings, including Kyiv's city hall and the justice ministry.

In late February, violence between police and protesters leaves more than 100 dead in the single bloodiest week in Ukraine's post-Soviet history.

Ahead of a scheduled impeachment vote on Feb. 22, Yanukovich flees, eventually arriving in Russia. Ukraine's parliament votes unanimously to remove Yanukovich and install an interim government, which announces it will sign the EU agreement and votes to free Tymoshenko from prison.

The new government charges Yanukovich with mass murder of the Maidan protesters and issues a warrant for his arrest.

Russia declares that the change in Ukraine's government is an illegal coup. Almost immediately, armed men appear at checkpoints and facilities in the Crimean Peninsula. Putin at first denies they are Russian soldiers but later admits it.

– March, 2014

With Russian troops in control of the peninsula, the Crimean parliament votes to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. A public referendum follows, with 97% of voters favoring secession, although the results are disputed.

Putin finalizes the Russian annexation of Crimea in a March 18 announcement to Russia's parliament. In response, the U.S. and allies in Europe impose sanctions on Russia. They have never recognized Russia's annexation. It remains the only time that a European nation has used military force to seize the territory of another since World War II.



– April, 2014

With some 40,000 Russian troops gathered on Ukraine's eastern border, violence breaks out in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas — violence that continues to this day. Russian-supported separatist forces storm government buildings in two eastern regions, Donetsk and Luhansk. They declare independence from Ukraine as the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic, though they remain

internationally recognized as part of Ukraine. Russia denies that its troops are on Ukrainian soil, but Ukrainian officials insist otherwise.

#### –May, 2014

The pro-West politician Petro Poroshenko, a former government minister and head of the Council of the National Bank of Ukraine, is elected Ukraine's president. He promotes reform, including measures to address corruption and lessen Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy and financial support.



#### – September, 2014

Representatives from Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany meet in Belarus to attempt to negotiate an end to the violence in the Donbas. They sign the first *Minsk Agreement*, a deal between Ukraine and Russia to quiet the violence under a fragile cease-fire. The cease-fire soon breaks, and fighting continues into the new year.

#### – February, 2015

The Minsk group meets again in Belarus to find a more successful agreement to end the fighting in eastern Ukraine, resulting in the *Minsk II Agreement*. It too has been unsuccessful at ending the violence. From 2014 through today, more than 14,000 people have been killed, tens of thousands wounded and more than a million displaced.



Together, the annexation of Crimea and the Russian-backed violence in the east have pushed Ukrainian public sentiment toward the West, strengthening interest in joining NATO and the EU.

– Over the course of 2016 and 2017

As fighting in the Donbas continues, Russia repeatedly strikes at Ukraine in a series of cyberattacks, including a 2016 attack on Kyiv's power grid that causes a major blackout. In 2017, a large-scale assault affects key Ukrainian infrastructure, including the National Bank of Ukraine and the country's electrical grid.

– April 2019

In April, comedian and actor Volodymyr Zelenskyy is elected president in a landslide rebuke of Poroshenko, which includes a stagnating economy and the conflict with Russia.

During his campaign, Zelenskyy vowed to make peace with Russia and end the war in the Donbas. His early efforts to reach a solution to the violence are slowed by U.S. President Donald Trump, who briefly blocks U.S. military aid to Ukraine and suggests to Zelenskyy that he should instead work with Putin to resolve the crisis.

In a phone call with Trump in July 2019, Zelenskyy requests a visit to the White House to meet with Trump about U.S. backing of Ukraine's efforts to push off Russia. Trump asks Zelenskyy for "a favor": an investigation into energy company Burisma and the Bidens. A White House whistleblower complains, leading to Trump's first impeachment in December 2019.



– April, 2021

Russia sends about 100,000 troops to Ukraine's borders, ostensibly for military exercises. Although few analysts believe an invasion is imminent, Zelenskyy urges

NATO leadership to put Ukraine on a timeline for membership. Later that month, Russia says it will withdraw the troops, but tens of thousands remain.

– August, 2021

Two years after his entanglement with Trump, Zelenskyy visits the White House to meet with President Biden. Biden emphasizes that the U.S. is committed to "Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russian aggression" but repeats that Ukraine has not yet met the conditions necessary to join NATO.

– November 2021

Russia renews its troop presence near the Ukraine-Russia border, alarming U.S. intelligence officials, who travel to Brussels to brief NATO allies on the situation. "We're not sure exactly what Mr. Putin is up to, but these movements certainly have our attention," says U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

– December 2021

Biden, speaking with Putin on a phone call, urges Russia not to invade Ukraine, warning of "real costs" if Russia does so.

Putin issues a contentious set of security demands. Among them, he asks NATO to permanently bar Ukraine from membership and withdraw forces stationed in countries that joined the alliance after 1997, including Romania and Balkan countries. Putin also demands a written response from the U.S. and NATO.

– January, 2022

Leaders and diplomats from the U.S., Russia and European countries meet repeatedly to avert a crisis. In early January, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov tells U.S. officials that Russia has no plans to invade Ukraine.

The State Department orders the families of embassy staff to leave Ukraine on Jan. 23. NATO places forces on standby the next day, including the U.S. ordering 8,500 troops in the United States to be ready to deploy.

Representatives from the U.S. and NATO deliver their written responses to Putin's demands on Jan. 26. In the responses, officials say they cannot bar Ukraine from



joining NATO, but they signal a willingness to negotiate over smaller issues like arms control.

– February, 2022

Diplomatic efforts pick up pace across Europe. French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz travel between Moscow and Kyiv. Biden orders the movement of 1,000 U.S. troops from Germany to Romania and the deployment of 2,000 additional U.S. troops to Poland and Germany.

Russia and Belarus begin joint military exercises on Feb. 10, with some 30,000 Russian troops stationed in the country along Ukraine's northern border.

The U.S. and the U.K. urge their citizens to leave Ukraine on Feb. 11. Biden announces the deployment of another 2,000 troops from the U.S. to Poland.

In mid-February, the fighting escalates between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces in the two eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. Separatist leaders call for evacuations. "In our view, what is happening in Donbas today is, in fact, genocide," says Putin on Feb. 15 — a false claim that Western officials say Putin is using to create a pretext for an invasion.

Russia continues to build its troop presence on its border with Ukraine. Estimates range from 150,000 to 190,000 troops. U.S. officials, including Biden, increase the urgency of their warnings, saying that Russia has decided to invade.

On Feb. 21, Putin formally recognizes the independence of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic — including territory claimed by separatists but controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. He orders Russia's military to deploy troops there under the guise of a "peacekeeping" mission.

In response, Biden declares the move "the beginning of a Russian invasion." Together, the U.S., the U.K. and the European Union enact a broad set of sanctions targeting Russian banks and oligarchs.

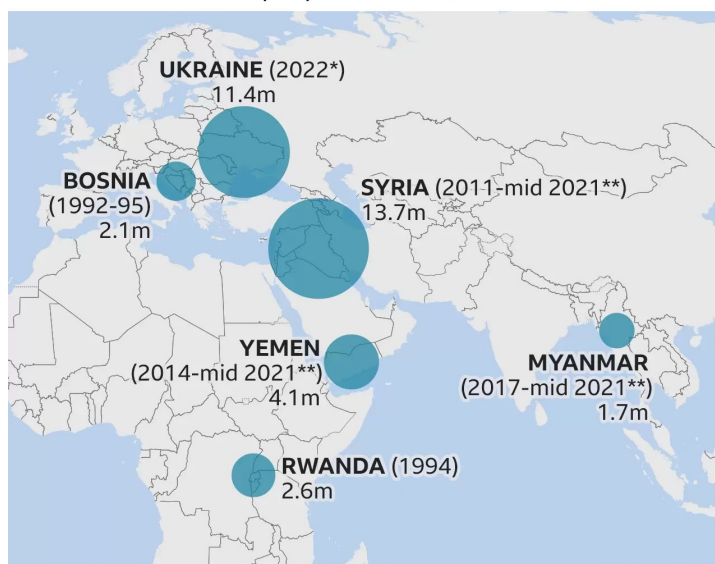
On Feb. 24, Russian forces launch a devastating assault on Ukrainian territory — the largest such military operation in Europe since the end of World War II. Missiles rain down on Ukraine's cities and columns of Russian troops from neighboring Belarus and from Russian-held Crimea reportedly begin streaming into the countryside. Ukrainian forces reportedly try to hold back the Russian advance on several fronts.

## Current Humanitarian Situation

The escalation of conflict in Ukraine has caused civilian casualties and destruction of civilian infrastructure, forcing people to flee their homes seeking safety, protection and assistance. More than 5.6 million individual refugees from Ukraine have crossed borders in Europe since 24 February alone, and many more have been forced to move inside the country. They are in urgent need of protection and support. UNHCR has declared Ukraine a Level 3 emergency – the highest level they have.

### How Ukraine compares to other refugee crises

Estimated number of people forced from their homes



Figures include refugees who have fled to another country and internally-displaced people. \*As of 6 April 2022 \*\*Latest figures to mid-2021

Source: UNHCR

BBC

The citizens of Ukraine that have not fled their homes are caught in a war that does not have an end in near sight as The Ukrainian Parliament extended martial law for another three months until 21 November according to a UN Office for Coordinated Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) Situation Report.

Since February 24th, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Russia and Ukraine has been documenting violations of international humanitarian law and violations human rights law which have been occurring in the country. Many of these allegations concern violations that may amount to war crimes from both parties.

Highlighted human rights atrocities in the OHCHR's May 2022 press briefing:

– Hundreds of educational and medical facilities destroyed or damaged in areas affected by hostilities across the country.

–The right to health has been severely affected across Ukraine. In areas under intense hostilities, we have seen that mortality rates increased because people were not able to access medical care. Often it was too dangerous for people to leave their homes or shelters to seek medical assistance.



- Older persons and persons with disabilities are two of the groups that have suffered disproportionately from the effects of the conflict, often depending on others and lacking access to the medication and treatment they need.
- Documentation and allegations of rape, including gang rape, attempted rape, forced nudity, threats of sexual violence against civilian women and girls, men and boys.
- Documented cases where Russian armed forces had detained civilians, mostly young men, and transferred them to Belarus and then Russia, where they have been held in pre-trial detention centres. Overall, since February 24th, we have documented 204 cases of enforced disappearance (169 men, 34 women, 1 boy), the overwhelming majority of them by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups.
- Reports of torture, ill-treatment and incommunicado detention by Ukrainian Armed Forces of prisoners of war belonging to the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups.
- Publication of videos, which show inhumane treatment, including prisoners from both sides being coerced to make statements, apologies and confessions, and other forms of humiliation.

In addition to the United Nations Human Rights offices many other international human rights NGOs and CSOs have drafted their own reports as well. One of those organizations is Amnesty International. Amnesty International is documenting serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the unlawful killing and injury of civilians, destruction of infrastructure, and blocking of desperately needed aid for civilians. Amnesty International has also brought to light Russia's crackdown on protests and media.

According to Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnès Callamard, Russian authorities have unleashed an unprecedented, nationwide crackdown on independent journalism, anti-war protests and dissenting voices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia will continue its efforts to hide the human cost of its war and has blocked independent news sites and social media. Meanwhile, anyone caught spreading what it regards as "fake news" about the conflict faces a prison sentence of up to 15 years. Coupled with a campaign of disinformation, the media blackout seeks to entirely deprive the Russian people of access to objective, trustworthy information about the conflict. As repression mounts, at least 150 critical journalists have fled the country so far.

## **Role of the International System**

In reaction to the human rights atrocities in Eastern Europe, the UN as well as many Member States have taken many different types of action. The international system has had their focus on Russia and Ukraine for some time but especially since the Annexation of Crimea.

## **UN System**

### **Security Council Resolutions and Presidential Statements:**

- Security Council Resolution S/RES/2623
  - This resolution called for an “emergency special session” (ESS) of the General Assembly to consider and recommend collective action on the situation in Ukraine. This represented the first time in four decades that the Council has adopted a “Uniting for Peace” resolution, whereby the Council refers a situation on which its permanent members are deadlocked to the General Assembly. It was adopted with 11 votes in favour, one against (Russia), and three abstentions (China, India, and the UAE).
- Security Council Resolution S/RES/2020
  - This was a resolution that endorsed the "Package of measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements" signed on 12 February 2015.
- Security Council Draft Resolution S/2022/231
  - This was a Security Council draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine drafted by Russia and co-sponsored by Belarus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Syria. The resolution failed to be adopted because it did not garner the requisite support, receiving two votes in favour (China and Russia) and 13 abstentions.
- Security Council Draft Resolution S/2022/155
  - This was a Security Council draft resolution authored by Albania and the US and co-sponsored by 81 member states, deploring Russia's aggression against Ukraine in violation of Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter. The draft resolution failed to be adopted because of a veto cast by Russia. Eleven members voted in favour, one against (Russia) and three members abstained (China, India and the United Arab Emirates).
- Security Council Presidential Statement 2022/3
  - This conveyed strong support for the Secretary-General's efforts in the search for a peaceful solution to the war in Ukraine.
- Security Council Presidential Statement 2018/12

- This presidential statement expressed concern over the worsening security situation in eastern Ukraine and condemned continuous violations of the ceasefire, including the use of heavy weapons.

#### Human Rights Council Resolutions:

- Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/49/1
  - This was a resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council establishing an independent international Commission of Inquiry to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights committed in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
- Human Rights Council Report A/HRC/28/6/Add.1
  - This was the report of the Human Rights Mission to Ukraine on the situation in the country, including Crimea.

#### General Assembly Resolutions:

- General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/3
  - This was a resolution suspending Russia's membership in the UN Human Rights Council.
- General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/2
  - This was a resolution titled "Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine".
- General Assembly Resolution A/RES/ES-11/1
  - This was a resolution titled "Aggression against Ukraine".

#### ***Member State Action***

On February 26, 2022, the leaders of the European Commission, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States released "Joint Statement on Further Restrictive Economic Measures," committing to the launch of "a transatlantic task force that will ensure the effective implementation of our financial sanctions by identifying and freezing the assets of sanctioned individuals and companies that exist within our jurisdictions." As well, two countries that had not previously taken part in sanctions, namely South Korea and non-UN member state Taiwan, engaged in sanctions against Russia.

On February 28, 2022, Singapore announced that it will impose banking sanctions against Russia for Ukraine invasion, thus making them the first country in Southeast Asia to impose sanctions upon Russia. The sanctions also included materials that could be used for weapons against Ukraine, as well as electronics, technology devices and

other related equipment, which were listed in a detailed statement on March 5. On that same day, the Central Bank of Russia was blocked from accessing more than \$400 billion in foreign-exchange reserves held abroad and the EU imposed sanctions on several Russian oligarchs and politicians. On the same day US Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) has prohibited United States persons from engaging in transactions with Central Bank of Russia, Russian Direct Investment Fund (including its predecessor, JSC RDIF, sanctioned previously), Limited Liability Company RVC Management Company, and Kirill Dmitriev, a Vladimir Putin's ally, personally.

Additionally, on March 16, 2022, financial intelligence units of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States signed a joint letter of intent forming a working group to "enhance, expedite and engage" in coordinated efforts related to sanctions and asset recovery.

These sanctions are some of the harshest imposed by the international community. Member States hope to push this economic war in order to see changes in the abusive human rights behavior Russia is engaging in.

### **Next Steps**

While you conduct your research keep these research questions in mind for the topic:

- What UN agencies could be better working together to resolve this crisis? How would they make sure the cooperation is effective?
- What can the General Assembly do in this situation to be the most effective as resolutions are 'non-binding' documents for Member States?
- What is your Member States stance when it comes to the Russia-Ukraine conflict?
- What is your Member State or Member Region contributing to the conflict already? How can other Member States build off of what your Member State is contributing or how could your Member State do more toward this conflict?
- What consequences should be imposed and how will you make sure they are imposed as a General Assembly Member State?

## Topic II: SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in COVID-19 Recovery

### Introduction

“The Sustainable Development Goals are more important now than ever. Now is the time to secure the well-being of people, economies, societies and our planet.” – António Guterres, Secretary-General

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

The SDGs were put to the ultimate test of global partnership over the last 4 years with the international COVID-19 Pandemic. COVID presented the international community with a unique set of challenges that needed to be adapted to quickly in order to be successful in complete COVID Recovery. The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting many sectors of society, such as health, education, economy, which are related to thematic issues covered by many of the SDGs.

COVID-19 being a global pandemic has had its challenges but it gives us the ultimate opportunity to work on our multilateral partnerships which no international issue—since the SDGs inception— has provided that opportunity before.

### What are the SDGs?



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries -

developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. The SDGs build on decades of work by countries and the UN, including the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

In June 1992, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, more than 178 countries adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action to build a global partnership for sustainable development to improve human lives and protect the environment. Member States unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Summit led to the elaboration of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty by 2015.



The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation, adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002, reaffirmed the global community's commitments to poverty eradication and the environment, and built on Agenda 21 and the Millennium Declaration by including more emphasis on multilateral partnerships.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, Member States adopted the outcome document "The Future We Want" in which they decided, inter alia, to launch a process to develop a set of SDGs to build upon the MDGs and to establish the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Rio +20 outcome also contained other measures for implementing sustainable development, including mandates for future programmes of work in development financing, small island developing states and more.

In 2013, the General Assembly set up a 30-member Open Working Group to develop a proposal on the SDGs. In January 2015, the General Assembly began the negotiation process on the post-2015 development agenda. The process culminated in the subsequent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with 17 SDGs at its core, at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015.

2015 was a landmark year for multilateralism and international policy shaping, with the adoption of several major agreements:

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015)
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (July 2015)
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 SDGs was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September 2015.



- Paris Agreement on Climate Change (December 2015)

Now, the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development serves as the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the SDGs.

Today, the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) provides substantive support and capacity-building for the SDGs and their related thematic issues, including water, energy, climate, oceans, urbanization, transport, science and technology, the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), partnerships and Small Island Developing States. DSDG plays a key role in the evaluation of UN systemwide implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on advocacy and outreach activities relating to the SDGs. In order to make the 2030 Agenda a reality, broad ownership of the SDGs must translate into a strong commitment by all stakeholders to implement the global goals. DSDG aims to help facilitate this engagement.

### **SDGs & Long Term COVID-19 Recovery**

In order to understand how the SDG's can effectively aid COVID-19 recovery we need to understand what each individual Sustainable Development Goal is doing to combat the damage of COVID-19 or how COVID-19 has made the gap between completing the SDG's larger and how this will look to combat any future threat to our sustainability.





### ***SDG 1: No Poverty***

Although difficulties were foreseen even before pandemic for SDG 1, due to the pandemic it is expected an increased by 110 million of people living in poverty. The pandemic impact is bigger among the vulnerable groups (women, youth, lowwage workers, small and medium enterprises, informal sector). It is expected that economic crisis will have a stronger impact for the developing countries.



### ***SDG 2: Zero Hunger***

The number of undernourished people has dropped by almost half in the past two decades. Central and East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean have all made huge progress. Still, as of 2017 there were 821 million people chronically undernourished. COVID-19 has exposed weaknesses in global food supply chains. And it has pushed fragile countries, such as Yemen, where, despite humanitarian assistance, 15.9 million wake up hungry every day, push millions more into further distress.



### ***SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing***

Even before the crisis, the world was off track to ensuring healthcare for everybody by 2030. Now, the impressive gains made in recent years—declining infant and maternal mortality rates, turning the tide on HIV/AIDS and halving malaria deaths—are threatened, and we face possibly alarming setbacks, not just from the disease itself, but the knock-on effects of breaks in vaccination campaigns.



### ***SDG 4: Quality Education***

UNESCO estimates about 1.25 billion students are affected by lockdowns. UNDP estimates 86 percent of primary school children in developing countries are not being educated. The pandemic has re-emphasized the 'digital divide' and the right to internet access, particularly for those in rural areas. UNDP estimates that closing the digital divide would reduce by more than two-thirds the number of children not learning because of school closures.



### ***SDG 5: Gender Equality***

The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030, and the social and economic fallout from the pandemic has made the situation even bleaker. Progress in many areas, including time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and gender-responsive budgeting, is falling behind. Women's health services, already poorly funded, have faced major disruptions. Violence against women remains endemic. And despite women's leadership in responding to COVID-19, they still trail men in securing the decision-making positions they deserve. Commitment and bold action are needed to accelerate progress, including through the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality. Greater investment in gender statistics is vital, since less than half of the data required to monitor Goal 5 are currently available.



### ***SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation***

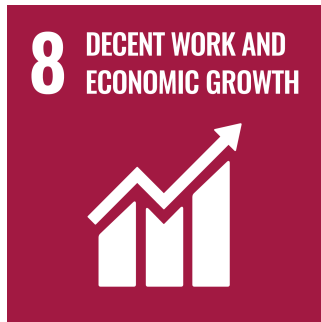
As the COVID-19 pandemic drags on, it becomes increasingly clear that safely managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services are vital to human health. But unless progress picks up speed - dramatically - billions of people will still lack these essential services in 2030. Water is fundamental to many other aspects of sustainable development and is under threat. The proportion of the global population using safely managed drinking water services increased from 70 per cent in 2015 to 74 per cent in 2020. Still, 2 billion people were without such services that year, including 1.2 billion people lacking even a basic level of service.



### ***SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy***

Huge disparities in access to modern sustainable energy persist, leaving the most vulnerable even further behind. In some countries, the COVID-19 pandemic has weakened or reversed advances already made. Rising commodity, energy and shipping prices have increased the cost of producing and transporting solar photovoltaics modules, wind turbines and biofuels worldwide, adding uncertainty to a development trajectory that is already far below Goal 7 ambitions. Achieving energy and climate goals will require continued policy support and a massive

mobilization of public and private capital for clean and renewable energy, especially in developing countries.



### ***SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth***

About 1.6 billion people work in the informal economy—that's about half the global workforce. The International Labour Organization reports that they are in immediate danger of having their livelihoods destroyed. The ILO reports that more than one in six young people have lost their jobs since the pandemic began and those that are still at work have seen their hours reduced.



### ***SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure***

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of industrialization, technological innovation and resilient infrastructure in building back better and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Economies with a diversified industrial sector and strong infrastructure (e.g., transport, Internet connectivity and utility services) sustained less damage and are experiencing faster recovery. In 2021, global manufacturing rebounded from the pandemic, although the

recovery remains incomplete and uneven.



### ***SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities***

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating global income inequality. As a result, the steady progress over the last two decades is now in jeopardy. Projections suggest that between-country inequality rose by 1.2 per cent between 2017 and 2021, the first such increase in a generation. Before the pandemic, inequality was expected to have fallen by 2.6 per cent over the same period.



### ***SDG 11: Sustainable Cities***

In preparing for a post-COVID world, urban planners are rethinking the link between economic recovery and the equitable distribution of open public spaces. Parks, boulevards and playgrounds, for example, not only enhance the quality of urban life, but are places where people can interact, playing a vital role in social and economic life.



### ***SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production***

Transforming our relationship with nature is key to a sustainable future. As the world develops strategies for sustainable recovery from the pandemic, governments and all citizens should seize the opportunity to work together to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and pollution, and shape a new circular economy.



### ***SDG 13: Climate Action***

In 2020, social and economic disruptions caused by COVID-19 lowered energy demand around the world. As a result, global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions declined by 5.2 per cent in 2020 – the equivalent of almost 2 billion metric tons, the largest decline ever and almost five times greater than the 2009 drop following the global financial crisis. But it was only a temporary reprieve. With the phasing out of COVID-related restrictions, demand for coal, oil and gas increased.

Consequently, energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for 2021 rose by 6 per cent, reaching their highest level ever and completely wiping out the pandemic-related reduction seen in 2020.



### ***SDG 14: Life Below Water***

While COVID-19 may have reduced coastal pollution in some areas due to declining tourism and other activity, the pandemic does not appear to have eased coastal eutrophication globally. The main sources of marine pollution are land-based, leading to a seemingly unstoppable flow of litter, waste and run-off into the ocean. In 2021, a study estimated that more than 17 million metric tons of plastic entered the world's ocean, making up the bulk (85 per cent) of marine litter. The volume of plastic

pollution entering the ocean each year is expected to double or triple by 2040, threatening all marine life.



### ***SDG 15: Life on Land***

In an effort to prevent and halt the degradation of such ecosystems, many countries are sustainably managing their forests, protecting sites critical to biodiversity, and enacting national conservation legislation and policies. However, other opportunities are being lost. The emergence of COVID-19 was

an opportunity to integrate biodiversity considerations into economic recovery measures and build a more viable future. But biodiversity has been largely neglected in recovery spending.



### ***SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions***

At least 18 national elections and referendums have already been postponed. Sometimes this can lead to increased risk of unrest. Governments, particularly in fragile contexts are under unparalleled pressure to deliver digital services and social protection, and to function in ways that advance social cohesion, while upholding human rights and the rule of law.



### ***SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals***

With the pandemic far from over and stark disparities in vaccine distribution among countries, there is also the threat of a “two-tiered” COVID-19 recovery. To build back better from the pandemic and rescue the Sustainable Development Goals, a full-scale transformation of the international financial and debt architecture will be required. The world is facing a multitude of crises across the social, health, environmental, and peace and security spectrums. To find lasting solutions, international cooperation must be scaled up – urgently. To stay ahead of crises, significantly more investment in data and statistics will be necessary.

### **How do we complete the SDG's in a Post-COVID-19 World?**

The COVID-19 Pandemic served as an unprecedented signal for action, exposing the degree of inequality in the world, and highlighting the problems that formed the need for the SDG's in the first place. The spread of COVID-19 virus and the associated economic problems have negatively affected the indicators of sustainable development throughout the list of SDG's. Many of the previous achievements in reducing poverty, eliminating hunger, providing healthcare, and improving well-being may be reversed, unless the world community takes the same decisive actions to achieve the SDG's that are currently being taken to counter the spread of the virus. In addition, any decrease in the achievement in the goals of the 2030



Agenda could lead to an even greater negative impact of the COVID-19 spread.

For example, as stated in the 2021 report of the UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, weak progress in the implementation of the SDGs along with a high degree of concentration of economic activity, overpopulation and urbanization, led to the fact that the initial impact of the pandemic in the Asia- Pacific region was as significant as it was.

The current COVID-19 crisis makes it difficult to revise traditional social norms or implement the usual political programs to take decisive steps that will help return the international community to the trajectory of achieving the SDGs. Significant progress in achieving SDGs is vital for the implementation of such recovery programs that will create more 'green' and inclusive economies that are more resilient to the challenges of development of public relations. It is the large-scale nature of investment programs in 'green' technologies that may be the least expensive way to both revive the economies of the affected by the virus, and to make significant progress in the fight against climate change. Recent research claims that 'green' projects, in comparison with traditional support options, create more jobs, as well as bring more profit and reduce more costs in the short- and long-term.



In the Sustainable Development Goals 2022 report, cascading and interlinked crises are putting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in grave danger, along with humanity's very own survival. The Report highlights the severity and magnitude of the challenges before us. The confluence of crises, dominated by COVID-19, climate change, and conflicts, are creating spin-off impacts on food and nutrition, health, education, the environment, and peace and security, and affecting all the SDGs..

The Report details the reversal of years of progress in eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and education, providing basic services, and much more. It also points out areas that need urgent action in order to rescue the

SDGs and deliver meaningful progress for people and the planet by 2030.

The post-pandemic recovery process needs to be directed towards sustainability. The

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be the most useful tool for the post-pandemic recovery processes if they can be optimized for mitigation and future resilience. Although several SDGs are affected more than others by the pandemic, their interconnectedness influence the progress on others, thus working together to achieve the overall progress of the 2030 Agenda.

Identifying commonalities and dependencies between the SDGs especially the characteristics brought out in pandemic specific contexts, is important in order to address in multiple post COVID-19 challenges at once. By addressing or financing for the SDGs in groups, based on their most positive commonalties in, it can be achieved more with less resources.

The *UN Research Roadmap for the COVID-19 Recovery* identifies key research priorities for the socio-economic recovery related to SDGs progress, and stresses the role of research for finding new ways to resolving problems created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also important for all Member States to take the opportunity of a positive trend on behaviour change, as a result of the pandemic, towards more sustainable life styles. Our world's awareness is raising regarding the importance of sustainability and of balanced ecosystems for health and wellbeing. Many countries experienced an increase in the use of alternative mobility ways, especially biking. Many cities around the world have as well intensified measures for non-motorized transport alternatives to solve air pollution issues. Therefore, recovery policies based on sustainable frameworks can have more support from communities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which encompasses sustainability in all forms, can be a useful framework and guideline toward a sustainable future.

### **Next Steps**

While you conduct your research keep these research questions in mind for the topic:

- 2030 is only 7 years away, what should we keep the same about the SDGs and what should be done differently in the next decade of sustainability?
- How do we get back on track with our 2030 goals?
- How can Member States come together for COVID-19 Recovery?
- How can we track and enforce progress made or lost with the SDGs due to COVID-19 recovery?
- If another pandemic broke out right now what would be the most effective strategy to combat it with the knowledge we gained from COVID-19?



– What adaptations need to be made to the Sustainable Development Goals in order for us to maximize our international cooperation?

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